

FOURTH INTERNATIONALIST

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**The General Strike
Nicaragua
CPSA Left**

EVADING THE GENERAL STRIKE

1985 saw not only the tenth month in this epic of class struggle but also, for the first time, an open debate among NUM leaders firmly in favour of the strike on the way forward. We had previously seen rows between the Trevor Bell right wing and Scargill over ballots and the very continuation of the strike. But no left NUM figure had uttered a word of comment on the direction of the strike itself. That this has happened, in the form of a statement by Welsh miners' leader Kim Howells, and a reply from Arthur Scargill, expressed the fact that the strike cannot continue in 1985 as it was in 1984. Further evidence of this mood amongst firm supporters of the strike that the present strategy is insufficient, came in a resolution passed by members at Ashington Colliery in Northumberland and discussed by the NUM executive on January 10th. It reflected fears amongst the activists that if new progress is not made soon, more could drift back to work. The resolution has nothing to do with defeatism - the same area has been forthright in championing non-compliance with the courts and is on record as calling for a General Strike.

The basic tenet of the Scargill position has come to be that the strike can be won through either making Thatcher spend a fortune on staving off its effects or the advent of power cuts which disrupt the economy. This is known popularly as the 'lights out' perspective. Indeed there is evidence that de facto power cuts and reductions are occurring in various places. At Hackney, in East London, an actual blackout of between fifteen minutes and an hour took place in the first week of January. LEB workers said unofficially it was due to reduction in output and an overloaded grid, both can only be the result of the miners' strike.

But the level of these problems is nowhere near enough to cause prolonged blackouts or the 'three day week' which Edward Heath introduced at the end of 1973. The 1973-4 tactics, which succeeded because coal stocks were very quickly exhausted and in a situation of a 100% strike do not exist today. Not only are more power stations capable of oil burning but nuclear fuel has come onto the scene. There is a clear bourgeois strategy of siting power stations around the coast, with direct access to oil and coal imports. With the increased nuclear capability, this is designed to remove entirely the threat to power output by any miners' strike. Thatcher has been pushing ahead with this since 1979

and will continue to do so.

It has to be said: the miners no longer have the capacity to directly shut down the supply of electricity and to cause massive power cuts capable of making Thatcher concede. This has not been in any sense a re-run of 1973-74, except perhaps in a way which contradicts Arthur Scargill's perspective.

In no way can it be said that Scargill is a bureaucrat in the mould of Duffy, Murray or Basnett. He came up from the militant ranks of his union and he wants to win this strike. This, as he himself has said on many occasions, means defeating the government. But this is not an economic act alone as he has come to say. It centres on the main problem of politics in this period: the power of the British trade unions. Thatcher has set herself the task of reversing the decades of gains for the British working class from 1969 to 1979, when, in conflict with both Tory and Labour governments, the unions grew in size and influence. Above all they maintained their legal rights and basic independence from state interference.

DECLINE OF BRITISH CAPITALISM

The decline of British capitalism, which has entered a qualitative phase with the collapse of its manufacturing base, loss of markets, crisis of the pound, impending instability on the stock market and a crisis of profitability and productivity, forces Thatcher to attack and diminish the power of the unions. Added to this is an attempt to begin to break the organic link between the unions and the Labour Party.

One of the ways in which this attack has proceeded is to break the ability of unions to defend jobs and dictate terms of employment. The right to work has been a theme among British workers since the boom collapsed in the early 1970s. Struggle after struggle has centred on stopping closures. The NUM strike is the most important in the chain and the most clearly political.

Early in the strike Scargill talked about bringing the Tories down and he talked about the need for a Labour government pledged to carry out 'A Plan for

Coal'. This document, drawn up between the NUM and Tony Benn, then Energy Minister, has grave weaknesses. But for Thatcher, who needs to cut, break up and partially privatise the coal industry, it is too much. Scargill was right to point the finger at the need to bring the Tories down. But he believed the miners could do it alone, or practically alone. He was wrong about this as we have consistently pointed out.

GENERAL STRIKE

The miners' strike can provide the focus for putting an end to Thatcher, which needs to be done speedily - if we can move towards bringing other key sections out with the miners and force the TUC General Council to call a General Strike.

Here we hit another problem, none of the NUM leaders (including Scargill) are now talking about a General Strike. Obviously everyone involved in the strike is worn out and there have been many instances of sell-outs and backing off by other union leaders and the TUC. This is no reason for not stating the case clearly: without waging an all-out battle for the General Strike within the TUC and the unions, from rank and file up to General Council level, the miners are unlikely to win on their own.

Miners are tough, both morally and politically. It's in the nature of the job and in the strong Labour traditions of their areas. But their morale must be based on real events and on moving forward, not only on the past. Miners need a viable perspective in 1985, one which can overcome the impasse which the strike has reached and bring a victory. This can be done, if Arthur Scargill unites his union executive and all rank and file strikers behind an offensive for a General Strike. This is the decisive moment and the 'on-off' relationship with the TUC must be ended. No union militant could for a second deny the treacherous nature of the TUC bosses. Millions of workers are supporting miners in whatever way is open to them. These millions must now be given the chance to act in common and through their unions as such.

There is strong opposition to this from right wing bosses and those in the ranks who want to try to accommodate Thatcher. The 'New Realism' which took Murray to his traitor's peerage and allows Alastair Graham to sit and smile on sellouts in the civil service, has its echo among the rank and file. Just as the Notts miners have scabbed, so many SDP, Liberal and Tory voting workers will not support extensive strike action to support the miners. Only a fool would portray the whole working class as one militant block straining at the leash to come out on strike with the miners. But millions are ready to do it and millions more can be persuaded to join if the TUC can be pushed to call a General Strike.

This requires the immediate convening of a caucus of all those union leaders who have spoken for supporting the miners, and especially those who head public sector unions. On this basis emergency meetings of the General Council and Public Sector Committee can call industrial action with the miners. The fact that the strike has gone on for ten months does not make this less urgent.

All through the miners' strike the spectre of a General Strike has stalked events. Union leaders, including Arthur Scargill it would appear, have carefully avoided alluding to this historic act and some have ruled it out. Now the miners absolutely need a General Strike to win, and through it they can definitely win. The NUM would be wrong to turn its eyes in an inward direction towards the Notts area and let the TUC scabs off the hook. This will not bring victory and the rifts between strikers and scabs, even if the latter in Notts retain their NUM cards, will not be papered over. If the strike does not win then the chance of holding together a strong NUM capable of staving off closures and cuts is greatly diminished.

The key to the future is now in the hands of the TUC lefts. The 'front' called into being by Moss Evans at the time of the NGA dispute either exists in total secrecy or not at all. Such secret caucuses are of no use to the miners. Typical of the methods of the Communist Party and its allies down the years, it offers no chance to regroup trade unionists behind the miners now and other workers in struggle later.

BROAD LEFTS

The SLG believes it necessary for open Broad Lefts to exist in every union and for an open Left Caucus with a clear platform of struggle against both Thatcher and her TUC lackeys - the future Murray's and Chapples - to be formed at TUC level. Norman Willis does not want to call other workers into struggle behind miners. Has anyone seen him near a picket line? Did he not refuse the miners TUC office space in case his bank accounts were threatened by Thatcher's anti-union laws?

Willis is no different from Lord Murray and we must now campaign for his removal just as we did for the noble Lord Murray's after he sold the NGA for £48 a day on the red leather benches.

The responsibility for victory or defeat in the miner's strike now rests on the shoulders of the TUC, and within that body more especially on those of Jimmy Knapp, Ron Todd, Ray Buckton, Ken Gill, Arthur Scargill, Ray Alderson and their allies.

A final word about the conduct of the miners' strike early in 1985. Arthur Scargill should rouse both his own ranks and hundreds of thousands of others who support the miners for systematic mass picketing. The impression has been created that picketing is for miners alone. This is the moment for a demonstration of the power of the working class on the streets - a power that the police could not contain. Strategic targets exist, they must be mass picketed on an area basis.

We must add to this the problem of vehicles available for other trade unionists to support the miners. What was apparent for some years - that the old Trades' Councils had become little more than middle order bureaucratic rumps under Stalinist control - has been graphically confirmed by their total absence during the strike. Various forms of ad hoc committees have been brought into being, based on Labour Parties, unions and left groups. No nation-

al framework exists to co-ordinate this work which centres mainly on financial support that poses no serious threat to the official levels of the union bureaucracy which have been blocking strike action with the miners.

CONFERENCE DEBACLE

On December 2nd a national conference was called by the 'Miners' Defence Committee', a self-appointed coalition of the SWP, Socialist Action and Labour Herald, with Ken Livingstone as its major figure. Livingstone has called for strike action to back the miners on several occasions and has even called for a General Strike. How did it come about then that teachers and others who work for ILEA and the GLC have received disciplinary letters because they followed his advice and took strike action? Soon enough local government leaders will face their own conflict with Thatcher's laws and if they refuse the chance now to link their own struggle with that of miners then the whole working class will have to pay the cost. Fine words from David Blunkett, Ken Livingstone, Ted Knight, Hilda Keane and Derek Hatton must quickly be translated into sponsoring strike action by their own employees and backing for time off to attend mass pickets. What would be the effect in the North if Blunkett and Hatton gave 100,000 council employees the chance to join miners' picket lines?

The December 2nd conference was a debacle on two counts. Firstly it allowed a procession of speakers to avoid facing the problem of the treachery of Neil Kinnock and the TUC. Secondly it provided neither a political nor a practical framework for support groups, and especially trade unionists, to campaign for General Strike action with the miners.

Socialist Action supporters on the organising committee, bowing before their idols of the larger SWP, who believe the working class is doomed to retreat, contrived before the day to remove all reference to General Strike action from conference statements. Thus do some of the 'Marxists' support the miners! As to Militant, it answered the

problem of these opportunists who refused to condemn Kinnock and called for everyone to simply go away and provide a teddy bear and a turkey for miners' families (see the SWP statement for the conference), by not attending the conference at all. Never mind the thousands of supporters of the miners' cause who came there looking for answers and a way forward. Nor is this an isolated incident. In Lancashire Militant supporters not only boycotted a mass picket of Gold-borne colliery, organised by other members of BLOC with the local NUM, and supported by over 300 miners and other workers, they called their own 'mass picket' a couple of days later at Bold colliery nearby. This was attended by 80 people, three miles from Liverpool where Militant claim to have 2,000 supporters.

Strange forms of Marxism, not exactly full solidarity. But not without precedent. It's not that long ago that Gerry Healy took the largest Trotskyist organisation of the time down a similar road. The SLL led hundreds of good militants on the docks, in the car industry and elsewhere into a similar sectarian blind alley which set Trotskyism in the British unions back a decade or more.

CP OPPOSES GENERAL STRIKE

The miners' strike has put all political currents in the working class to the test, none more so than the Communist Party. Bereft of a large rank and file industrial base these days the rump CPGB has entered the middle and upper layers of both unions and Labour Party with some skill. The CP is opposed to a General Strike. Its methods were tied to parliamentarism by Stalin more than 30 years ago, in the wrongly titled 'The British Road to Socialism'. Typical of the Communist Party's methods, if not actually authored by its Industrial Department were the 'on-off' dock strikes of last summer. Ask any docker firmly involved in that strike and they will tell you they came out to support the miners. The first strike could have been the opening to General



Strike action if Evans, Todd and Connolly had taken action for it inside the TGWU as a whole and in the TUC. Instead the strikers were sent back for nothing when the moment to escalate came - at the point where Thatcher was preparing to send in troops to keep the docks open.

REMOVE KINNOCK

Stalinism has tied its fortunes to Neil Kinnock's coat-tails. A fact of which he may be aware. Kinnock is totally opposed not only to General Strike action but to any move which might destroy the Thatcher government by 'extra-parliamentary' means. Kinnock is the harbinger and mascot not for an aggressively anti-capitalist Labour government but for a cross-class Popular Front, passing itself off as a progressive government for working people.

The miners' strike, in posing an immediate challenge to Thatcher's government and its repressive measures has thrown into the balance the parliamentary illusions upon which Thatcher rests her repressive anti-working class measures. Every single conflict between the workers and both Labour and Tory governments since the seamens' strike of 1966 contained the seeds of this miners' strike, pitting a trade union against the state as it does. Margaret Thatcher and her ministers are fully aware of this and have said as much. Kinnock is also aware that any future government he heads must be free of trammels laid down by a historic miners' victory over Thatcher and her parliamentary 'right' to sack miners and attack unions.

Kinnock does not want to see the NUM smashed but he will not play a part in helping the working class, through strike action behind the NUM or disruption in the House of Commons, to further destroy the authority of the bourgeois parliament in which he has made his servility pay. The reformist Labour leaders, both right wing and most of the old Tribune lefts, now stand in fear of struggles which attack the bourgeois state. They have no answers for the new sharper stage of class struggle being brought about by the collapse of capitalism.

CRISIS OF WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP

Trotsky's Transitional Programme of the Fourth International refers to the crisis of working class leadership as the chief problem for us in this period. Indeed this is the main reason why a smashing blow has not been delivered to Thatcher before now. In the miners' strike this crisis focuses on the absence of a combative Labour and TUC left and that in turn rests centrally on the treachery of Stalinism, on the influence of the Communist Party in both the Labour Party and the unions. That the Tribune newspaper is now somewhat under the sway of Stalinism was shown in its front page editorial of January 4th. Under the heading "Working to win", Tribune wrote, "Ultra-leftism which is only interested in using the miners' strike to attack Neil Kinnock, must receive just as short shrift as the antics of Right-wingers who cannot wait for

Arthur Scargill to come a cropper. Calls for a General Strike, if not irresponsible, are at best a distraction from the real issues for it is not a demand that has any basis in reality. It cannot be delivered and there are those who knowing that, raise the demand only to be able to cry "betrayal" when it does not happen."

Leaving aside for the moment that those who have supported moves for a General Strike include Tony Benn, Denis Skinner and Ken Livingstone, why does Tribune devote its front page to, "at best a distraction?" It is because the editorial is arguing for the Left "to practice a self-denying ordinance" and meet Neil Kinnock half-way. Put it another way, meet him half-way in his betrayal of the miners! Tribune has taken on the role of left cover for the treacheries of Kinnock, seeking to stop any new left regroupment on the issue of leadership.

This coincides exactly with the wishes of Stalinism and its friends in the Labour Party who want Kinnock to head up a Popular Front '1980s style' with bourgeois forces from the SDP, Liberals and Heathite Tories.

Moves toward Popular Frontism are being handled carefully, since the Labour Party has a long history of forming governments alone and one of electoral independence. If events drive the miners' strike into a General Strike confrontation in which the working class either defeated Thatcher or was defeated outright by her then a massive question mark would be placed against the chances of an alliance with Owens, Steel and Heath, none of whom support a strong NUM led by Scargill.

Socialists must fight tooth and nail to defend the political independence of the Labour Party, which means Kinnock must be removed and the NUM must be defended as a national union led by Arthur Scargill.

Quickly following on any setback for the miners will be attacks on the rights of all unions and on left-wing union leaders. The Tory laws aimed at separating the unions from the Labour Party will loosen up the organic and vital link which enables the Labour Party to offer the chance of a government separate from the SDP-Liberals.

Thus the miners' strike concentrates questions way beyond its apparent concerns, questions of the independence of the Labour Party, based on strong trade unions, and of the independence of the unions themselves from the state.

The latter issue is coming to the fore. The miners' strike has seen what must be a record number of court rulings and legal orders concerning a union and a strike. Added to this is the decision by some right wing led unions to take Tory money for enforced postal strike ballots.

In large measure the working class at bedrock level is undergoing a severe shock to its traditional trade union methods and attitudes - traditional for the past forty years or so that is. The emergence of Broad Lefts in a number of unions, harking back to the 1920s and 1930s but in no way identical to the Minority Movement and left caucuses of that era, shows one way in which some of the most conscious workers have attempted to get to grips with the need for more combative leadership in the face of a sharpening industrial situation and increasing state interference.

But Broad Lefts are being sabotaged by

Stalinism at breakneck pace, before they can win control of a number of key unions and have a direct influence in the TUC. No political force on the left can now fight for effective Broad Lefts without facing squarely up to acts of betrayal by the CPGB and its acolytes. In particular, for Militant to stay silent on Stalinist sabotage, which extends to support for the NUM without exception, is only to store up further betrayals for the future.

The miners' strike, lasting nearly a year and in the face of four million on the dole and massive police victimisations, has become one of the great working class acts in this century. It has shown for all that the British worker will fight to the end given a chance. But the problem of winning the dispute has all along been that of leadership and perspective. It is not too difficult to understand and condemn the role of the betrayals by the TUC right wing. But searching answers are now needed to the question of the failure of left leaders, and these include Arthur Scargill, who have failed to open up a fullscale campaign for a General Strike and to condemn the antics of the TUC right.

BANKRUPTCY OF TUC LEFT

Without exception the TUC left is shown to be bankrupt in the face of the miners' strike. There is no immediate replacement for it since the Broad Lefts in various unions are not a mass movement of the 1920s Minority Movement type. There is not even a national Broad Left in the NUM itself. Added to this is the reluctance of Militant to open out the 'Broad Left Organising Committee', in which they are the moving force, as a genuinely broad rank and file body. These problems have helped to isolate the miners in their long and bitter fight.

The road forward lies only through the building of a revolutionary organisation, which bases itself not on secret machinations within the TUC apparatus like the ones which put Norman Willis in power, but on the needs of workers in struggle like the miners and on the methods of class struggle not those of secret talks and deals.

In allowing Thatcher to slowly grind down the miners in isolation the TUC lefts are not defending trade unions and the TUC itself. That can only be achieved through defeating the Tories by their own methods - class struggle, in a General Strike.

JOIN THE SLG

Miners and those who have fought and will fight alongside them to the end now have an urgent need to draw the political and theoretical balance sheet of the strike. Join the Socialist Labour Group and its international comrades in the struggle for a new workers' international movement able to overcome the treachery of the right and the bankruptcy of those like the TUC lefts and the Stalinists.

As our programme, the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International, says, "No matter how the methods of the social betrayers differ...they will never succeed in breaking the revolutionary will of the proletariat. As time goes on, their desperate efforts to hold back the wheel of history will demonstrate more clearly to the masses that the crisis of the proletarian leadership having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International."

George White, 15.1.85



DEFEND

Extracts of a declaration by the International Secretariat of the Fourth International (International Centre of Reconstruction).

The day after his re-election, Ronald Reagan declared: 'You ain't seen nothing yet', and said 'My first priority for this second term will be peace, disarmament and the reduction of arms in the world'. At the same time The Washington Post published a secret document prepared by the National Security Council at a meeting in the White House on October 30th, where the Reagan Administration claims to have 'stacked' the Contadora group peace treaty.

The document also exposes a plan which aimed, by means of US Embassies worldwide, to convince western trade unions, non-governmental organisations, and world opinion generally, that the elections held in Nicaragua last Sunday were a farce; this would have to take into account, initially, the position that Willy Brandt, the President of the Socialist International, would adopt (...)

Soon after the elections, US imperialism and the American bourgeoisie decided that Reagan's re-election gave him enough of a boost to allow him to talk tougher against Nicaragua, in order to prepare the ground for a direct act of aggression, including the option of a military intervention (...)

The elections offered a choice between two sides of the same imperialist coin, Mondale and Reagan (it must be remembered that it was Kennedy and Johnson, the "Democratic" presidents, who began the military intervention in Vietnam). On a turnout of 52.9% - only 0.6% higher than in 1980 - these elections were deemed to enjoy a greater democratic legitimacy than the election of Daniel Ortega, who won 66% of the vote on a turn-out of 82%, when every political grouping enjoyed the same genuine rights (...)

At the same time that Reagan, on November 5th, was declaring that a military intervention was ruled out, although he was once again asking Congress for more funds for the Somozist "contras", Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, number two in the senate committee on espionage, declared - the day after the elections - "that they had reached an agreement whereby if any MiGs reached Nicaragua the use of force could not be ruled out" (...)

Was the Sandinista government, confirmed as the legitimate representatives of its people by the Nov 6th ballot, wrong to fulfil its primary revolutionary duty in arming the people against aggression?

400 international observers, from Europe and America, as well as 600 foreign journalists, can confirm that despite the war and the hardships resulting from economic blockades, the Nicaraguan people have voted massively and freely to reaffirm the conquests of the revolution, to reaffirm and broaden the reform of agriculture, the literary campaign, the health campaigns

against contagious diseases, and above all the massive arming of the people and the formation of militias (...)

No, the Managuan government not only has the right, it also has the basic duty to equip itself with the means necessary to defend the people who on a massive scale confirmed it in its post in the Nov 6th election.

This is the basis on which d'Escoto, the Nicaraguan Minister for Foreign Affairs, told CBS, the American TV channel: "We do not think it a crime to have MiG-21s or any other type of military equipment to help us defend ourselves. After all, Nicaragua is a small country, under attack by the USA".

The whole of Nicaragua is involved in a very wide mobilisation, in preparation for an eventual military intervention; 25,000 young volunteers for the coffee harvest have been armed for the defence of Managua. To these can be added 400,000 militiamen and -women, and the 40,000 members of the Sandinista Popular Army. The vast majority of the Nicaraguan population is ready to defend their country against the imperialist military aggression.

It is this steadfastness in defence of the revolution that Reagan cannot accept. Having failed to subjugate the people of Nicaragua with blockades and embargoes, he is trying to destroy them by force, to prevent Nicaragua from continuing to provide an example for all the oppressed peoples of Latin America, and the world; so much so that in neighbouring El Salvador, President Duarte has been forced to recognise the guerrillas; so much so that the Salvadorean guerrilla leaders have declared that if the US invade Nicaragua, they will be obliged to launch a general offensive, and to co-ordinate their efforts with the Sandinista Army.

In fact, an invasion would mean the sweeping away of frontiers throughout Central America, and would represent a very important component of the crisis in the whole of Latin America, whose peoples are suffering directly the austerity measures dictated by the IMF and imperialism, and who look upon the cause of Nicaragua as their own.

At the same time, Reagan knows that the result of the US elections does not mean that the North American people, the black and hispanic minorities, the workers, would be willing to accept a military intervention which might take the form - and bring with it the consequences - of another Vietnam.

No, the problem isn't the MiG-21s or any other military hardware, as the elected President of Nicaragua Daniel Ortega has said: "The only heavy weapon that is truly worrying the US is the Nicaraguan revolution. The others are only pretexts for justifying US aggression, since their objective is to try to destroy the revolution."

Meanwhile, the Kremlin bureaucracy continues to try to "improve its relations with Washington", which means it continues

NICARAGUA

to submit to the demands of US imperialism. Just as, speaking of Afghanistan last April, the late Andropov declared: "One cannot forget that this is happening on our border, and that what happens in Afghanistan is not unimportant to us. To give an example, one could ask if the government of the day in Nicaragua would be unimportant to the USA ... ", so today, at a time when Nicaragua is most threatened, the Kremlin leadership declares: "The USSR is ready for an



open dialogue, for serious talks, and for political co-operation regarding the interests of the two parties", remembering that "our peoples have fought as allies against mortal enemies, that is the issue".

It is clear that Reagan's arrogance towards Nicaragua is linked to this sort of green light from the Kremlin as far as Central America is concerned. But the Kremlin's policy in this respect does not fail to provoke crises and confrontations within the various Communist Parties.

At the same time, the parties of the Socialist International are afraid of the consequences of Reagan's policy. But while some leaders like Willy Brandt adopt a clear position in leading demonstrations in solidarity with Nicaragua, like the march on Nov 3rd in Bonn which brought together 30,000 people, others like the Spanish and French Socialist Parties, are in the process of denying the legitimacy of the Sandinista government, and like the Spanish Socialist Party, didn't even send observers to the elections. Very important differentiations are growing as a result of this within the various Socialist parties.

The official policy of these parties clashes with the anti-imperialist will of many of their militants and leaders, who in numerous cases remain committed to the broadest acts of solidarity with Nicaragua.

All to defend Nicaragua! All to defend the right of a people to make its own decisions!

The defense of the Nicaraguan revolution, of the right to self-determination of that country, has been the constant factor in the activity of the Fourth International (International Centre of Reconstruction) and of all its sections on an international scale.

The greatest efforts have been made to seek out the broadest possible support for the Nicaraguan people and government. This is why the Fourth International has supported the holding of the Latin American conference in Colombia, as well as the European conference, held in Paris in December 1983.

At the end of November this year, there will be a meeting of Latin American trade union organisations, on the initiative of the Bolivian COB, the CUT of Brazil, the PIT of Uruguay and other organisations. The issue of Nicaragua will be taken up at this meeting; measures of mobilisation such as a 24-hour strike can and must be taken; all the peoples of Latin America are involved and are waiting for calls to united action against imperialist intervention.

To defend Nicaragua today is to defend the right of all the peoples of the world to decide their own future.

For the immediate lifting of the military and economic blockade against Nicaragua!

US troops and advisors out of Central America!

No to US intervention in Nicaragua!

CRISIS IN THE CPSA LEFT

STALINISTS PREPARE SPLIT

On November 3rd 1984 a grouping which calls itself 'Broad Left '84' was set up in opposition to CPSA's Broad Left which has existed since 1977. This split had been forecast in an article carried in 'Socialist Newsletter' number 26 published in July 1983. That article was written shortly after the 1983 National Conference of the CPSA, in it we made the following points:

"...conference saw the launch of the 'Broad Left Labour Group', fronted by the opportunist Jonathan Baume and well known stalinists like Roy Lewis. The meeting posed as an open forum for Labour Party activists. It developed into a virulent witchhunt of 'Militant'.

The 'Broad Left Labour Group' is a stalinist project which at this stage is utilising the skills and rightward shift of slick bureaucrats like Baume to attack the 'Militant'...

At the Broad Left Conference last November, a new creature appeared calling itself the 'Labour Left'. This was the tactical expression of the stalinists' strategy to win back control or at least redefine the Broad Left so as to isolate or even exclude forces they regarded as Trotskyist."

The development of the class struggle during 1984 created a highly volatile situation within the CPSA and particularly its Broad Left. The Communist Party has traditionally dominated union Broad Lefts, their activity has centred on tying these Broad Lefts to union bureaucracies and preventing them from being used by the rank and file to wrest control of unions away from right-wing full time officials.

The development of the class struggle had led to the growth of CPSA's Broad Left, to the growth of 'Militant' and to sharp attacks by the rank and file on CPSA's bureaucracy. On a broader front the development of the 'Broad Left Organising Committee' (BLOC) right across the trade union movement and under the leadership of 'Militant' posed a considerable threat to the C.P. and their ailing trade union front 'the Liaison Committee to Defend Trade Unions'.

In order to protect its position as the major component of the left within the trade union movement and to defend the bureaucracy in the labour movement against rising demands for greater democracy and against sell-outs to Thatcher, it became imperative for British stalinism to attempt to wreck BLOC and therefore one of its most important components the Broad Left in the CPSA.

The miners' strike represents a major attempt by the working class to break through the bureaucratic obstacles faced by workers trying to protect their jobs and conditions. The situation is complex because although the NUM is led by stalinists or those from stalinist backgrounds, stalinism recognises that in order to preserve the integrity of the bureaucracy in the British

trade union movement, of which they are a crucial part, they would have to frustrate all attempts by the rank and file to disrupt this bureaucracy. If the initiative of the rank and file miners was generalised across the whole or significant sections of the workers' movement the Thatcher government would be seriously imperilled and the relative political stability in Britain would be seriously disturbed which would include a fundamental shake-up of the leadership and structure of the labour movement.

The development of a pre-revolutionary situation is feared not only by the bourgeoisie but most of all by stalinism whose chief job is to preserve the political status-quo in all countries in order to defend the Kremlin's counter-revolutionary alliance with world imperialism.

The development of the political revolution in Poland is bad enough for the Kremlin bureaucracy, but when combined with the onset of the mobilisation of industrial workers in Germany, France, Belgium and an historic miners' strike in Britain, the Kremlin is faced by the movement of the European proletarian revolution which threatens its bureaucratic stranglehold of the workers' state in the USSR. For these international reasons British stalinism and the stalinists within Britain's largest civil service union had to do all in their power to break the strength of a Broad Left movement which was beginning to make significant inroads against the CPSA bureaucracy.

IMPACT OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE ON THE CPSA

Thatcher's decision to ban unions at GCHQ raised very serious problems for CPSA's leadership. In the end Alistair Graham promised the Tories a 'no-disruption deal', in other words he was eagerly prepared to sign away the right to strike. This abject failure to protect a fundamental principle of trade unionism gave rise to profound discontent amongst the ranks of the CPSA. At the union's National Conference in May 1984 hundreds of resolutions appeared condemning Graham's role. However, no one political tendency, including the 'Militant' had actually decided to fight to remove Graham from office, but several branches, not controlled by 'Militant' sent in resolutions demanding Graham's resignation. Faced by this threat Graham appeared on television before Conference declaring that if a 'no confidence' motion was passed he would resign and stand again in the election. As everybody realised Graham was challenging the Broad Left.

On the evening before the Conference began the Broad Left met to decide on its attitude to the 'no confidence' motion. It was without doubt the largest meeting of Broad Left supporters ever held. A furious row took place. The 'Militant', the SLG and two-thirds of the gathering decided to support the 'no confidence' motion. But the

Communist Party and their fellow travellers within the 'Broad Left Labour Group' hotly opposed this course of action. They argued that 'now is not the time' and 'Graham would strengthen his position by winning.' Their role as protectors of the bureaucracy and its leading figure could not have been clearer.

The fact is that in the wake of the debacle which allowed Thatcher to get away with her union ban, Graham was at his weakest and most vulnerable to removal. Tens of thousands of civil servants had lost confidence in a man who was prepared to sign away the right to strike. Ray Alderson other stalinists and fellow travellers were perfectly aware of this. But they knew that such a move would not strengthen them or their wing of the bureaucracy. It would in fact have transformed the political situation within CPSA by giving considerable momentum to those rank and file forces fighting for control of the union against all bureaucrats, left and right.

In the event, despite a 2 to 1 majority in the Broad Left in favour of ousting Graham, the C.P. and its opportunist front men broke ranks in the Conference and voted against removing the General Secretary. Over 400 delegates voted 'no confidence' in Graham. The 500 whose votes blocked the move were made up of a coalition of the right-wing, the C.P. and those elements of the left that the C.P. maintains influence over. Despite winning, the C.P. were frightened by this episode. They were part of a Broad Left which was prepared to sack the General Secretary. The Graham episode did not end there.

The May 1984 Conference voted by simple majority to remove Graham as CPSA's representative on the TUC General Council. However, the measure needed a two-thirds majority and was not therefore implemented. After the Conference the 'Militant' supporters on the now Broad Left controlled CPSA National Executive Committee moved that the NEC replace Graham as the TUC General Council delegate. Again the C.P. was opposed to this. One of the leaders of the 'Broad Left Labour Group', Jonathan Baume, argued that it was wrong to open up this type of division when unity was needed to oppose Tory attacks. He chose to close his eyes to the way in which Graham had squandered and betrayed unity during the GCHQ affair. What Baume really meant was that he was prepared to accept Graham's domination if the alternative meant opening up a war against a bureaucracy which he is now an important component of.

However, the 'Militant' supporters on the NEC reflecting the pressure of the rank and file stood their candidate Kevin Roddy against Graham. This presented Alderson and Baume with an awkward dilemma. They couldn't vote for Roddy because they feared the movement which at that moment was gathering behind the 'Militant's' leadership. But how could they vote for Graham so soon after his betrayal at GCHQ. Alderson and Baume tried to manoeuvre. They proposed to Graham that they would support him against Roddy if he accepted three 'minders' when he attended General Council meetings. Graham refused. This forced them to stand Alderson and he easily beat Graham. Today the 'Broad Left '84' grouping pretend that it was they who removed Gra-

ham from the TUC. In fact they did all they could to protect him but the pressures of the class struggle prevented them from doing so on this occasion.

The miners' strike has thrown the TUC into crisis. This crisis has fed down into many of its affiliates. Many local NUM lodges will tell of the excellent support given by CPSA branches. The more class conscious sections of the union in the Department of Health and Social Security and Department of Employment have raised tens of thousands of pounds for the miners. This support has been a constant embarrassment and irritation to Alistair Graham who has not missed a single opportunity to attack the miners for not holding a national ballot. During the March and April of 1984 constant demands were made for the CPSA NEC to make a large donation to the NUM. At one stage Kevin Roddy proposed that the NEC give £40,000, Graham proposed £4,000 and the then right-wing NEC threw out both proposals! At the May Conference the incoming left-wing NEC was instructed to make a large donation and they settled for £25,000.

The right-wing then started a campaign based on the fiction that such donations were leading to mass resignations from the CPSA. Slowly but surely the likes of Alderson and Baume began to bend before this pressure. In tandem with a great deal of left-wing demagoguery about the miners in the union's journal 'Red Tape', edited by C.P. fellow traveller Clive Bush, the individuals who now lead 'Broad Left '84' accepted right-wing pressure to hold a ballot of the membership about future donations. First they refused to support any further donations made by the NEC and then held a ballot at the height of the pre-Christmas propaganda campaign in the press for miners to return to work. They couldn't have served the enemies of the miners more subserviently. Inevitably a very low turn out rejected any further donations 3 to 1. What's more, all the classic C.P. demagoguery dissolved into nothing during the period of the consultation exercise which required a serious campaign by this left-wing NEC.

It was the dispute waged by the Newcastle DHSS shiftworkers which finally pushed Alderson, Baume, Duggan and McClelland to break up the Broad Left. The shiftworkers came out on strike in May 1984 in defence of their shift disturbance allowance and the integrity of their union branch. As the largest and strongest branch in the union the Government was keen to isolate and smash it.

After some months of strike action it was clear that the dispute needed to be escalated to other computer centres, namely Reading and Livingstone where the giro cheques for the unemployed are sent out. By August the workers at both Reading and Livingstone, who also face threats to their shift disturbance allowance, had voted to take strike action. A major confrontation between the CPSA and the Tories was in preparation at the same time as the miners' strike. This placed Alistair Graham and the left-wing controlled NEC at the head of a national struggle.

At its August session the NEC refused to back escalation despite the favourable vote at both Reading and Livingstone. Instead

they proposed a consultation exercise in both the DHSS and Department of Employment sections. In the DE section this exercise was accompanied by a scandalous campaign against the Newcastle strikers. Those responsible for this were not right wingers but members of the C.P. who control the executive committee of the DE section. The wording of the consultation was designed by C.P. members. It sought not to build support for Newcastle but to confuse the rank and file about how they should be consulted. Inevitably a low turn out produced a confused response which the NEC interpreted as a refusal to support the shiftworkers. So treacherous was the propaganda put out by the full time officer in the DE section that it was actually used in official management propaganda within the DHSS. From then on the left-wing NEC worked to force Newcastle back to work.

This betrayal was not orchestrated by Graham alone but was very much organised by a coalition of Graham and the people who now describe themselves as the "real socialist alternative", the 'Broad Left '84'. Veiled behind talk of having spent £600,000 on strike pay these left wingers sabotaged the necessary escalation which could have secured victory.

Now they have forced the shiftworkers back to work the Editor of 'Red Tape' has been given the green light to use the union journal to open an attack on those shiftworkers behind attacks on the 'Militant'. In the January(1) 1985 issue of 'Red Tape' Clive Bush writes the following:

" How tragic it is that the strikers, who were being driven, by the hectoring of a few eccentrics...should find their seven month struggle being used as weaponry in the battle which 'Militant' intends to wage against the Left-wing leadership...Sell-out? That is the language of the gutter press and will comfort only the enemies of progress."

In fact the decision not to escalate the dispute has brought great comfort to Graham and his often repeated opposition to industrial action, and the Tories.

An immediate product of this conflict between the rank and file and this "Left-wing leadership" was a large influx of Newcastle strikers into the Broad Left. This development terrified the likes of Alderson and Baume who feared that these new members of the Broad Left would hold them responsible for their actions. The 'Broad Left '84' walk-out of the November Broad Left Conference took place just before the debate on the Newcastle dispute. The shiftworkers were at the head of a fresh wave of rank and file activists fighting to make the Broad Left an instrument to use against the union's bureaucracy. The C.P. had to organise a split to protect the bureaucracy from this pressure.

At the Special Pay Conference of the CPSA held in London in December the 'Broad Left '84' circulated a leaflet entitled 'Militant Splits Broad Left'. It is interesting to note how well the authors of this leaflet have learned the methods of stalinist falsification. The title of their leaflet turns reality inside out and presents a lie as fact. This leaflet reveals the similarity in method and policy between 'Broad Left '84' and the team gathered around Kinnock in the Labour Party. They argue that:

"Broad Left '84' supporters believe...the following points are fundamental...pressure groups such as the Broad Left cannot be an alternative pole of power or authority to that of the whole membership or their elected representatives."

In other words the independent organisation of the rank and file must not be used to challenge the bureaucracy ie "elected representatives".

When those who have betrayed workers in struggle talk about defending the 'power of the whole membership' we can guarantee that they are not concerned with the membership but talk in its name in order to defend the interests of the bureaucracy against those in struggle. Kinnock talks of the rights of all individual members of the Labour Party against militant takeovers of Constituency Parties. His proposal for one-member-one-vote for MPs' reselection is advanced not to improve the democratic rights of individual party members but to frustrate inroads made against the Labour Party's bureaucracy by the collective strength of Constituency Parties. At the very moment when the CPSA Broad Left had reached the stage when it could pose a serious threat to Alistair Graham and NEC members who betrayed Newcastle, then 'Broad Left '84' suddenly discover that 'the power of the whole membership' is threatened. When the Broad Left used its influence to win the election of Alderson and Baume to the NEC then it is advantageous. But when that same Broad Left seeks to make Alderson and Baume accountable then, according to 'Broad Left '84', it becomes a threat to 'the whole membership.'

This parallel between 'Broad Left '84' and Kinnock's team is not arbitrary. The moving force behind 'Broad Left '84' is stalinism. Key members of Kinnock's research, policy making and speech writing team are also those with strong attachments to stalinism. The C.P. has argued for some months now for an anti-Thatcher alliance to include forces stretching right over to Tory figures out of favour with Thatcher. This same popular-frontist method is now being witnessed in the CPSA. 'Broad Left '84' is preparing an alliance with Alistair Graham and through him with CPSA's right-wing who will eagerly use the Tories anti-union laws against rank and file initiative. This explains why 'Broad Left '84' voices such virulent hatred of Trotskyism which is the only political force in the workers' movement which has consistently fought popular-frontism since the 1930s. They must purge and isolate all those who stand for the independence of the working class. Why else would Alan Sapper appear at the 'Broad Left '84' Conference in December to make a speech which included an attack on Trotskyists who he described as the agents of the right-wing because they, according to Sapper, stir up violence on miners' picket lines? This kind of talk is so reminiscent of the C.P.'s line in the 1930s when they described Trotskyists as Hitler's agents in order to conceal their cooperation with bourgeois parties right across Europe, which in Britain in 1945 took the form of calling for a Government of Communists, Labourites and "progressive Tories like Churchill" !

At the Broad Left Conference on November 3rd 1984 when the leaders of the split made the speeches which announced their

departure, Steve Cardownie, now Chairman of 'Broad Left '84', declared minutes before walking out of the hall, "I am not an anti-Trotskyist." There is a long and pathetic list of left-reformists who have been used by stalinism to attack the working class whilst plaintively crying that they are not anti-Trotskyists. Non-stalinists like Cardownie and Norman Jacobs are but the latest victims of the poisonous manoeuvres of stalinism. When the C.P. has no more use for them, after the split is consolidated and the deal with Graham struck, then Cardownie and Jacobs will also be dismissed as agents of the right-wing.

THE MILITANT'S RESPONSE TO THE SPLIT

The success of the stalinist's splitting activity was not inevitable. It was conditioned by the political weaknesses of the 'Militant' itself. From the moment Alderson led the walk-out of that hall in Manchester the 'Militant' have passively accepted the split as a fait accompli. They have restricted their response to denunciations of the splitters. They behave as if the reasons for the split are perfectly clear to the overwhelming majority of CPSA's membership.

They seriously underestimate the considerable influence and electoral base which 'Broad Left '84' commands. At the same time they exaggerate their own influence. They do not understand that although a majority of the original Broad Left did not split this does not automatically mean that the majority of the CPSA will draw the same conclusions, especially when the union's journal is being used as a mouth-piece for 'Broad Left '84'.

It is worth noting that although CPSA's Broad Left was probably the largest of its type in any British union, it was still less than 1,000 strong in a union of 190,000 members. The Broad Left was never a homogenised body moving in one direction, it was always divided by differences over principles. It did not command the kind of influence in the union as a whole that a politically united Broad Left could have achieved. It was always a tenuous electoral alliance between politically hostile forces. It was produced in 1977 as a result of the first big wave of attacks on the public sector and the growing influx of working class members. A split, of the type staged by the C.P., could quickly destroy it as a credible force able to challenge and defeat Losinska and the right-wing. All the more so because both the C.P. and the 'Militant' had resisted the construction of the Broad Left as a workplace based rank and file movement. The 'Militant' had used it as an electoral machine much as the C.P. had.

If in breaking away the C.P. had radically undermined its base in the union then of course it would be correct to write-off Alderson and press ahead with building the Broad Left. But it was in the knowledge that this split would in fact protect their bureaucratic interests that the C.P. split. Knowing that the 'Militant' could not in the foreseeable future defeat the right-wing alone it was necessary to launch a new unity offensive aimed at the splitters all the better to expose their drift towards an alliance with Graham. The slogan is simple—For the Left to stand united against That-



Alistair Graham

cher's friends in the CPSA. For 'Broad Left '84' to refuse such unity would in practice have demonstrated to far more members the real nature of 'Broad Left '84' than a thousand volleys of denunciation.

The C.P. assert that the 'Militant' want to dominate the Broad Left. The 'Militant' respond by putting up an electoral slate which is almost exclusively made up of 'Militant' supporters. They compound the C.P.'s split by confirming the allegation made against them. The 'Militant' is not stalinist and neither is it responsible for the split but the arguments they use to justify their pretence that the Broad Left can continue is the same old way after the split are reminiscent of the arguments used by stalinism during the period in the late 1920s early 1930s when the 'theory' of social fascism was advanced.

At the Recall Broad Left Conference in December a leader of 'Militant' described 'Broad Left '84' as "worse and more dangerous than the right-wing because they sow illusions amongst the membership." It is true that stalinist leaders prepare the victory of the enemy. But in order that the masses can learn this themselves in practice it is necessary to drive these leaders into conflict with the enemy so that workers' illusions can be stripped away in the course of their own activity. To make no attempt to force 'Broad Left '84' to stand with the left against Losinska and to passively accept that the right-wing will win does not in any way deal with illusions but in fact confirms 'Broad Left '84's view that 'Militant' are the splitters and thereby reinforces those very illusions.

Another key argument used by the 'Militant' is that a right-wing victory in the 1985 NEC elections will be a "temporary

setback" after which the 'real left' will come storming back to power. This complacent rationale completely avoids the dynamic of the situation within CPSA at the moment. The class struggle in 1984/85 centres on an intense offensive by the ruling class against the labour movement aided at each step by the obstructions and betrayals organised by the leadership of the TUC and Labour Party. The Government has long been disturbed by the growth of rank and file radicalism and the presence of left-wing organisations in the CPSA which organises tens of thousands of civil servants in Government departments. The split in the Broad Left presents them with their best opportunity yet to smash militancy amongst civil servants.

We have already witnessed the beginnings of a future alliance between Graham and the 'Broad Left '84' against the rank and file. A right wing victory in 1985 will open a period of vicious attacks on all those seeking to use the CPSA against Tory assaults. This will be no "temporary setback" but a battle waged on the terms of a right wing union bureaucracy set on smashing the left with Thatcher's blessing and practical assistance.

Contrary to what 'Militant' believe the working class is not an ever-leftward-moving mass unaffected by the twists and turns of its treacherous leaders. Consciousness and mobilisation is profoundly shaped by the policy of the leadership and the way in which marxists position themselves in relation to the traitors. When marxists are still relatively small in number and influence they are obliged to fight for united fronts with left-wing traitors to defeat the enemy and to win to revolutionary organisation and programme the majority of workers who still follow reformists and stalinists. The promise that this setback is just temporary will soon be contradicted by reality.

The same sectarian logic leads the 'Militant' to say that after the split and after the sell-out of Newcastle, we cannot possibly vote for traitors. This would be all well and good if the majority of the CPSA held the same view, but they don't. The Newcastle shiftworkers and other more class conscious elements in the union understand through experience what 'Broad Left '84' is but they are in a tiny minority. To say we should no longer vote for Alderson and as a result let in Losinska divides the more class conscious wing of the union from the majority who will still vote for those who sold out Newcastle because they see no other way to defeat the right-wing. For revolutionaries to demand that workers who still have illusions in traitors to drop those illusions simply on our say so is a policy doomed to failure. Far better to maintain our unity with the mass of the rank and file who support Alderson even if this involves voting for Alderson in order to develop our influence and help them break from their treacherous leaders in the course of their own experience.

It would appear that these simple lessons embodied in Trotsky's 'Transitional Programme' have not been learned by the 'Militant' even though they have been inside the Labour Party for over 20 years and have voted and campaigned for traitors at every General Election in those two decades.

As Lenin and Trotsky explained many years ago a united front between revolutionaries and workers with illusions in reformist cannot be imposed from below and on the full programme of marxism. A united front must include the leaders otherwise it simply does not address itself to the key problem which is treacherous leadership.

To avoid facing up to these questions the 'Militant' leadership have produced an entirely false analogy between the 'Broad Left '84' split and the SDP's break from the Labour Party. Despite some not unimportant damage inflicted on the Labour Party the SDP has not been able to break the fundamental allegiance of the working class to the Labour Party or the organic bond between the unions and the Party. This is simply not the case with 'Broad Left '84'. As the Spring elections will show the 'Broad Left '84' split, compounded by 'Militant's' ultra-left response has shattered the base of the original Broad Left. In any event a trade union Broad Left dating from 1977 is a very different type of creature to a national workers political party formed 80 years ago and shaped through the experience of the British working class as a whole, in several decades of struggle.

The 'Militant's' response to the stalinist split is superficial and deviates markedly from marxist method:

THE SWP'S ANALYSIS

After long years of abstention from CPSA's Broad Left the SWP decided mid way through 1984 to return to the Broad Left just as the split was in preparation. The December 1984 edition of 'Socialist Worker Review' offered its explanation for the C.P.'s break:

"The left officials were therefore torn in two directions. On the one hand there was the pull of the activists, who campaign for them to be elected and re-elected. On the other there was the pull of the mass of the membership who much of the time are quite conservative...It is this contradiction that led to last month's split."

This kind of analysis is typical of the SWP's explanation for the treachery of the leadership in the British labour movement. Alderson and Baume did not split in order to protect the bureaucracy, of which they are part, AGAINST the interests of the rank and file but, according to the SWP, their split was in harmony with the conservatism of the mass of the membership. This is exactly what 'Broad Left '84' say of themselves. Rather than understand the needs of stalinism to split the Broad Left, the SWP in fact blame the rank and file. This is a classic example of the old petty-bourgeois sentiment that the workers get the leaders they deserve.

After years in the wilderness during which time the SWP's considerable presence in the CPSA, through the now defunct 'Redder Tape' organisation, has been qualitatively reduced numerically and politically. They now advocate building the Broad Left as if nothing had been changed by the November split, as if the Broad Left remains what it was in 1977. Although they called for a partial slate in order to facilitate a united left against Losinska, they have accepted 'Militant's' decision to run a full slate against 'Broad Left '84' and in so doing have politically subordinated themselves to

'Militant' and their ultra-left policy on this question. To compensate for years of sectarian abstention they are now hanging onto a Broad Left which is a Broad Left no more.

The 'Militant' and the SWP can pretend that they are part of a Broad Left. But the truth is that the Broad Left of 1977 is dead and a new alliance of the left needs to be constituted to reunite those rank and file forces divided and confused by the stalinists. This new initiative will necessarily have to include leaders and forces currently within 'Broad Left '84' as well as 'Militant'.

THE SLG'S POLICY

Trotsky once pointed out that the laws of history are stronger than any bureaucracy. The C.P.'s split has certainly made life more difficult for the rank and file but their manoeuvre has not solved any of the fundamental problems which the bureaucracy faces.

In the Newcastle dispute the Government had two objectives, one was to force through changes in working conditions and pay and the second was to smash the CPSA's strongest branch. The Tories achieved victory on the first issue because the CPSA NEC offered itself as the troops to drive the shiftworkers back to work. But the Tories, despite this NEC, have totally failed to smash the union branch. In the end this is the most important question. It typifies Thatcher's problems, despite making many inroads against the working class she is failing to crush the workers' movement despite the persistent aid of the TUC and the Labour Party leadership.

Growing numbers of civil servants have been drawn into battles in defence of jobs. Still more will be drawn into struggles as Thatcher's job cuts leave no other option open. It is the certainty of this continued confrontation which lays the basis for regroupment and reorganisation of CPSA's rank and file. However, these developments require political leadership if the likes of Graham and the stalinists are not to repeatedly frustrate the aspirations of the ranks.

The SLG's policy is based on a perspective of ever more profound explosions in the world class struggle and in particular in Britain where economic decay makes turbulent class struggles absolutely inevitable.

In these circumstances the independence of the workers' movement is an essential pre-requisite. There are forces at play in the British labour movement today who are actively seeking to build a popular-front alternative to Thatcher. Kinnock is seen as a possible leader of a Government which would include representatives from all the bosses' parties. When Thatcher is defeated the ruling class will need an alternative which can obstruct the working class from taking the revolutionary road faced by the ravaging impact of an imperialist power in an advanced state of decay.

The fight against popular-frontism is not restricted to the Labour Party but involves the unions very deeply. For example, take Alistair Graham's column in the January(1) 1985 issue of 'Red Tape' where he discusses the split in the Broad Left:

"I now hope genuine debate can take place within the union between the respective

approaches of the 'Broad Left '84' and the 'Moderates' and that both groups will unofficially combine to push the Militant Tendency to the outer fringes of the union where they belong..."

He then goes on to talk about an MP who he describes as a good friend of CPSA:

"Talking of the Militant Tendency I would like to wish Frank Field every luck in his battle for re-selection as the Labour MP for Birkenhead...As a Labour Party member I despair if people like Frank Field are in danger for their future within the Labour Party. Let us hope 1985 will see people like Frank Field victorious."

Who is Frank Field? None other than the man who has relaunched 'The Rainbow League', a cross-party organisation which calls for an anti-Thatcher alliance. In two paragraphs Alistair Graham has summed up the strategy of the bourgeoisie when Thatcher falls.

1. Purge and isolate marxism which he identifies as the Militant Tendency.
2. Support those Labour politicians who seek to construct a popular front.

The job of marxists in the CPSA centres on organising the rank and file to build a national campaign in defence of jobs; demanding that all the components of the left unite to keep out the right-wing and to elect a leadership which will organise a national fightback on jobs and in defence of our trade union rights. This will entail a ferocious campaign against the influence of stalinism in the CPSA, a campaign which no doubt will include forcing them into alliances against Graham and Losinska.

In this period of explosive turns in the class struggle, savage attacks by the bourgeoisie, abject betrayals by reformist and stalinist leaders and enormous self-sacrifice by the working class, now being witnessed in the miners' strike, there are great opportunities for the sections of the Fourth International to build a genuine mass base in the unions. The SLG's policy in all unions is best summed up in a quote from Trotsky's pamphlet 'Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay':

"It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilise the masses not only against the bourgeoisie but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime. The primary slogan for this struggle is: Complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labour aristocracy. The second slogan is: Trade union democracy. This second slogan flows directly from the first and presupposes for its realisation the complete freedom of the trade unions from the imperialist or colonial state...The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

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