

# workers power 3

december  
1976  
35p

**PORTUGAL-**

**AYEAR SINCE NOV 25**

by Mike Lee

**CHINA AFTER MAO**

by Ian White

**The Labour Government  
and the Crisis**

by

**John Hunt**

**FAILURE OF A FUSION**

**THE SPLIT IN THE I-CL**

PLUS FEATURE ARTICLES ON :-

**NORTHERN IRELAND**

**SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**TRICO,**

**STANDING LEFT CANDIDATES, SCOTLAND**

# workers power

DECEMBER 1976

The bimonthly journal of the Workers Power Group

Editorial and business address  
1a Camberwell Grove,  
LONDON SE 5

PUBLISHED BY Workers Power  
Printed by RYE EXPRESS (TU)

EDITOR: DAVE HUGHES

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The publication of Workers' Power is re-continued as a direct result of the failed fusion of the I-CL. However, as we made clear in issues 1 and 2 we remain committed to joint work on a principled basis and to sharp, open political debate with other tendencies on the left. Only honest political argument can provide the basis for meaningful revolutionary re-groupment.

The magazine will focus on the key issues posed to the left by the class struggle, nationally and internationally. Arguments with other tendencies will be on the basis of their way forward for the class, their perspective for building a revolutionary leadership. We welcome debate and argument from other groupings in reply.

Because of the split in the I-CL, because of our decision to resume publishing Workers' Power, we have given a considerable portion of this issue to explaining the split—putting the record straight once and for all.

Workers' Power No. 3 includes important articles on central issues of the class struggle. We analyse the prospects and strategy of the Labour government and within that context, look at the positions adopted by the left on standing candidates in elections and the question of Scots nationalism. In this issue we draw out the lessons of the Trico dispute, in the next we will produce a statement on our perspective for the Working Women's Charter.

We see the record of the left on the question of support for the struggle in Ireland as a deplorable history of neglect and avoidance of the key issues. In this issue we print an analysis of the present state of the struggle in the North and also our criticisms of, and perspectives for, the September Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland. Such coverage will always be central to our magazine.

Our articles on China, Portugal and South Africa subject prevalent myths on the left to scrutiny. They draw out the lessons that revolutionaries must learn from these on-going struggles.

Our next issue, appearing in February, will carry an in-depth analysis of the West European Communist Parties, articles on the Spanish situation, the labour movement in Scotland and Topics of Struggle, an up-to-date commentary on national and international labour movement events.

## CONTENTS

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE CRISIS . . . . .	3
by John Hunt	
STANDING LEFT CANDIDATES . . . . .	8
TRICO A Victory To Build On . . . . .	10
by Jill Daniels	
SCOTS NATIONALISM . . . . .	12
by John Todd	
THE LABOUR MOVEMENT DELEGATION TO IRELAND by Stuart King . . . . .	14
CHINA AFTER MAO: Behind the Bureaucrats dogfight . . .	15
by Ian White	
THE PROVISIONALS AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT: The Strengths and Limits of Republicanism . . . . .	17
PORTUGAL: One year since the November 25th events . .	19
by Mike Lee	
SOUTHERN AFRICA: Imperialism in search of new friends. by Sue Thomas. . . . .	23
FAILURE OF A FUSION: The Split in the I-CL . . . . .	25
WHERE WE STAND . . . . .	37

# The Labour Government and The Crisis

Renewed tensions inside the Labour Cabinet, Healey's mid December budget, the application for a 3.9 billion dollar IMF loan all signal the failure of the economic strategy of the Labour Government.

The Labour Government looked to cuts in real wages, policed by the TUC as a 'social contract', and cutbacks on government spending on social and welfare services to make available funds for new rounds of productive investment by private manufacturing capitalism. The Labour Government hoped to restructure and revitalise productive investment at the expense of living standards. The shift in investment patterns, if achieved, was to bare fruit as the world economy picked itself out of recession. Healey looked to a decisive upturn in the world economy to pull a more productive British capitalism in its tow.

The TUC has faithfully delivered the goods. Real wages fell by at least 5% in the year of the £6 limit. If the trade union leaders have their way they will fall by a greater amount this year. Successive rounds of cuts have decimated services and working conditions in the 'public sector'. But neither the transformation of the British economy, nor a buoyant upswing in the world economy has materialised.

Despite wage and welfare cuts the Labour Government has not realised its plans for increasing and restructuring investment. In fact investment was 3% lower in the second quarter of 1976 than in the first. By increasing interest rates to record levels, the Labour Government has acknowledged the failure of its strategy for stimulating private investment.

But the problems of the Labour Government do not end there. Precisely at a time when Healey has been promising, and not doubt praying for, the start of an upturn there is no sign of significant growth in British production. Industrial production in the third quarter of 1976 was 1/2% down on the figures for the second quarter!

Neither have inflation rates kept within the limits predicted and promised to the TUC as the basis for agreement on wage control limits. The government 'price index' registered a 1.8% increase in October this year, the Treasury is now expecting an annual inflation rate of at least 14.5%. Over the last three months prices have risen at a rate of 19.7% a year! Uncertainty about inflation rates is clearly exacerbated by the position of the £ Sterling as a reserve currency. The sterling balances hang like an albatross around the neck of the British bourgeoisie.

Callaghan for one has made it public that he wants to be free of the burden of supporting Sterling as a reserve currency — as he put it on the television in October:

"I'm not sure that everybody in the treasury — or maybe the Bank [of England] — would agree with me, but from Britain's point of view I see no particular advantage of being a reserve currency at all."

The scale of international holdings in Sterling can only accentuate the vulnerability and volatility of the currency. Dramatic drops in confidence in, and the value of, Sterling (as took place in September) can only further push up inflation rates, increase the balance of payments difficulties of British capitalism and undermine further the prospect of securing deposit and investment funds.

The predicted and longed for world upturn has been faltering, uneven and hesitant. It has not been significant nor dynamic enough to dispel the stagnation and gloom of British capitalism. The OECD's 24 member countries are now expected to increase their Gross Domestic Product by 3.5% in the second half of this year. Earlier this year the OECD was confidently predicting a 5% increase.

With inflation running at an average of 8% annually within the world economy the stronger capitalisms are particularly afraid of reflationary, high credit policies unleashing even higher and more disruptive rates of inflation. This explains the caution of bourgeois in the United States and Germany..... It explains the plight of the weaker capitalisms such as Britain, Italy and Portugal. In the first nine months of this year Italy experienced a 10% rate of growth, this was mainly accounted for by taking up the slack in productive capacity that had been occasioned by the world recession (industrial production in 1975 declined by 9.8% in Italy). Such a growth rate however has given birth to an inflation rate running close to 20% per year. In this situation the Italian bourgeoisie has been forced to slap on credit restrictions, to hike up interest rates and brace itself for a standstill in economic growth as its alternative to rampant inflation.

Everywhere including the stronger capitalisms, growth rates are small. After the productive slack was taken up early in 1976 leading to seemingly high growth rates, growth has been extremely moderate and short of predictions advanced earlier in the year. Britain is now hoping for a 0.5% growth in GNP this year. In January 1976 the Labour Government projected its strategy on a 4.5% growth in the GNP. Italian predictions have been scaled down from a 4.3% growth to a 3.5% drop in GNP. 'Strong' West Germany has scaled down its estimates from 8% to 4.5%.

The picture is not one of world upturn coming later than expected. In fact the prospect for world capitalism remains sombre and uncertain. The OECD is predicting a world recession in the second half of next year. The American Treasury disputes this putting forward instead its own predicted recession date for 1978/79. World capitalism is experiencing only a temporary and partial upturn within a perspective of long term stagnation. Far from a world upturn whisking British capitalism out of its doldrums capitalism, on a world scale, is facing an increasingly sharp cycle of recession and uneven, timid boom.

## new solutions

In this situation the employers and the Labour Government have to look for new solutions. Some, for example, Ronald Mc Intosh, 'impartial' head of the National Development Office, have called for further massive rounds of cutbacks. McIntosh is calling for an extra £300 million as incentive for investment. The Labour Government knows that its options are narrow. Callaghan expects unemployment figures to continue to increase into next year. High levels of permanent unemployment are a feature of all the sectors of present day capitalism. In West Ger-

many unemployment figures topped the 1million mark in November — an increase from 899 000 in October 1976. Callaghan and Healey are already preparing themselves for a third round of wage restraint next summer when the present limit runs out.

Two major problems face the Labour Government in adopting new economic measures within a perspective of world stagnation, inflation and expected downturn. Firstly too stiff a dosage of cuts, of credit restrictions threatens to deflate the British economy into a nosedive. The CBI, the Labour Cabinet 'doves' are perfectly aware of this danger. Secondly there is a limit; however willing servants they may wish to be, to the ability of the trade union leaders to sell their members living conditions and working conditions year after year. Len Murray may have already declared his support for a third year of statutory wage control commencing next July. This is not surprising. He is opposed to "declining into disorder", as this man calls free collective bargaining. But Murray, Jones and Scanlon know they cannot guarantee to hold their membership indefinitely.

## Germany or America ?

The Cabinet debates over the IMF terms have to be seen in this context. Capitalism is such an integrated world system that no stronger capitalism can afford to see British capitalism completely degenerate and stagnate at present. There exists a safety net, but not an inexhaustible one. Both US and West German capitalism have shown themselves prepared to aid British capitalism at a price! Both have different attitudes to British capitalism and its sterling balances. The 'European' project of German capitalism, the sharpening of competition for markets and outlets between the European capitalisms and America make Germany more favourable to maintaining the value of the £ Sterling, more politically sympathetic than are important sections of US imperialism. Schmidt is prepared to accept softer terms for the IMF loan than the US Treasury.

But whoever the paymaster be in Europe or America, they will demand their price. They will demand their price in guaranteed wage restraint. That's why Len Murray was speaking for the employers to the IMF when he promised wage restraint agreement between the TUC and the government next year. They will demand further cuts and mounting unemployment figures. And they do this knowing that there are no magic cures for a deeply sick British capitalism in a world economy moving from its feeble uneven 'boom' into recession.

The economic crisis immediately poses the problem of political rule for the employers, nationally and internationally. There is a consensus: that recognises it as preferable to cut living standards through the Labour Government, to rely on the trade union leaders to sell measures the Tories never could. But that policy, that option, breaks down immediately the Labour Government cannot do its job. If the Labour Government and the TUC cannot hold back rank and file trade unionists and cannot prevent them from defending jobs, conditions and wages then new policies (governmental) will have to be embraced by the ruling class. When the IMF, for example, say jobs and wages can be defended and a Labour Government kept in power they forget that precisely at that moment workers defend their wages and living standards against the Labour Government, the bourgeoisie will look to other methods to maintain their rule. They will boot out the Labour Government.

The mechanics of this are not difficult, and it is no closed secret that the ruling class is chewing over its options with a national or coalition government. We do not have to believe, with Gerry Healey, in the impending restoration of an absolute monarchy to recognise that the brazen collaborationism of the Labour rightists, the spinelessness of the Labour Left, the slender majority of the Callaghan government and speculative power

over 'runs on the pound' and the IMF terms render it fairly simple for the British bourgeoisie to force a crisis on the Labour Government, to force a more favourable governmental solution, should they need it.

The Labour Government is desperate to solve capitalism's crisis. It is prepared to drop all legislative proposals unpopular to the employing class. The nationalist hold in Scotland, and less so in Wales, threaten not only to wipe out significant portions of the Labour Party's historic base — it provides the context for the elaborate charade and smokescreen of 'devolution debate' behind which the Labour Government will continue its attacks.

Callaghan's Queens speech expressed fully the paralysis of the Labour Government. It intends no legislative changes that would upset the Tories or the IMF. Callaghan announced the Labour Government's intention of staggering on attempting to treat the diseases of British capitalism.

But how long can the Labour Government hold the line? The massive turn out on the November 17th demonstration against the cuts, strikes against cuts in the West Midlands and Scotland, are all significant pointers to the mood of anger mounting in the working class. The magnificent militancy of the Trico women, the Seaman's vote to break with wage restraint, the mood at the pithead, all stand as a stark reminder to the Labour Government that they have not broken decisively the fighting spirit and organisation of the working class. It faces major battles with the working class in the year ahead.

In a contradictory way the by election defeats of staggering proportions point to a tide of working class disillusionment with the Labour Government. But, as Walsall demonstrated it is the racists, the National Front and National Party who are making the most immediate gains from the demoralisation and frustration felt by whole layers of workers. The swing from Labour, the revulsion felt by so many workers at the policies and attacks of the Labour Government will not automatically register itself in gravitation to the revolutionary left.

## Options

The ruling class is not openly supporting the fascists and racists of the NP and NF. It does not need to yet. Such papers as the 'Financial Times', 'The Economist' still see Callaghan as their best prospect at present. They are deeply suspicious of attempting to rule through a Thatcherite Tory Cabinet. The present right wing Tory shadow cabinet would, if in power, commit the ruling class to policies of direct conflict with the Trade Union leaders which important sections of the employing class want to avoid at present. The divisions within the Tory Party between the Heath and Thatcher lines - divisions that embrace wage restraint, social service cuts and devolution denote a serious crisis of strategy in the direct party of big business.

In keeping its options open the ruling class is clearly attracted to the idea of coalition. ... a call for unity excluding the Tory 'right' and Labour 'left'. Heath is clearly judged a potential candidate for such a move. Callaghan has the credentials too. The actions of Walden and McIntosh show that there is no shortage of candidates within the Parliamentary Labour Party. The option of 'national' government will be kept open. The ideological pump has been well primed in the 'popular' press for such a move should it be deemed necessary.

When, and if, the ruling class makes the move to strengthen its hold directly via coalition or the Tory party depends on the strength of working class resistance, depends on the lead-

ership of working class struggles in the period ahead.

A decisive lead, clearly and vigorously argued by the revolutionary left is the only alternative to the spread of disillusionment, demoralisation and racist poison. Such a lead does not depend simply on calls to action and militancy. The crisis of British capitalism, the role of the Labour government pose to the militants in workplaces, unions and the Labour Party the question, 'What is your answer?' 'What is your alternative?' These questions have to be answered by the Left if it is to gain a hearing in the Labour movement, if it is to vie with the bankrupt collaborationist policies of the Trade Union leaders.

## The Left Bloc

The traditional 'lefts' in the Labour Party and T.U. leadership have been prepared neither to lead, to fight or to argue a consistent workers' answer to the attacks. The Labour 'lefts' hold on the NEC was a result of their alliance with the Trade Union bureaucracy in the early 1970's. Without the support of the Trade Union bureaucracy these lefts are particularly powerless to mobilise a fight even around their own limited and bankrupt programme. The bloc between the Labour 'lefts' and the TUC - a characteristic of the early '70's anti-Tory struggles - has been severed by the Trade Union bureaucracy. The Social Contract deal, left the Labour left in decisive positions of authority within the party but without the T.U. base that pushed them into leading positions. The massive turn-out on the November 17th demonstration - called as a protest by the public sector T.U. leaders, mobilised by thousands of rank-and-file Trade Unionists - underlined the weakness of the Labour 'lefts'

The platform at the Central Hall, Westminster, on the November 17th demonstration brought together again sections of the Tribunitite and Bennite 'lefts' with the Public Sector Trade Union leaders. The unity of the Trade Union bureaucracy has faced its sharpest test on the question of public sector cuts. The Healey-Callaghan drive for export leading manufacturing industry, the material and ideological campaign to cut back on 'unproductive' expenditure can open a wedge in the Labour Movement. The ruling class and the Labour Government clearly see it to their own advantage to open up such a division within the Trade Union bureaucracy. Hugh Scanlon, for one, lines up with this drive for manufacturing industry, for cutting welfare and social spending. He has graced the Labour Government's plans with after dinner speeches to Engineering employers on the need to divert funds and investment from services into manufacturing.

The Public Sector Trade Union leaders are weak and spineless in their arguments against Public Sector cutbacks. After November 17th they have concentrated their fire on persuading the Labour Government not to introduce more cuts as a result of the IMF loan. Alan Fisher made it plain during the one-day West Midlands NUPE-led strikes on December 1st that he saw such action as a warning to the Labour Government not to make further cuts. The bureaucrats invariably argue only their own sectional 'special case', their indispensability of their own issues... logically an argument for chopping somebody else. Such arguments are occasionally put over, for example, by Alan Fisher, within the context of the reflation and import controls package of the Labour lefts - but they will not lead beyond token protests.

The NUT have already suspended for life members at the Little Ilford School for taking action to defend conditions.

The CPSA leadership is attempting to climb down on its campaign of non-cooperation with statistics. The Labour NEC supported the November 17th demo, but they have not called on Labour Councils to refuse to implement the cuts as the Clay Cross Councillors did - they have not, therefore, even called for the implementation of Labour Party policy decided on at the Blackpool Conference.

The economic alternative of the Labour left is reactionary in part; utopian in others. The call for import controls is plainly reactionary, a purely nationalist response to a world recession, to a capitalist crisis. The demand for deflation, for lifting credit restrictions on British industry (a demand echoed by the Morning Star) does not challenge the dynamics of capitalism's crisis. The caution and stagnation in British capitalism, the deep fear of inflation must, logically, be attributed, by the Labour Left and the CP, to the lack of patriotism of the employers!!

Such ideas were the predominant ideas, presented from the platform on the November 17th demonstration. Their currency in the class depends not simply on publicity, and certainly not on the mobilising power of the NEC 'lefts'. The Communist Party plays a crucial role in maintaining the credibility of the Labour 'lefts' and their political programmes.

## National Reformism

The Communist Party's economic programme is essentially indistinguishable from that of the Labour 'left'. Their November 17th 'stamp out the Cuts' programme was a hotpotch of nationalist reformist schemes to prop up British capitalism while starting 'the process of shifting the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people promised in Labour's manifesto'. The platform which would 'open the way to a Socialist Britain' included:

'As an immediate temporary measure, introduce a two-tier interest rate system to keep rates inside Britain low, but rates paid to foreign holders of sterling high enough to discourage them from taking their money elsewhere'

it includes:

'Take over the foreign shareholdings of British firms, estimated at over £6,000m, and sell them to raise' foreign currency needed to clear the more volatile debts, like the sterling balances held by the oil-exporting countries, and so help stabilise the pound.

This could be done in a relatively short space of time. Compensation could be via low-interest government bonds in sterling'

and:

'Direct the funds lying idle in the banks and insurance companies into productive investment.'

Against the attacks on the working class, the Communist Party alternative is the old recipe of nationalism, of productive 'British' investment funded by selling of 'foreign' holdings with low interest compensation!

The CP have played a vital role in pressing for the token protest actions being called for by the public T.U. leaders. Their political strategy, however, has been facing increasing difficulties. The 'lefts' and 'progressives' of yesteryear, the TU leaders wooed by the CP (including Scanlon and Jones) have shown their true colours in the period of recession and social contract. But the CP is not capable of organising independently of them. Its industrial base enables it to initiate the Labour Assembly of last March, even to propose a call to action in the heat of the day. But it cannot carry such initiatives through. The Labour Assembly was put on ice by the CP in favour of renewed pressure on

the Public Sector TU leaders and the Labour lefts. Quietly, virtually unannounced, the Liaison Committee for the Defense of Trade Unions has been revived this autumn. But it has not issued any calls for action or given any indication that it will organise active resistance independent of the Trade Union leaders. The political line of the CP, its strategy for a 'British Road to Socialism' prevents the CP from mobilising their industrial base as a force that can give a fighting lead against the Labour and Trade Union collaborators.

## The Revolutionary Left

But, if the reformist left is bankrupt in programme and powerless to develop a real fight, the 'revolutionary' left has itself fragmented in the face of the employers' crisis. The largest formation, calling itself the International Socialists, have shown that they can stand as a pole of attraction to a small but vitally important section of workers. The Right to Work marches, the representation at the Manchester Right to Work Conference, even Jimmy McCallum's poll in Walsall, all testify to that. But the simple IS platform of more militancy, serves to positively disarm the workers drawn under its banner. The simple hash of militant demands raised by the IS remain a list of reforms to be fought for hard. The propaganda of Socialist Worker is a con. The 'Socialist Answer' (SW 16th October) is simple. Low wages are the cause of unemployment:

'shoe workers are sacked because unemployed textile workers cannot afford shoes, and textile workers are sacked because unemployed shoe workers cannot afford to buy clothes.'

The 'overseas debt' of British capitalism is less than 'our upper classes own abroad' ... 'if they were serious about getting out of debt, they would sell these possessions. But they are not.' In fact, as Socialist Worker would have it, arms cuts and a soak the rich budget would have us all in clover:

'... But if arms spending was slashed and the rich parasites forced to go without their unearned millions, there would be a huge surplus...'

Such is the 'Socialist alternative' offered by the IS. It is an alternative that fails to understand even the reality of capitalism's crisis, let alone offer a revolutionary workers' answer.

If the militancy of the IS and its verbiage can attract groups of workers, it cannot transform those workers into the solid political base of a revolutionary workers' party. This was absolutely clear at the November 6th Right to Work Conference in Manchester. Longstanding IS worker members could only argue against the proposals for 'a sliding scale of wages'; for a campaign to 'open the books' - at the level of 'I've never understood the sliding scale of wages' (the stunning argument produced by Willie Lee against Alan Thornett); and Gerry Jones' argument that if the Chrysler workers had opened the books it wouldn't have done them any good!!

The other side of the reformist politics of the IS is their increased breast beating and sectarianism fortified and maintained by a succession of stunts and sideshows. A sectarianism that is manifest in their ludicrous pretensions as the 'only' organisation fighting the attacks on the working class, their new self-designation as 'the' Socialist Workers' Party, and their sectarian election campaign.

The ideological and organisational fragmentation of the revolutionary left occurs at a time of vital importance to the class struggle. This in itself is not surprising, is no accident or coincidence. The capitalist recession and the working class response sharply reveal the inadequacies of the major tendencies on the left.

Now it is not the case that without revolutionary leadership there will be no fight against the attacks of the Labour Government. The wage and differential battles in the care industry, the public sector strikes in Glasgow and the West Midlands, the mood for action in the mines all prove this to be the case. We can say, however, that without the direct intervention of revolutionaries, these struggles will remain under the leadership of either sectional trade union ideas, or the false programmes of the Trade Union bureaucrats and Labour lefts.

What are the tasks of revolutionaries in this situation? Our first task is to fight for a united working class response to the attacks on conditions and living standards of the Labour Government. Such a response must necessarily be prepared to organise independently of the Trade Union and 'left' leaders; placing demands on them but prepared to build independently to fight for those demands. Cuts Committees based on Trade Unions and the Labour Party in many areas show that such a response can be built. The moves in the NUT to build a new Socialist Teachers Alliance as an alternative to the sectarian IS dominated, rank and file, the Birmingham based drive for a new 'Engineering Voice' paper show that significant groups of militants, close to the revolutionary groups, see the need to organise at rank and file level to fight back the cuts.

But we cannot build a united rank and file response on the basis of organisation, of linking up rank and file trade unionists in cuts committees, in alliances and around newspapers. Rank and file groupings have three vital tasks:

Firstly, to argue for direct action to defend living standards, working conditions and working class organisation; secondly, to fight uncompromisingly for workers' democracy in the Labour Movement - to fight the bureaucracy to transform the Trade Unions in particular into fighting organisations of class struggle; thirdly, to hammer out a programme of action specific to the industry and struggle specific to the period of recession and stagnation in world capitalism and to a working class answer to the attacks.

None of these tasks is, in fact, separable. We have no interest in debating programmes in a forum situation of inactive unity. While rank and file groupings must tolerate the maximum degree of freedom for arguing out alternative political strategies, they do so within the strict terms of a clear commitment to actively support all struggles against the government, to campaign to organise independent of the Trade Union leaders for direct action and Labour Movement democracy.

## spurious unity

We do not, therefore, support the IMG's forum notion of unity portrayed vividly at the first conference of the Socialist Teachers' alliance. The IMG were prepared to hold back on their own programme (in itself inadequate) to maintain the unity of a conference that did not even seriously discuss the attack of the NUT bureaucracy on the Little Ilford Teachers. Revolutionaries have no interest in subordinating their programme to preserve spurious and flabby unity.

We do not, however, seek to deliver our programme as an ultimatum to militants. We do not demand full support for our programme in exchange for joint action and struggle. But we will openly argue for our position within those rank and file bodies committed to an active fight against the Labour Government.

There are those who seek to dissolve the rank and file movement into a militant fighting organisation, maintained by organised links between militants, with a programme

of militant demands. Clearly, the IS stand by this position, most recently revealed at the Manchester Right to Work Conference. Their offshoot, the Workers' League, have not broken with that position. At the Socialist Teachers' Alliance, they opposed all mention of 'socialism' in the declaration of the meeting in that it might put off imagined fighting militants who could be won to a rank and file movement but not to socialist politics. We reject this tradition too. Those who seek to limit the cuts committees, the rank and file groupings and newspapers either to information swapping grapevines, or to discussion groups without a clear and adequate programme are incapable of taking the working class movement forward.

## OUR PLATFORM

What then are the principle planks of our answer, our way forward?

The central problem lies in stopping the implementation of the cuts, of breaking through wage restraint limits. We must support sectional direct action and build a united movement that can force the Labour Government to drop its plans.

To those who argue that the Labour Government will be brought down by such action we have a simple answer. Labour is tolerated in power by the bosses for just as long as it carries out anti-working class policies, backed up by the Trade Union leaders. If the Tories bring down a Labour Government because we defend ourselves the responsibility lies with Callaghan, Healey Foot and Co. To do nothing while the cuts divide and demoralise the working class is to scatter the real forces who can defeat any future Tory Government, as the Miners did in '72 and '74. We are not trying to persuade the Labour movement of alternative 'plans' to cuts in the form of resolutions to be passed at local and national conferences and then forgotten. We need an alternative that can be the basis for action, and action now. ASTMS conference, for example, adopted many of the positions argued by Red Weekly, for a cash injection into the social services, and for the annulment of the cuts, but they have led no fight in the branches and workplaces to decisively implement these policies.

Such an alternative was spelt out by the Workers' Power group in a leaflet produced for the November 17th demonstration; we reproduce the key extracts from that leaflet:-

The cuts mean speed up and unemployment for public sector workers. We must commit the unions and workplace organisations to a campaign to **CUT THE HOURS - NOT THE JOBS**. The teachers' 'No Cover' campaign must have our full support. We need a real fight for **35 HOUR WEEK NOW WITH NO LOSS OF PAY**. Workplace committees must be formed to enforce **NO REDUNDANCIES - WORK SHARING WITH NO LOSS OF PAY UNDER TRADE UNION CONTROL**. Such committees must oppose all attempts at speed up, the leaving of vacancies unfilled. **NO COVER FOR UNFILLED VACANCIES**. In this way the employed can strike a blow for those already on the dole, and guarantee jobs and services.

We must fight, locally and nationally, for public sector unity **FOR A PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE** to fight all cuts. Local Trade Union-based cuts committees drawing in Labour Parties, Women's Organisations and Student Unions, must be formed. They must organise joint action and full support for all workers in struggle.

But such a campaign must have an answer to wage cuts, dole queues and cuts in the public sector. We need not only fighting spirit, but awareness of the seriousness of the issues at stake. Cuts are central to the strategy of Britain's Bosses to solve their crisis at our expense. They cannot afford decent housing, education and hospitals for us. For them it is a question of the profits that fuel their system, for us it is a question of our most basic needs. The fight over the cuts is a fight to solve the crisis at either their expense or ours. A working class solution means planned production for need, not profit, and, therefore, the destruction of the political and economic power of the bosses. We need to convince our fellow workers, step by step, in struggle, that an effective defence of their most basic needs leads inevitably to the fight for Socialism.

We must fight for:-

1. No wage control, no incomes policy.  
For the automatic protection of wages against inflation on the basis of a working class cost of living index, not the phoney State index.
2. Direct action to cut the hours, control the rate of work, fill vacancies.
3. Direct action to open the books of the employers, the corporations and the banks.
4. Cancel the crippling debts of the local authorities to the banks and finance houses without compensation. Nationalise the banks and finance houses without compensation.
5. Restore all cuts in social expenditure.  
Protect it against inflation by sliding scale of social expenditure.
6. For a campaign of socially useful works under Trade Union control to extend and develop the hopelessly inadequate social and welfare services. Hospitals, Nurseries, schools, housing, transport are all areas of immediate need. We demand the nationalisation without compensation of all industries necessary to carry this out, e.g. building industry, drugs industry.
7. Local, Trade Union-based anti-cuts committees should fight to force Labour councils to refuse to implement the cuts, to deliberately overspend to maintain services. Force local Labour MP's to vote against proposed cuts.

## Threats to Unity

The employers will use the cuts to divide and weaken the working class. Women are particularly hard hit by the cuts. Their's are often the first jobs to go, they are hardest hit by the loss of nursery places.

**FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO WORK.**

The Labour Government, supported by the 'Left Winger' Scanlon, argues that the cuts favour workers in the manufacturing industries. This is not true. All workers rely on the services provided by the workers of the public sector. A cut in Social expenditure is a direct attack on the living standards of all workers. The Healeys and Scanlons are trying to drive a wedge between the unions in the public sector and those in manufacturing industry.

From the Fascists of the National Front to the 'respectable racism' of the Tory and Labour Parties' anti-immigration policies, comes the threat to turn white workers against black, blaming the latter for unemployment, shortage of housing and all the other symptoms of capitalism in crisis.

**NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS, RACISTS OUT OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT, TRADE UNION SUPPORT FOR BLACK SELF DEFENCE AGAINST POLICE AND RACIST THUGGERY.**

The fight against the cuts must ensure that the employers and government cannot open up such disunity in our ranks.

Local anti-cuts committees must draw in the support of Working Women's Charter groups, anti-Fascist committees, immigrant organisations and the unions in the manufacturing industries.

To do this, however, they must demonstrate that they are leading a militant united fight from the outset.

The Labour government is compelled into further rounds of confrontation with the working class movement. Compelled as a capitalist government to further cut-backs on welfare spending, to compulsory wage restraint. In the battles ahead the

future of the Labour government depends on its success in implementing the policies of the employers and bankers.

In the class struggles of the coming months the openings exist for revolutionaries to relate to important sections of workers in struggle against the effects of the cuts and wage control. It is in the fight for revolutionary politics, for the method of the Transitional Programme linking these battles of today with the struggle for working class power, that a revolutionary leadership can be built. A leadership that can mobilise workers behind a revolutionary alternative to reformism and overcome the fragmentation and isolation of the revolutionary left.

## Standing Left Candidates

The question of standing Parliamentary candidates has posed itself to the revolutionary Left in Britain in the last 6 months. The sectarian drive of the International Socialists and the confused support for 'class struggle' candidates by the IMG makes it vital that revolutionaries are clear on the question.

The IS see the standing of Socialist Worker candidates in the by-elections and the General Election as central to their perspective of building the Socialist Worker Party. Jimmy McCallum, their Walsall candidate, made it quite plain that they see standing candidates as a method of building their own organisation. As a result the IS have a deplorable record of sectarianism towards the rest of the left. On a minimal militant platform they have refused to even discuss joint candidates with those on the left, such as the IMG, who would be prepared to campaign for minimal militant candidates. With no consideration as to their actual base in the class they refused pig-headedly to drop their claims to be the only alternative. With a minimum programme they pose as the nucleus of the revolutionary party.

The IMG has given uncritical support to the IS candidates. In Walsall they produced a leaflet supporting McCallum in the name of real socialist policies. The required policies they outlined (which did not include Labour Movement support for black self-defense, or Troops out of Ireland and Now) were not the policies of McCallum, but the IMG did not even point this out. Such support, and the attempt to stand a united candidate in the Stechford by-election, is given in the guise of supporting 'class struggle' candidates. The IMG will give their support to 'class struggle candidates' where they stand in opposition to the policies of the Labour Government.

The problem is not simply a British one, nor is it purely a problem of election tactics. In Italy, revolutionaries have participated in the Democrazia Proletaria election campaign with a united but centrist programme. In Portugal the left attempted such a unity within the F.U.R.. The question of standing candidates poses also then the question of the political basis for unity and cooperation on the left.

Parliamentary elections are an important forum for

revolutionaries to make propaganda. Obviously the most direct, clear way to do so is via a revolutionary candidate standing on a manifesto directly reflecting the programme of the party as applied to a particular time and situation. The question of 'doing well' or getting a 'respectable' vote is not the decisive factor in determining whether a group stands a candidate or not, but whether a parliamentary candidacy is the best means of putting over revolutionary politics. Those who think that a tactic of critical support for the mass reformist party rules this out until a revolutionary party exists on a mass scale, are wretched opportunists.

However, communists always argue their full programme i.e. point out through the actual immediate and partial needs and struggles the road to working class political power. Obviously, this necessitates focussing on the key problems facing the class, but it does not mean diluting the programme to what workers will accept at any given moment.

As long as revolutionary communists remain a tiny minority compared to the mass reformist parties, they are obliged to use a tactic which is a variant of the united front. Though the social democratic and stalinist parties are in essence bourgeois in programme and policy, their mass working class base and their 'socialist' political disguise make it possible and necessary, generally speaking, for revolutionaries to give them critical support during elections against the open bourgeois parties. The criticism of the reformists is not simply an 'exposure' of their crimes and betrayals, but contains the programme of immediate and transitional demands communists argue are objectively necessary to meet the needs of the class. These are focussed as demands on the reformist party, not passively, but as the simultaneous objects of mass, direct action, struggles.

Thus, such a programme is not disguised as a 'reasonable' series of measures to be carried through by normal parliamentary means - so-called 'socialist policies' - in the belief that when this strategy fails, the reformists and the nature of the capitalist state will be exposed. That then the disabused and indignant masses will turn sharp left onto the road of revolution, picking



up the waiting revolutionary leadership en route.

The positions of the 'Anti-Pabloite' groups, the WRP and the WSL fall into this error. 'Labour to Power on a Socialist Programme' sows more illusions that it exposes. It strengthens parliamentary illusions by disguising the revolutionary programme as a series of normal governmental measures, as an alternative set of policies which a Labour Government might carry out. The question of direct mass struggle for these goals is obscured or postponed until after the Labour Government refuses to adopt or fails to carry out these measures. The term 'socialist policies' also opportunistically blurs revolutionary measures and reformist ones being inevitably 'understood' in a reformist sense by workers under reformist leadership.

Critical support means making absolutely clear the communist appraisal of the treacherous role of not only the right, but even more importantly, the left reformists, challenging them to make good their rhetorical promises certainly, but not painting them in socialist colours to encourage them to go a little further. In their different ways, the policies of both the WSL, ('Force Healey/Callaghan to resign) and the IMG (class-struggle Labour candidates) fall into precisely this trap.

Critical support is a tactic for fighting not accommodating to reformism. It remains in Lenin's dramatic phrase: 'a rope for hanging'.

However, revolutionary communists cannot tie themselves passively to the tail of the mass reformist parties until the day the 'great exposure' dawns. They must intervene to actively

They must actively intervene in the process. When sections of workers break with the major reformist party it is not our task, as the Militant Tendency, the Chartists and, increasingly, the I-CL, see it, to plead with these workers to return to the fold to 'fight the right wing' or 'fight reformism'.

In certain circumstances revolutionaries ought to critically support non-revolutionary candidates (left centrist, left reformist organisations or non-party militants from particular struggles, e.g. black self-defence) against the candidates of the mass reformist parties.

In none of these cases do we support the programme put forward. We criticise its every inadequacy, whether of inclusion or exclusion. What determines our support is not rightness of the programme, but the opposition to the pro-bourgeois policies of the Social Democrats and the support that this will attract from workers breaking away from allegiance to the reformist party. Our criticism is, as before, an exposition of our programme and a criticism of their's. The tactic of critical support is, therefore, a method of fighting left-centrism and left-reformism. It is applicable only when such candidates are at least potentially related to important sections of workers and other strata and is a matter of concrete assessment.

## A TRIAL OF LABOUR

As a result of such a concrete assessment, Workers' Power took the position that it was correct to support the Socialist Worker candidates in Walsall and Newcastle. Why was this.

The bye-elections were a national focus and trial of the Labour Government anti-working class policies at a particularly sharp period of economic/political crisis, and coming at the end of a summer of mounting racist hysteria.

The militant TU/militant, anti-racist elements of the IS programme was likely to draw the support, both as active campaigners, election audiences and voters, of black workers and rank and file militants disillusioned with Labour's racist and anti-working class policies.

Within this milieu it was vital to fight the centrist rubbish of IS' policies and programme, which are reformist in essence and no operative alternative to the LP. This supporting the SW candidates militancy and anti-racism and mercilessly criticising inadequacies both on these issues and on their lack of a real strategy capable of challenging reformism.

## THE LEFTS ATTITUDE TO CANDIDATES

Our position was in sharp contrast to that of the IMG who dubbed McCallum the Socialist Worker candidate a 'class struggle candidate' and made no criticism of him. It was also different from that of the I-CL who remained oblivious to the possibility of sections of militants looking towards candidates like McCallum. We oppose the IMG's "projection" of 'class struggle tendencies', particularly confusing left reformist politicians and trade union bureaucrats with workers in struggle and attempting to stitch together left reformist or centrist programmes for them. Equally we oppose the total fixation of the I-CL with the tactic of critical support for the Labour Party.

A separate question is that of joint candidates from revolutionary groups. In our view such candidacies are possible and desirable only as part of the process of regroupment around programmatic agreement. However, agreement to stand candidates on the basis of solely immediate or minimal demands obscures the main aim of communists at all times. We reject the notion of revolutionaries standing as 'class struggle candidates' i.e. revolutionaries constructing a programme that supposedly expresses the immediate needs of the class struggle as distinct from the plans and programmes of the reformists and collaborators. In practice this means revolutionaries posing as centrists. The IMG have made it clear that they have no preconception of a programme for a joint candidate in Stechford, they certainly will not insist on the candidate standing on their programme. The 'Revolutionaries' of the IMG see their aim as being to help articulate centrist currents being expressed in the working class movement in response to the capitalist crisis and the Labour Government's attacks.

Workers' Power's position may be summed up as follows. We give critical support to Labour, putting demands on it in normal circumstances i.e. when the Labour Party is ruling for the bourgeoisie by persuading the workers it is ruling in their interests. Revolutionaries cannot support Labour 'in all circumstances', however electoral opposition to them would be necessary where a Labour Government called an election to carry on anti-working class measure against mass action by organised workers. Support for a centrist or left reformist candidate against Labour is also possible at certain critical conjunctures. This is necessary where such a candidacy acts as a rallying point for opposing anti-working class Labour Government policies. But it is principled only on the condition of the sharpest and most honest criticism of the candidate's inadequacies.

Workers' Power is prepared to discuss the question of joint revolutionary candidates within the context of the programmatic agreement - i.e. within the context of the unification of revolutionary forces around programmatic agreement.

'Our equal pay strike is over. We went back to work on Monday having won a complete victory.' : Monica Harvey, on strike for equal pay at Trico-Folberth car components factory for 21 weeks.

After 21 weeks on strike the 400 women workers at the factory won a significant victory for themselves, for all women fighting for equal rights and for the working class.

The women proved that the legislation introduced by the Government is not only inadequate, in the number of loopholes it offers employers in terms of re-grading structures and job evaluation schemes, but a complete mockery, in that an Industrial Tribunal set up to implement the legislation could find that Trico women doing exactly the same job as 12 men were not entitled to equal pay. By boycotting the tribunal Trico women set an important precedent in proving that reformist legislation alone cannot bring real equal pay and that the strength united industrial action provides is the only way working class women can win equal pay struggles. In the words of AUEW District Secretary Roger Butler 'Our decision to boycott the Industrial Tribunal when the company took the case to it has been fully vindicated'.

The terms of the Company's surrender means that the main demand of the strikers, a common operational rate for payment by results throughout the factory has been met, resulting in increases totalling £8.70, more than the original claim for equal pay. There will be no victimisation, full continuity of employment with Trico making up the lost benefits - insurance stamps, pension funds and holiday pay and the agreement would be operative immediately the strikers went back to work.

But the workers at Trico still face the problem of the AUEW men who refused to support the women. These men scabbed on the strike continuously until the management was finally forced to lay them off and then held rival meetings to try and break the strike. These same men are now harassing the women who were on strike, inside the factory. The union at shop-floor level must seek to win these men over and persuade them that their behaviour can only succeed in bringing down the union in the factory and thereby defeat the workforce. The union must also be seeking to win parity for workers at the Trico factory in Northampton, who are paid £11 below the rate at the Brentford factory, and who are only now beginning to organise within the AUEW through the example of the strike at Brentford.

### THE STRINGS ATTACHED TO VICTORY

But the employers' surrender is only partial. The strikers will not receive negotiated back-pay for the strike period and many of the shop-floor agreements, won by hard negotiation by the Union may have been undermined through the reorganisation of the shops by the management. It will therefore be of vital importance that the Union is built up in the factory and the high level of solidarity shown by the women in keeping up the strike for 21 hard weeks is not allowed to fall. At the mass meeting where the terms of the surrender were given, Eileen Ward, a leading shop steward who played an important role in the strike, spelt out what they must do when they got back to work: Fight for a closed shop, hold mass meetings in the factory every month regardless of whether there is any dispute, the production of a factory bulletin, a 10p levy on all members to donate to other industrial disputes, beginning immediately with the strike at Grunwick Film Processing laboratory in North West London, on strike for union recognition. She went on to urge all the strikers to attend the regular fortnightly union meetings.

The women at Trico must themselves now take positions as shop stewards in the union. The men must be encouraged to support the women in their particular problems as women workers and to allow them positions on the union committees. Although the con-

# TRICO

by  
JILL  
DANIELS

sciousness of many women increased during the strike this did not happen evenly because of the bureaucratic control the District Committee held over the strike. All the women in the factory must be encouraged to take an active part in the union and to meet together to discuss their problems and needs as women workers and members of the trade union in order to win support for their struggles and demands. By organising a Charter group within the factory these struggles and demands can be linked up with the demands of women workers in general. The union must take into account the particular problems women face, family commitments etc and make provision for these by holding meetings in work time and when this is not possible to provide creche facilities. The union must also look to the particular problems the Asian and black women face. They have never been integrated into the work force and their particular problems must be solved as a matter of urgency.

The struggle at Trico was won because the management were pressurised by the car industry to concede. The strike could and should have been won weeks earlier if the blacking on all wipers to the car industry had been effective. It was not, because the Communist Party dominated - AUEW District Committee did not demand that the AUEW Executive issue a call for blacking of all wipers. The District Committee justified this by saying that the AUEW Executive was against the strike and might sell it out if given the opportunity. In fact the District Committee did not want to bring the car industry to a standstill - they were not prepared for a showdown with the Labour Government.

The District Committee kept up an effective stranglehold on the militancy of the strike committee and the women themselves. The Strike committee could make no decisions without the approval of the District Committee and the women were not able to speak at mass meetings. Furthermore the District Committee did not

# A VICTORY TO BUILD ON

called for a national levy of all AUEW members, despite the strike being made official after the first few weeks and despite the women suffering severe financial hardship. Any initiatives proposed by other organisations were immediately rejected by the District Committee without any consultation with the strikers and sometimes without it being discussed adequately by the strike committee.

The Working Women's Charter Campaign (WWCC) supported the strike actively throughout the whole 21 weeks through organising public meetings, speaking tours for Trico speakers in key areas such as Birmingham, helping on the picket lines, making financial contributions and fighting to gain the support of the labour and women's movements for the strike. But an indication of the attitude of the District Committee to the Campaign is given when they asked the Campaign to organise a creche for the women. This was clearly the responsibility of the union and on being told this, the District Committee said the money would have to come from the hardship allowance for the women. Naturally the creche did not get off the ground.

When the WWCC proposed that a Support Committee should be set up in order to draw in the maximum support of the labour movement to force through effective blacking and stoppages of the car factories, the District Committee rejected the idea. But a couple of weeks later when the Greater London Association of Trades Councils suggested the idea, the District Committee enthusiastically welcomed it. This was because it was clear from the outset that the GLATC Support Committee would do nothing. In practice the Committee discussed effective blacking of Trico products in every locality, a mass picket and day of action - but that's where it remained - a discussion. In spite of strong pressure from the WWCC and towards the end of the strike, the strike committee itself, the day of action never took place. The call by the WWCC for a national demonstration, called with aim of

regaining the solidarity of the labour movement, was at first severely criticised by the District Committee and then, under pressure from the Strike Committee, the District Committee decided to call a demonstration themselves after the strike had already been effectively won.

The Communist Party's reluctance to antagonise the car industry and the Government is illustrated by the situation at the British Leyland plant at Longbridge, where the CP dominate the works committee. For a long time after the AUEW proudly proclaimed all Trico blades were blacked, wipers arrived and continued to be fitted at the Longbridge. Then it was Trico Germany and Trico USA blades that arrived and were fitted. The CP said that they would wait until after the tribunal to black Trico blades. But when the Tribunal found against the strikers they still did not black.

The strike could have been won much earlier if it had not been for the manoeuvres of the Communist Party. Their strategy of alliances with so-called 'lefts' and progressives in the trade union bureaucracy tied them to the policies of the AUEW leadership. The industrial strength of the CP, particularly in the car industry, could have secured an early victory for the strikers. Instead the CP subordinated the Trico Strikers to the collaborationist schemes of the AUEW leadership. The IS had no clear plan of action for the dispute. They performed collection and servicing duties - but had no clear policy as to how the dispute could be won. At one point they even called for a strike of women workers in the engineering industry to back the Trico workers!

The significance of the win at Trico is that the women won equal pay despite having the Industrial Tribunal find against them. This effectively pushed the strike outside the law. At the same time as winning equal pay the workers at Trico have broken the Social Contract. No doubt the Trico employers and the Labour Government will try to prevent a further wage increase for the workforce. They will argue that "legally" the workers are not entitled to a rise. The employers will no doubt argue to male workers that 'the women' have taken all the money the company can afford. Trico workers must organise to open the books and accounts of the company to nail such lies. They will have to prepare a united fight against wage controls if the company are not to have their way.

Victory also points the finger directly at the the legislation and the Industrial Tribunals. By boycotting the tribunals they proved that struggles in the working class can be won through determined strike action. IS have used the Trico case as a reason to boycott tribunals altogether:

"Every future tribunal will now have the example of this strike before it. The message is simple. Ignore the Tribunals. They exist to stop the Equal Pay Act working not to help anyone get equal pay. The only way to be certain of winning is by strong and determined industrial action".

## WHY THE ACTS WERE BROUGHT INTO BEING

This position does not take into account the fact that the introduction of the legislation has raised the expectations of women and implies that without the Tribunals the Equal Pay act would bring equal pay. Quite clearly this is not the case. The Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act are the products partly of the increasing pressure from women as they have become more militant and active within trade unions, and the fact that the Government has had to fall in line with the rest of the EECs regards equal opportunities for women.

The legislation itself is full of loopholes for the employers to exploit but there is the danger that they may sow illusions in the working class that legislation can abolish women's oppression altogether. But the Acts do not give women what they want, they give women what in the Government's view is enough to avoid an explosion of women's struggles. Similarly the Tribunals exist to prevent women getting equal pay. Ninety-nine per-

cent of all cases taken to Tribunals are lost. The Tribunals are an attempt to dilute the militancy of women through a reliance on legal codes of practice, arbitration schemes and tribunal systems. The Trico strikers have given us an important lesson by their boycotting of the tribunal and then going ahead with and winning equal pay through their own action.

We must not allow the militancy of women workers to be weakened by the Acts, but on the contrary use the increased expectations the Acts raise in the eyes of women, to encourage them to fight for their rights. We would only want cases taken to Tribunals as a means to further the organisation and demands of the working class and as part of a broader struggle and as a last resort. We should, while recognising the impossibility of legislation alone bringing real equal pay, support any moves to stop up the loopholes in the Acts. Determined strike action is the only way to win equal pay and we must begin to look at ways these struggles can be co-ordinated with a broader fight for women's equality.

The Working Womens Charter Campaign raises certain key demands working class women need as the prerequisites to equality, such as the free nursery, abortion, contraception facilities, an end to legal and bureaucratic barriers to equality with regard to pensions, supplementary benefits etc, child benefits, adequate maternity leave and an end to discrimination in training and education. The importance of women taking an active part in trade unions coupled with the demands for a minimum wage for all workers, a sliding scale of wages under the control of the working class and work-sharing without loss of pay, are all linked to the key demand of 'A Woman's Right to Work' which raises all the necessary prerequisites to women's equality. These demands can provide the basis around which women can organise to fight their oppression and exploitation and co-ordinate their struggles. The WWCC played an important role in ensuring that the Trico strike was actively supported nationally and raising important initiatives to the strikers. Charter groups now must take up the lesson learnt from the Trico strike to spread them throughout the labour movement and to help to build Charter groups within the trade unions. The Campaign is establishing Investigatory Committees to monitor all equal pay cases going into Tribunals within the context of important struggles for equal pay such as the one fought at Trico, and the savage attacks on the women and the working class through cuts in living standards, cuts in social expenditure and the increasingly high level of unemployment.

These investigatory committees would consist of Trade union union branches, trades councils, Labour Parties, Women's groups groups and Charter Groups. They should not be seen as passive research bodies, but campaigning bodies who would actively support strikes as they arise using the information from monitoring cases at Tribunals and trade union statistics. We must fight to build these committees and ensure them a strong base in the localities.

On February 26th at Alexandra Palace the WWCC has issued a call for a rally to assess women's rights in the light of the legislation entitled 'One Year On from the SDA - A Rally for Women's Rights'. This is an important initiative and an opportunity for the working class to pool their experiences in struggle. Women will be telling of their struggles in nursery campaigns, fights for abortion facilities, child benefits, equal pay, Sex Discrimination, for the right to work, against cuts in social expenditure, in order to assess and co-ordinate the struggle for women's rights.

The reason why the Trico strike is so important, for women and for the working class, is that women workers are prepared to fight for their rights, however hard the fight and however long the struggle and despite the attacks made on them by the Labour Government and the bosses. Women workers have shown that their strength and determination has not been diluted into a reliance on reformist legislation and anti working class Tribunals.

# Scots Nationalism

by JOHN TODD

Recent years have seen the emergence of several nationalist movements in Europe - Basque, Catalan, Corsican, Breton, Scottish for example. Such movements have caused not a little confusion on the Left. For decades nationalist struggle has been, by and large, equated with anti-imperialist struggle, in the Twenties, China, India and Ireland, in our own time Vietnam, Angola and Ireland.

Quite correctly revolutionaries, in arguing support for such movements, have stressed the (bourgeois) democratic right of nations to self-determination. Normally this has meant the independence of the countries / nationalities involved. However, as a result, certain important principles have become blurred or lost sight of altogether.

Firstly, even in the Twenties, the Comintern saw support for nationalist movements as a tactic in the development of the international proletarian revolution. Secondly, and flowing from this tactical nature, the Comintern stressed the need to distinguish between communist and non-communist movements:

"A resolute struggle must be waged against the attempt to clothe the revolutionary liberation movements in the backward countries which are not genuinely communist in communist colours. (point 11 e of the Comintern theses on the National and Colonial question)

Nationalism 'pure and simple' is historically reactionary in the epoch of Imperialism, it is the necessarily anti-imperialist nature of most struggles for national independence which has given them their progressive content.

Our support for specific demands for national liberation is subordinate to their role in the development of international proletarian class-consciousness, an international party and the goal of international revolution. In other words, support of the right of nations to self-determination is not totally unconditional. Thus, recognition of the right does not, necessarily, imply support for the goals of all nationalist movements.

In assessing the attitude of communists to particular nationalist demands, we should, as point 2 of the Comintern theses puts it,

"... undertake first of all a precise analysis of the given environment, historical and above all, economic; secondly it should specifically distinguish the interests of the oppressed classes, of the workers and exploited, from the general concept of so-called national interests, which signify, in fact, the interests of the ruling class;..."

The question of revolutionaries' attitude to Scottish Nationalism has to be determined with this in mind.

In common with many 'peripheral' areas of Europe, the development of Scotland has lagged behind that of more central areas where capital has tended to concentrate. With the onset of capitalist instability, such regions have been the first to feel the effects in terms of unemployment, declining industry etc. This has been accentuated in Scotland by virtue of the historic structure of Scottish industry. In the 18th and 19th centuries the union of Scotland and England and the integration of the two ruling classes into one, allowed the development of industry in Scotland which was denied to Ireland with the exception of North-East Ulster. However, the contraction of British capital in the 20th century has left Scotland with an archaic economic structure that was clearly highlighted by the collapse of UCS in 1972.

In the past the demand for Scottish independence has been the preserve of utopian and anachronistic cranks. By and large the necessity of the link with England was recognised by the Scots in general. The working class, in particular, expressed this, and at the same time, their dislike of many of the effects of the link, by a massive Labour Party vote.

Now, however, the situation appears changed. The entry of Britain into the Common Market (itself a recognition by the British bourgeoisie of the need to further concentrate European capital) the onset of the crisis and, of course, the discovery of North Sea oil, have caused this apparent change.

For the first time the nationalists can point to a supposedly realistic economic basis for separation. At the same time the violently anti-working class policies of the Labour Government has turned the Scottish working class away from their traditional party allegiance.

That is one side of the new situation. There is another. The Labour government, incapable, even if it wanted to, of implementing its manifesto because its first priority is to save British capitalism, are looking for a way out of the impasse. The recent constitutional tussle with the Lords gives a hint of their solution — The Great Devolution Debate. While, as their devolution proposals show, they are not at all keen on serious devolution of power, they are still less keen on people's minds focussing on the real problems facing the working class. The Great Debate is a fraud — a diversion.

## a referendum ?

Apart from the 'debate' itself another diversion has recently been proposed, the holding of a referendum on the government's proposals. Support for this idea has even come from sections of the revolutionary left who, applying the principle of self-determination abstractly, see in it a way of assessing the opinion of the Scottish nation. Such abstract application serves no revolutionary purpose. A referendum on the proposals will prove precisely nothing. Those bent on full independence and those dead against any devolution would vote on the same side. Workers' Power would call for a boycott of such a referendum. The only genuine question that could be asked in a referendum is, 'Independence or not?' Such a question would at least confront the actual issue of independence. Workers' Power supports the right of the Scots to opt for independence in such a referendum. To oppose such a referendum on the grounds of the 'sovereignty of the British parliament' as do the Tribune group is to capitulate totally to English chauvinism. We do not believe that independence can possibly be to the advantage of the working class, Scottish or English, in a referendum on independence we would urge a 'No' vote. It is, however, for the Scots to decide.

Scottish nationalism does not have the progressive content of Irish nationalism. Its historic roots are not like those in Ireland where for hundreds of years the Irish people have

proved time and again their wish for independence. The elections to the first Dail proved, if further proof were necessary, the determination of the Irish people to escape the yoke of British Imperialism. In Ireland the necessarily anti-imperialist nature of the drive for independence produces a tendency for differentiation between the classes, particularly between the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois, the latter producing, as a result, most of the leaders of the Republican movement. On the other hand Scottish nationalism is a backward-looking reaction to problems posed by the effects of past Scottish/English capitalist development. The logic of Scottish nationalism is the welding together of the different classes rather than, as in Ireland, the clarification of different interests and the pulling apart of class alliance. Worse still, the red-herring of Scottish nationalism, by dividing the working class in Scotland from its natural allies south of the border, actually weakens the ability of the class to develop its own strength, confidence and organisation. At a time when the strikes against the cuts in Glasgow have demonstrated the potential for direct action by the working class against the policies of the Labour government, the rhetoric of the nationalists can only serve to put the brake on further development in this direction. The reactionary, anti-working class nature of their politics was clearly demonstrated earlier in the year at the time of the announcement of future redundancies at Chrysler Linwood. The SNP condemned the proposals, urged the workers to oppose them and use their strength to force management to — cut the workforce at Halewood instead!

## after the 'debate'

Ironically, the Labour government's Great Debate play plays into the hands of the Nationalists. They too recognise the phoney nature of the proposals, but also that they are, to some extent, a concession to nationalism. The terms of the debate will bring them and their policies, to the centre of the political arena. If an election were held now we can be sure that the SNP would sweep Labour out of Scotland, and, therefore, out of power. If, or more probably, when devolution goes through it will solve nothing. The SNP will then argue that this is the result of not gaining full independence — the trend will have been set, 'progress' will be equated with independence. For this reason it is necessary for revolutionaries to be clear on the implications of the devolution issue, we should oppose it and argue for the alternative of facing up to the problems produced by capitalism's instability and fighting them as a united working class.

Working class support for the SNP is more a protest vote against the policies of the Labour government than one in favour of full independence. It is, in fact, a confused recognition of the fact that the answers to the problems facing the class are necessarily of a society-wide nature, involving a total change of course and a restructuring of society. Very few believe that the likes of Hugh Fraser, even if they could get their hands on the North Sea profits, would hand them over to the mass of the Scottish People.

The way forward for the Scottish working class lies, not in swapping one set of masters for another, but in fighting for a genuinely revolutionary restructuring of society in alliance with the English working class. The first step in this has to be opposition to the Labour government's anti-working class policies of cuts and wage control. Such a fight has to be organised on the basis of an independent rank and file movement to overcome the collaborationist policies of the leaders of the Trade Unions. Such a movement, fighting for the interests of the working class under communist leadership can ensure that real power will devolve, not onto the careerists and opportunists of the SNP, but to the organised working class.

# The Labour Movement Delegation To Ireland

by Stuart King

The Labour Movement Delegation which visited Ireland on the weekend of the 17th-20th September, provides the opportunity to develop a genuine labour movement current against the presence of British troops in Ireland and for the right of the Irish as a whole to determine their own future.

In preparation for something over a year, the delegation was organised by the Troops Out Movement as a fact finding mission aimed at working out a policy that the British Labour movement could adopt to aid the Irish people in their struggle for self determination. Differences over perspectives for such a delegation appeared early in its preparation, with the TOM leadership resisting all attempts to allow an organising committee of sponsoring bodies to determine the policy and agenda of the delegation. As a result the TOM leadership had their way over the programme for the delegation in Ireland. Thus the 'fact finding' mission wouldn't in fact be talking to any Protestant organisations - opening trade union delegates on their return to the accusation of having failed to hear both sides of the argument. (An ironic situation given this was precisely the criticism made of the CP dominated GLATC delegation which spoke only to Republicans favouring an 'Irish Bill of Rights'.) The argument used by the TOM spokesman that you wouldn't ask South African Whites about 'how to achieve self determination' for the blacks is totally demagogic, and is in fact an excuse for ignoring the fact that many British workers are genuinely confused and held back from taking up a 'troops out' position by precisely this question. Despite the difficulties involved in organising such meetings - difficulties which could have been overcome - it would have strengthened the arguments of returning trade unionists who could have spoken first hand of the protestant intransigence when arguing a policy with their members.

The delegation itself spent 2 days in the North and one day in the South, hearing and discussing with representatives from the trade unions and political organisations including Sinn Fein, SDLP, the Labour Party and the IRSP, as well as visiting Crossmaglen, Newry and Belfast. A meeting held late on the evening of the third day, a final session which the delegates had earlier been told was unlikely to take place, had little over a quarter of an hour to discuss a series of 'guidelines' for the report of the delegation put to them by the organising committee. In a chaotic situation with no time for serious debate, motions and amendments were put and voted on with no discussion, providing a spuriously democratic approved basis for the TOM leadership to produce a draft of the final report. Workers Power believes that the delegation should declare against the British ruling class's involvement in Ireland, call for the immediate withdrawal of troops and support any and all socialists and republicans fighting against the presence of that army in Ireland.

Is the delegation a success or a failure? In itself it is neither. The answer to this question lies in what happens next. Cert-

ainly the left once again showed its lack of seriousness in taking up the question of Ireland in the Trade Union movement. The two largest groups, the International Socialists and the IMG had barely a handful of delegates each, a reflection no doubt of the priority given in those organisations for building for the delegation. As was argued in the planning stage the importance of the delegation rests in its effects on the British Labour movement. In this, the campaign, to be built around the report back meetings is crucial. Only then can one say that the delegation was more than a 9 day wonder. However there are strong reasons to fear the latter will prove to be the case. Far from using the delegation to build a genuine movement in the trade unions opposed to British troops in Ireland and in solidarity with the Irish people's to fight for independence, the TOM is doing little to build such a campaign. The meeting to discuss the final report has been needlessly delayed, promised for the 'end of the year', (at Christmas perhaps) it now seems likely to be well into the new one; delegates are being 'encouraged' to hold report back meetings. There is little perspective of using the delegation to build an ongoing campaign, the fact that the 'historic three day visit' took place appears success enough, while the next big event is already on the slipway - a delegation of 'Irish people' to Britain. Such a perspective, again based on gaining national publicity for the Irish question, might provide the TOM leadership with a role but does little to build a trade union campaign to withdraw the troops. It might momentarily raise morale in Ireland, and this is a vitally important gain but it will represent no lasting assistance to those in struggle.

We must use the returned delegates to hold a series of meetings in TU and LP bodies, not just among delegating bodies but everywhere such a meeting can be organised. The aim should be to commit those bodies to the policy of the delegation and involve them in an active campaign to remove the troops. (Including local public meetings worked for in the labour movement, anti-recruitment campaigns in the schools and dole offices involving NUT and CPSA members, picketing and leafletting outside army recruitment offices, tattoos etc and anti-PTA work.) A labour movement delegate conference must be held to organise and launch such a concerted campaign throughout the whole labour movement. The delegation gives us another opportunity to build such a movement, it must not be squandered this time.



# CHINA AFTER MAO: Behind the

## bureaucrats' dogfight

by Ian White

Although the death of Mao Tse-tung came as a surprise to no one, most commentators were caught very flat-footed by the speed at which events developed once he was gone. There is little doubt that this surprise was shared by the vast majority of the Chinese people themselves.

What lies behind the decision of the new regime to move so fast against its opponents, the so-called 'Shanghai clique'? At first sight it would seem fairly straightforward. For years Hua, and the strata he represents, have been in de facto control of the machinery of state, the Army, the greater part of the Communist Party and could confidently rely on the support of the managerial strata in industry. At the same time the 'Shanghai Four' had lost much of the support they enjoyed among the masses during the 'Cultural Revolution' by the central role they played in the suppression of the popular anti-bureaucratic movements at the end of that period. On the face of it then Hua and company were merely asserting their dominance to remove an irritant that no longer enjoyed the patronage of Mao himself.

However, such an explanation overlooks several important dimensions to the problem. Firstly, if the 'Four' were so unpopular, so impotent, why the need to act so fast? Why the quite incredible charges made against them? Why the rumours of public trial so reminiscent of the Moscow purges? Are the 'Four' being smashed so completely in order to "encourage others"? As the move a precursor of some change of policy so enormous that any potential critics — even discredited or unpopular ones — have to be silenced first?

It is all too easy, given the scantiness of information from China, to fall into the trap of personalism. The nature of the present struggle in China also encourages this. The factional strife in China takes place only within the confines of the higher echelons of the bureaucracy. Since 1949 this bureaucracy has attempted, by a variety of means, to develop China in its own interests as opposed to those of the workers and peasants. The present power struggle represents only a division within the bureaucracy as to the best strategy to create and maintain a stable state capitalist regime under the control of the bureaucracy. The bureaucrats function as a ruling class, albeit a divided one at present. This point is essential to an understanding both of the present in-fighting and the political development of China in general.

### THE TWO FACTIONS

Despite the apparent confidence of the new regime they are (and must know it) playing a dangerous game. It is generally known that behind Hua Kuo-feng stand many of the celebrated 'capitalist roaders' of yesteryear — Teng Hsiao-ping, Li Hsien-nien for example. For Hua to come to power and immediately accuse Chiang ching of precisely the crimes of which Mao accused his own backers, is to risk the credibility of the new regime in the eyes of the workers and peasants. A quarter of the entire population of the world is not as 'poor and blank' as Mao would have had us believe, neither are they the quiescent beasts of burden that Mao's Western admirers would like to think.

The struggle between the 'Maoists and the 'capitalist roaders' has been going on for years. To understand what is going on at present we have first to look at what the two sides stand for and how they got their images of 'radical' and 'moderate'.

As was true of Mao both wings are explicitly nationalist in their politics. Both wish to see China build herself into a modern, industrialised country. Both believe in 'Socialism in One Country'. In other words the arguments in China today bear no resemblance to those in Russia in the '20's. The Maoist faction do not represent some kind of unconscious proponents of 'permanent revolution' as is argued by S.S.Wu in *Inprecor* Nos. 59 and 60.

The 'capitalist roaders' (moderates to the Western press) want to industrialise relatively quickly. Their aim is to build a technologically advanced industrial sector. Their policy, on the face of it practical but actually utopian, is to import technological know-how and plant. In the future they hope to re-produce this technology and expertise domestically and then return to some kind of autarchy. Such a policy is doomed on several counts: the initial cost, in foreign currency, of the imports, the subsequent cost of interest-laden repayments, the social implications of capital—rather than labour-intensive techniques, the difficulty, if not impossibility, of integrating such plant into a generally backward economy incapable of producing the sophisticated back-up requirements, the time, cost and social implications of training an elite strata of experts to use the new plant. This is the policy which, in recent years has led to the importation of sophisticated iron-smelting plant, joint plans for mineral exploitation with the Japanese, the importation of computerised mining equipment.

In order to finance this programme they have depended on two main factors: the export of oil-based products from the Taching oilfields, and the export of agricultural produce. It is their programme that fits most easily into the designs of world imperialism particularly the U.S. who look to the massive Chinese market and the untapped mineral resources as an element in a possible way out of their current difficulties. If the 'capitalist roaders' have their way we can expect an increase in Chinese involvement on the world market and, probably, the development of the import of foreign capital.

By contrast the 'radicals' remain fixed to the policy of Mao. This consists, essentially, in trying to develop all sections of the economy at the same time. The speed at which this can be done depends almost solely on the rate of accumulation of capital and, therefore, on the rate of exploitation of the peasantry and workers. In classic Maoist fashion the radicals see the key to rapid development in the enthusiasm of the masses. Hence the political method of Maoism, close involvement of the Party at lower levels and 'political' campaigns to keep enthusiasm (and, therefore, output) high. It is this method that has given Maoism its radical image.

Common to both wings is a foreign policy based on the supposed interests of the Chinese state. For the moderates this helps to obtain the foreign markets and the capital equipment. For the radicals it both diverts domestic attention away from the realities of hardship and is designed to set one imperialist power (U.S.) against what they see as a more threatening one (Soviet Union).

Both policies are fraught with difficulties which increase with time. The 'radical' approach quite obviously implies a low standard of living for the masses. There has, for example been no national revision of the wage scale (an eight point range of differentials) since 1956! Both during and after the 'cultural revolution' workers have struck not only for wage rises but for payment of arrears, in some cases stretching back over a year. Particularly over the last two years there has been an increase in wage strikes throughout China, led by the railway and petro-chemical workers.

Although much has been made by the 'radicals' of the 'capitalist roaders' plans to stimulate production through an increase in wage incentives (this is called economism in the Maoist press) the fact that they are now in power is unlikely to lead to any general raising of income levels. In order to placate particular groups of workers, to soften up the impact of the introduction of capital intensive technology and, generally, to consolidate their power, the Hua regime may allow wage increases in some sectors. They are in no position, given the need to accumulate capital, to concede a general rise.

With regard to the countryside, it is first necessary to dispose of the popularly held myths. The only way in which China was dragged back from famine in the early 60's was by massive 'liberalisation' in the countryside. In particular of the policy concerning the cultivation of private plots by the peasantry. As a necessary development of this there has grown up a substantial black market version of the free market. Alongside this has gone a developing differentiation within the class. Both wings of the bureaucracy are powerless to do anything about this. It is notable that the peasantry, who supplied most of the support for the Communist Party and the PLA in the days of the Civil War were kept totally outside the parameters of the 'cultural revolution'. The slightest upset in the countryside, the reduction of production by a few per cent could cause domestic chaos. On top of this, as noted above, agriculture is an import foreign currency earner. We can, therefore, expect a continuation of the 'pragmatic' policy towards the peasantry and, hence, the continued differentiation of that class.

The western press have made much of the possibility of rapprochement between the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union as a result of Hua's gaining power. On the face of it this would seem very plausible. Past representatives of this strata have regularly been accused of pro-Sovietism by their opponents—Liu, Teng, Lin Piao etc. An argument could perhaps be made out that by "normalising" relations with Russia the kind of modern technological and (importantly) military aid could be obtained without going onto what is normally thought of as the world market. However, this is actually most unlikely, not because of ideological differences (these obviously matter not one jot to a regime that can maintain friendly relations with Chile) but rather because of the inability of the Soviet economy to deliver the kind of assistance on the kind of scale China's leaders are probably thinking of. No more probably some kind of diminution of mutual hostility is required for two perfectly pragmatic reasons. Firstly, to remove the ever present threat of military engagement along the disputed frontiers with the Soviet Union. Secondly, to encourage the Western Powers to give generous credit terms to China when she goes shopping.

One of the other bargaining counters in this real-politik may well be the future status of Taiwan, and somewhat less likely, the Korean situation.

#### THE RADICALS

The radicals, on the other hand, stand for a continued belligerent approach towards the Soviet Union and a cooling of relations with the United States. Again this does not stem from any principled political position. On the contrary it is an aspect of their "pull the country up by its bootstraps" theory. An integral part of persuading the workers to work harder is to present a picture of China surrounded by antagonistic powers. Such a siege mentality is essential

for them if they are to present themselves as the leaders of a nation in peril in which "sectional" interests (i.e. class interests of workers and peasants) have to be subordinated to the interests of the continued existence of the state. It also prepares public opinion for the characterisation of opponents as subversive of the state and agents of Imperialism.

The policy differences between the two factions then, are real enough. Can they explain though the events of the last period? Certainly, the bureaucratic methods of both dispose them to behind the scenes manoeuvring rather than open political struggle involving the workers and peasants. This is, however, a secondary factor. The main reason, indeed one of the few things that both factions are surely agreed upon, is their fear of the effect on the workers and peasants of such an open debate. Why should this be so? The answer lies in the experience and political development of the masses during and since the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.'

The Cultural Revolution was itself the result of the struggle between factions of the bureaucracy. Unable to force his position through the Party, Mao took the risk of mobilising first the students and then the industrial workers themselves. However, once the lid was taken off the Chinese political cauldron the resultant release of pressure was so great that Mao had to retreat in disorder, relying on the Army to suppress rapidly developing autonomous movements in the cities. Space does not permit us here to go into any great detail of this tumultuous period — the strikes, occupations, munition raids and finally open armed confrontation with the People's Liberation Army — 36,000 soldiers against the radicals of Shengyang — the dropping of paratroops and the use of artillery to regain central control of Wuhan. Some of the political implications however, can be summed up.

#### SOCIAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND THE STATE BUREAUCRACY

Firstly, the chaos in which the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution ended is a factor in explaining the allegiance to Hua of both the People's Liberation Army and the technocrats. Stability could not have been restored without the intervention of the Army whose importance was thereby underlined. The interests of the leadership of the military centre on concern that such disorder should not return and the development of sophisticated weaponry. Coupled with this are important social connections between the military leadership and the State bureaucracy, both of which developed out of the militarised Chinese Communist Party during and after the Liberation. The technocrats also expect the new regime to benefit them in terms of their role within the production of the more sophisticated technology.

On the other hand the Red Guards — the original advance guard of the Cultural Revolution — were totally disillusioned by Mao's retreat and use of overwhelming force against them. At the same time the massive strike wave and the nationwide links developed by workers in struggle regained for the Chinese proletariat some of the experience lost in the catastrophic defeat of the twenties. The armed clashes with the People's Liberation Army and the cynical manipulative methods of the bureaucracy also taught invaluable lessons that cannot possibly have been eradicated in the subsequent years. Whilst reports of 40,000 killed in the suppression of the "ultra-left" of the Province of Kwangtung are more than likely wild exaggerations — the killing of even one thousandth of that number by troops of a supposed "People's Army" cannot but have a long lasting effect on the consciousness of the working class.

The echoes of the shots of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' still reverberate around China. Hangchow is even now under at least partial military control since the suppression of the general strike there 2 years ago.



Other social problems stem from the suppression of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. For example the ex-Red Guard students who "went down to the countryside to learn from the peasantry" (euphemism for internal exile) for the most part chose not to stay there. Resentful at their enforced expulsion from the cities, resented by the peasantry from whom they were supposed to learn, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, became even more alienated from the regime and returned, illegally, to the cities. Unable to get residence permits and, therefore, rations, they live off the meagre resources of their families turning increasingly to crime for income. In Sian, for example in July this year, twenty four youngsters were jailed for raiding banks. But these are not mere lumpen elements, most of the strikes that have taken place in recent years have been explained by the ruling regime as the result of the agitation of such "criminal" elements. Refugee Red Guards speak of the dissemination, particularly in Canton, of political literature aimed at both wings of the bureaucracy. In the aftermath of the Tien An Men riots the slogan, "Down With Chin Shih-huang" (Chin Shih-huang was the first emperor to unify China) was seen in cities throughout China. This could have only been aimed at Mao himself and represents an important break with the period of the Cultural Revolution when even the most Left wing groups still adhered to Maoism. Again, in Canton the Li Yi-che movement (Li Yi-che is thought to be the collective signature of the leadership of the Red Guards who have returned from the countryside, they are probably linked to the Sheng Wu Lien faction of the cultural revolution) has raised the slogans "Down with the Red Capitalists" "Down With Socialism in One Country" and "For True Workers Democracy". One of the leaders of this movement was arrested two years ago for putting up wall-posters calling for revolution, but had to be freed under popular pressure!

In the last few weeks reports have reached the West through Hong Kong, of a new wave of strikes and the looting of state arsenals, together with increased state repression.

This points to the central reason for the speed of Hua's moves against his opponents. The greatest danger for him is the development of a political vacuum. However, despite Hua's coup and the increased repression, the workers of China will be heard. There is no way that their interests can be met by the policies of "Socialism in One Country" be it with a radical or moderate face.

As the political and economic crisis in China develops the divergence of interests between the different classes will become clearer. For the workers the way forward lies in total opposition to the policies of the regime, for the creation, once again, of a revolutionary proletarian party opposed to the concept of socialism in one country, the formation of a militia controlled by soviets, a revolutionary alliance with the poor peasants and the destruction of the bureaucratic state capitalist regime that stands between them and the creation of a Chinese Workers' State.

# THE PROVISIONALS AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT

## The strengths and limits of Republicanism

On Wednesday October 27th, British troops, who had 'wisely' maintained a low profile' in the area for a few days, entered the Catholic Turf Lodge in West Belfast where they provoked a confrontation with local residents during a funeral service. There was a minor riot, during which a woman and three teenage girls were arrested. They were taken to the army's Fort Monagh close by. After being photographed with cards showing name and religion they were taken to Andersonstown RUC station in a Saracen armoured car. The Turf Lodge people had already hijacked vehicles to barricade off their area, now a crowd of mainly women and youths gathered outside the RUC station and stoned it. Finally the prisoners were released 'pending further enquiries'. No charges were laid.

This story could have come out of Catholic West Belfast at almost any time in the last seven years. However the incident does merit further examination. Three of the arrested women have close relations that between them sum up much of the recent history and present situation in Northern Ireland.

One was Mary Green, half-sister of the passenger in the car that crashed after the driver had been shot dead without warning by the army, and killed the three Maguire children in the incident that gave rise to the peace movement. Another was the mother of Sandy Lynch, a victim of increasing army brutality (he was in a car that was shot up by the army after passing through a checkpoint and is still seriously ill). The third was Kathleen Stewart, sister of 13 year old Brian whose death has helped to discredit the peace movement and stiffen resistance behind the Provisionals. At the time of writing it is not known whether the 14 year old girl arrested with them was known to the army.

The Northern Ireland 'peace movement' began after Danny Lennon, a known I.R.A. volunteer was shot dead while driving a car which went out of control and crashed, killing 3 young children. Their aunt M. Corrigan, an organiser for the 'Legion of Mary' was interviewed on television. Betty Williams, a suburban Andersonstown catholic, contacted her, and with the instant support of the media, initiated a series of meetings and marches whose clear intentions were to further isolate and weaken the Provos in the anti unionist ghettos. Encouraged by what appeared to be growing support from sections of women in the nationalist population, the 'Peace Movement' immediately launched a mass campaign of demonstrations, meetings etc. throughout the province and the rest of Ireland. Recruiting to their ranks a professional journalist and noted anti I.R.A. 'specialist'. K. McKeown, the Peace Movement began to develop a sense of permanence which threatened to further divide the anti unionist population in a way not seen since the war began.

Despite the obvious fear that the peace campaign especially the leadership, were decisively anti I.R.A., and pro 'security' forces, it is also a fact that it has received sympathy and support from sections of the nationalist population. Why is this so?

IF YOU LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORKERS POWER GROUPING FILL IN THE SPACES BELOW AND MAIL IT TO THE FOLLOWING

ADDRESS: Workers Power  
1a Camberwell Grove,  
London SE 5.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

.....

First it is significant that the bulk of those in sympathy with the demands for 'peace and reconciliation' have been women. By the very nature of republicanism women have been actively excluded from the military (all male) struggle, despite their involvement within the movement as a whole. Essentially they have been seen as an auxiliary back-up resource, the roots of which lay within the need for continuity of the 'family' and the 'mother' as protector. Combined with the ideology of catholicism denying contraception, divorce and abortion, women have been offered no choice and no say in decision making about the direction of the struggle. The Provos have never resisted this. The full effects of 6 years struggle in which they have been compelled to bear an increasing burden passively, has led to increasing sense of futility among considerable sectors of nationalist women.

Secondly, the nature of the provos campaign with its exclusive reliance upon the bombing campaigns has meant a progressive downswing in the confidence and unity of the anti unionist mass population. As the bombing campaign grew in intensity, the number of marches and demonstrations faded - participation of those who once were deeply involved politically declined - Even the struggle against internment saw few demonstrations. Though few nationalist workers are prepared to throw in the towel their support has been both negative and resigned in the face of a war whose logic and duration as fought by the I.R.A. becomes more and more divorced from the mass political basis from which it originally emerged.

It is within the political vacuum created by provos' all dominant military strategy that the peace movement, like the less successful but equally symptomatic 'Better Life Campaign' has sprung. It is the ideological confusion within sections of the nationalist population that has given the Peace Movement a small foothold in some of the nationalist ghettos. Though it is undoubtedly a precarious foothold, given the extremely limited room for manoeuvre within the conflict, the Peace Movement has been allowed to sow even deeper confusion at a time when it looked possible to build around the question of political status a mass campaign - in August 1968 attended a mass rally in West Belfast. Sadly, the Provos permitted this magnificent initiative to be relegated to a minor role in their overall campaign. Refusing to see the apathy and demoralisation as the signs for a change of direction tactically, they still prefer to utilise mass involvement as a secondary and optional extra. It is no accident that they initially underestimated the potential power of the peace movement - as it grew, they have been forced to contend with it, dubbing it simply as an instrument of British Imperialism and hoping that abuse and counter marches would of themselves destroy it. In doing so the provos are again dealing with the symptoms and not the causes - in this way the clear and stark need for a mass campaign on the major issues facing the anti-unionist population has become further blurred.

#### THE REACTION TO BRIAN STEWART'S MURDER

One clear example will illustrate all of this. The first real test for the peace movement occurred in Turf Lodge over the murder by the British Army of Brian Stewart. The Turf Lodge population immediately united to keep the army 'out'. An ad hoc women's group issued a statement calling a public meeting in order to set up a broad committee, and to discuss the way forward for the people as a whole. A local representative of the Turf Lodge 'peace committee' was invited - also, with the clear intention of deepening their foothold, went Williams and Corrigan. Without realising it they also were

offering the anti-unionist population a real chance to put to the test what they really meant about 'peace'. If a committee had been elected, if it had quickly outlined a limited number of activities, the first of which would have been a march against the British Army, the Peace Movement could have been concretely challenged by this situation. Its local support both in Turf Lodge and elsewhere would have been given a clear example that the leadership of the peace movement, however they may quibble and equivocate will never march with republicans, socialist and anti unionist population against the British Army. Furthermore such a strategy would have shown the real basis for unity; the clarification of demands, aims etc. and spelling out how to realise them before as large an audience of the anti-unionist population as possible. The building of broad local committees can only successfully occur within such a perspective.

Unfortunately none of this occurred. Despite the fact that the meeting was called to set up a committee none was elected. Instead the meeting spent nearly two hours attempting to remove Corrigan and Williams. A meeting for the next evening also failed to elect a committee. Finally voluntary women's street groups, with the signal role of mobilising the population in Turf Lodge of the approach of the army, emerged. Despite their success in repelling the first attempt by the army to get into Turf Lodge, the impetus for action and unity has been lost - already the familiar hijacking and burning of cars has occurred as a response to the arrest of 4 women in Turf Lodge.

The peace movement's leaders emerged from the Turf Lodge incident politically unseated - indeed they were able to condemn the 'specific' army atrocity in Turf Lodge. Even though, later, forced to reaffirm their general support for the 'security forces' the issues illustrate that the peace movement can and will remain an obstacle in the way of the anti-imperialist movement. The question of how to destroy the peace movement cannot be divorced from the task of uniting the population to face the immediate problems of the Army, repression and political status.

Since the demise of the Northern Ireland Assembly earlier this year the British government has had no real policy for the North except to hope that the sheer weight of the British army can wear down the resistance of the Nationalist population to the point where a superficially reformed version of the pre-1968 government can be imposed on them. The army had reacted to this, even before their taste for blood had been implicitly endorsed by the appointment of 'their man' Mason to replace Rees, by demanding tougher laws and greater freedom. This would have been the logical outcome of British policy, if you're relying on the weight of the army the more weight it has the better, if world opinion was not at stake. The army though, has no such worries and soldiers have been manifesting their frustration of fighting a purposeless and unwinnable war in a horrifyingly carefree escalation of violence towards the Catholic population. Their off-handed shooting of civilians, beatings of youths in front of reliable (i.e. middle-class) witnesses and a rising incidence of drunkenness, all show that while the army is capable of inflicting endless misery on the Catholics their morale is deteriorating.

The Provisionals still remain the fighting vanguard of the Irish people against British Imperialism. This is well testified to by the massive turn out for Maire Drumm's funeral and the obscene chorus of abuse from the Fleet Street hirelings of capital. Marxists have the sharpest criticisms of the Provisional Republicans, for their programme and their tactics. It is a misplaced internationalism which suppresses these criticisms since the fate of the struggle in Ireland depends on transcending the crippling limits of republican strategy and tactics.

# PORTUGAL

## One year since the November 25<sup>th</sup> events

BY MIKE LEE

Up until one year ago this month Portugal seemed poised on the brink of socialist revolution. Discipline on the army had broken down to such an extent that it was no longer a reliable weapon in the hands of the ruling class. Struggles for workers control in the media had created an independent workers' daily paper, *Republica*, and similarly at Radio Renascença the workers had wrested control from the Catholic church. Striking building workers trapped the Constituent Assembly in the São Bento Palace until their demands were met, almost driving the seat of bourgeois rule out of Lisbon to the conservative north.

The events of November 25th 1975 completely reversed this situation and shifted the balance of forces firmly in favour of the right wing. Such a fundamental change could not have resulted merely from a clever manoeuvre by the right in the armed forces, particularly at a time when they were so weak. There is no doubt that a right wing provocation and possible coup was planned by people like Ramalho Eanes and Jaime Neves (head of the Amadora commandos), but in itself this does not explain the defeat of November 25th and the retreat of the working class since then.

The fundamental reasons lie in the crisis of leadership of the working class movement. By November 25th the class struggle had reached such a peak that there were only two alternative directions. Either onto the seizure of power or backwards into a period of defeat and demoralisation. It is possible that only the weakness and division of the bourgeoisie at the time avoided a far bloodier defeat for the working class. As it was the bourgeoisie gained two vital objectives; purging and disbanding the left in the army and regaining its hold over the media. The workers' organisations were left intact but seriously demoralised, particularly so because of previous illusions in the lefts in the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) who were now totally routed.

Some organisations on the left, notably the USFI lay the blame for the defeat almost exclusively on the 'insurrectionist line' of the PRP - BR and other centrist groups. Certainly to call for an insurrection when the overwhelming majority of the working class was still under the influence of the reformist parties was completely wrong. When this dominance was still

demonstrated by the failure of the lefts to win the workers and neighbourhood commissions to acting as soviets, to determine ones policies entirely by the far reaching but confused radicalisation of the soldiers was an error of the greatest magnitude. To accommodate to the confusion of the soldiers vis-a-vis the AFM and charismatic bonapartist figures like Carvalho was a crime. Yet the greatest crime was their failure to even attempt to win.

In so far as the centrist groups are to blame it is their failure to win Communist and Socialist Party workers through a correct United Front approach in the months leading up to November 25th which is central.

A massive united resistance by the workers' commissions and the rank and file soldiers organisations could have foiled the the right wing on November 25th and left the workers and soldiers organisations stronger than ever. But the principal leaders of the working class, the PCP, did not look to the workers at all. At their most radical, they were hoping that Carvalho would lead a left wing coup which would get the CP more Government places at minimum cost to themselves. When the right-wing plotters carried the day, the CP did not mobilise the working class in support of the paratroops and the capitulation of a number of their key officers and sergeants in the middle of the events left the whole movement in chaos.

### THE CP'S ROLE ON THE DAY

Alvaro Cunhal, the CP leader, went to see Costa Gomes and Melo Antunes and agreed not to mobilise the Lisbon Workers and not to mobilise the other military units in defence of the paratroopers and also not to oppose the re-imposition of order in the armed forces. In this situation the revolutionary left were totally unable to offer a clear revolutionary alternative. Their lack of influence in the workers' organisations made it impossible to mobilise the working class and the CP in a general strike to stop the isolation and defeat of the paratroopers.

The outcome of November 25th was therefore the re-imposition of military discipline, the appointment of right wingers to

the editorial boards of all the newspapers and the handing back of powers to the GNR (riot police force under fascism). Within weeks the GNR had opened fire on a demonstration in Oporto and picket lines in Lisbon. Hundreds of PIDE agents were released while 200 left wing prisoners were held after the 25th. The workers continued to fight, with struggles against soaring inflation and unemployment, one of the major struggles being at the Lisbon Timex factory. The workers' commissions were intact, and now the working class had to look to itself rather than the left wingers in the army to defend and advance its gains.

Having established its hold on the army and the media the ruling class was able to advance to the second stage of its strategy. A package of austerity measures including a total wage freeze until the end of February 1976 was announced. The increasingly confident right wing now looked forward to the elections to the Legislative Assembly on the second anniversary of the 1974 April 25 coup. They hoped for a stable bourgeois democratic government which could attempt to solve the economic crisis at the expense of the working class. Despite the increasing strength of the overtly capitalist PPD and CDS, it was still the Socialist Party of Mario Soares which held the key to this strategy. The result of the elections was inconclusive. The SP was the largest single party with 37% of the vote with the CP's share increasing slightly to 17%. The CDS (a haven for Salazarist and Spínolists) doubled its vote to 15% while the PPD's vote remained stable. The SP refused a co-alition with either the CP or the right wing parties and is attempting to rule with a minority in the Legislative Assembly. It is probably only because of pressure from its working class base that the SP refused coalition with the right wing parties.

#### THE NATURE OF THE SP VOTE

Despite the fact that 54% of the votes were cast for the so-called workers parties this result should not be viewed too optimistically. For months before the elections the SP had headed the attacks on the CP in the North, on workers' control at Republica and Radio Renascenca and on the rank and file soldiers organisations. Therefore much of the SP vote was probably a conscious right wing one. On the other hand much of its support remains working class with its promises of "democratic Socialism" attracting workers repelled by the CP's bureaucratic methods. It was to the rank and file of the CP and SP that revolutionaries should have directed agitation for a CP-SP Government. They should have posed a programme of demands to defend and advance the gains made by the working class since 25th April 1974. Of the groups of the far left which stood in the elections only the candidates of the LCP/PRT (sympathising sections of the USFI) raised anything approaching these sorts of demands. The Maoist UDP restricted its agitation to the demand for a 'Patriotic Anti-fascist Government'. And in its usual ultra-left fashion, the PRP boycotted the elections. All in all the parties to the left of the CP obtained about 200,000 votes.

Another test for the revolutionary left came with the Presidential elections on June 27th 1976. The new Portuguese Constitution gives very large powers to the President. As well as President he is head of the Revolutionary Council of the armed forces and Army chief of staff. He can dismiss Governments and exercise emergency powers. Therefore while the Legislative Assembly provides a democratic gloss to the system, real power lies with the President. The action of the SP and the CP in signing the pact between the parties and the armed forces hierarchy recognising this state of affairs actually renders them impotent. Any anti-capitalist measures passed by the Legislative Assembly can be annulled by the President.

The successful Presidential candidate with 61% of the vote was General Ramalho Eanes, the right wing hero of 25th November. He was also closely involved in the attempted Spínolist coups in September '74 and March '75 and was dismissed from his position

as head of the Portuguese TV network after March '75. His candidature was supported by the whole bourgeoisie, the PPD, the CDS, the SP and the Army and Air Force. The CP was only prevented from supporting him by pressure from its base, and the CP candidature was a purely formal one. Octavio Pato, a leading figure on the right of the party gained only 8% of the poll and in a statement announcing the candidature the CP made its intentions clear. 'The Central Committee of the PCP has decided for the time being not to support any military candidate. This however does not stand in the way of the Party supporting a military officer once one is elected President of the Republic'. Pato himself stated in 'Jornal Novo' on May 25th. 'While not supporting the candidacy of Ramalho Eanes..... We are not hostile to it either. Nor do we present our own candidacy in direct opposition to his or a plan for counterposing the workers' and peoples movement to the armed forces.'

#### THE BENEVOLENT BONAPARTE

The most confusing candidacy for the Left groups was that of Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. He played a leading role in the 25th April coup which toppled fascism and was imprisoned after November 25th. His campaign of mass rallies with red flags and carnations in abundance seemed to many the answer to the candidacy of Eanes and the bourgeois plan centred around this. Carvalho however is no working class candidate. It is true that COPCON was very inefficient agent of the bourgeois state during the time Carvalho commanded it, and it sometimes sided with workers struggles. But Carvalho's record also included acquiescence when the troops were sent against Radio Renascenca, alliance with the moderate 'Group 9' officers in September 1975 and failure to call for resistance on November 25th. 'Otelo' has always been essentially a maverick element within the military hierarchy. Examination of his programme should have warned the Left not to be carried away by the enthusiasm of his personality campaign.

His programme was essentially a bourgeois one dressed up with left rhetoric about 'Popular Power' and 'A friend in the Presidency'. It started by recognising the constitution and declared against the interference of the political parties in the trade unions. This 'apartidariism' was reflected throughout the campaign, and the groups supporting the candidacy were not allowed to sell their literature at campaign meetings. In speeches Otelo claimed 'It's the parties which have divided the workers. We must unite together to create popular power'. This antiparty feeling is strong amongst some of the most militant workers. It is fueled by the bickering and sectarianism of the centrist groupings and their failure to understand the tactics of the united front. Nevertheless for would-be revolutionaries to go along with it and support a candidacy which could do nothing but reinforce it was disastrous. Carvalho did not argue for working class action against the bourgeois state apparatus and the formation of a workers militia, but pledged 'to put the Armed Forces and the Police Force at the service of the people and the national interest, by never letting repression crush the workers'.

Otelo also declared himself in favour of the 'AFM-People' alliance and advocated 'Armed forces where order and discipline prevail' albeit not an order and discipline which are used as excuses to repress workers. His outlook remains that of a benevolent, left-wing bonaparte. Commending Portuguese workers to reliance on him does not advance one step the self organisation or self reliance they need to seize and wield state power.

As far as economic policy was concerned he did not mention inflation and unemployment running at 30% and 15% respectively and stated that 'socialism will only be achieved by

our children' and that in the meantime workers should 'make sacrifices for the national reconstruction' as long as they feel 'that those sacrifices were being made in the national interest'. As far as Eanes was concerned Carvalho stated at a Press Conference that - 'I do not intend to attack or discuss any army comrade chosen by the political forces as their candidate. The responsibility attached to the Presidency and the devotion it requires calls for dignity and total respect'. While criticising the backlash after November 25th, he also described Eanes as a comrade and said he would not have stood if Costa Gomes had done so.

The forces behind the Carvalho campaign were organised in 'Groups for the Dynamisation of Popular Unity' (GDUP). Three supposedly revolutionary groups, PRP, MES and UDP were the main participants. Once again the Portuguese far left was incapable of meeting up to basic revolutionary tasks and uncritically tailed Otelo's campaign. In line with its 'two stages' theory of democratic revolution now, socialist revolution later, the UDP (the largest and fastest growing left group) even opposed the vague references to socialism in Carvalho's platform.

Otelo achieved 17% of the vote because he seemed to offer for many militant workers a way back to the heady days before November 25th. However what was required was not more of the same old illusions, but working class action to secure its political independence from all capitalists and army officers. Central to this would have been an attack on the Presidential system and the Bonapartist project of the ruling class, which on only thinly veiled by Soares shakey minority government.

#### THE LCI'S AND THE PRT'S STANCE

A tiny ray of light was offered by the campaign of the LCI and PRT. Although shortlived because the false claims of the candidate to a heroic anti-fascist record caused an early withdrawal, the campaign contained elements of a correct approach. The LCI/PRT stood against the pro-Carvalho tide on the Portuguese left and proposed a critical vote for Octavio Pato as the only candidate of a workers' party. They also declared against the pact between the Parties and the Armed Forces hierarchy and for a workers' united front in struggle. However there were serious errors in the campaign. This bowdlerisation of the Trotskyist tactic of calling on the reformist workers parties to 'break with the bourgeoisie and enter on the road of struggle for the workers government' - in fact could do nothing but bolster illusions in 'normal bourgeois democracy'. The idea that a revolutionary candidate if elected on a revolutionary programme would call on a right-wing reformist parliamentarian to form a government is pretty remarkable. Further the platform uncritically described the SP and CP as workers parties without referring to the bourgeois nature of their programmes and made no clear proposals for a programme of concrete demands to be uput on a CP-SP government. The LCI which before the 25th of November had in pursuit of the 'new mass vanguard' of workers and soldiers, gone along with the ultra-left sectarianism of the left centrist groupings forming the FUR has obviously taken a sharp turn to the right. Why is this?

The LCI is under pressure from the United Secretariat of the FI to effect a rapprochement with the PRT. The PRT's politics are those of chronic adaptation to Social Democracy. The PRT denounced the Republica struggle and described the 25th November uprising by the paratroopers as an anti-working class venture and therefore not a defeat for the class. During the Presidential campaign it managed to couple critical support for the CP candidate with calls for a SP only

Government. Under pressure from the USFI the two groupings concocted an eclectic jumble of a programme and because of pressure from the pro-Carvalho feeling amongst the working class both these organisations underwent serious splits rendering the forces of Trotskyism even more atomised and impotent in Portugal.

#### THE CURRENT SITUATION

With his inauguration as Prime Minister and safely backed up by Ramalho Eanes as President, Mario Soares proceeded to outline a number of anti-working class measures. These include a wage freeze, an increase in the productivity of labour, priming of the private sector, financial pruning of the public sector and restriction of the Minister of Agriculture, Antonio Lopes Cardoso. His defence of the Agrarian Reform has made him a favourite target for reaction, especially the Confederation of Farmers of Portugal (CAP) formed in Autumn 1975 to organise resistance to the land occupations. It is possible that Cardoso could now become a pole of attraction for dissidents in the SP though he has never distinguished himself by courageous opposition to Soares and the amorphous structure of the SP makes this very difficult. The actual amount of land involved in the attacks is as yet small, but successful re-occupation by the land lords involved, backed up by the GNR and the army will lead the way to further attacks. 1,100,00 hectares of land have been occupied by farmworkers in the Alentejo and Ribetejo regions. A law legalising the occupation of 1,800,000 hectares was passed by the Fourth Provisional Government of Vasco Gonsalves. The "disoccupations" which have been carried out involve only 101 properties covering 16,800 hectares which did not qualify under this law. But this has been done without opposition either by farmworkers or in the industrial centres. Soares has also introduced laws to compensate land owners and under pressure from the CAP the occupation of further land allowed by the law has been frozen. Cardoso's split with the SP has come because he opposed these attacks and wanted the 700,000 further hectares allowed by the Fourth Provisional Government allowed to come under the Agrarian Reform.

The dispute came to a head at the SP Congress held from October 30th to November 1st. The report by Mario Soares as General Secretary was passed by a large majority. In it he announced tough austerity measures and attacked the dissenters within the party. Referring to the Agrarian Reform he stated that "The Alentejo region has been turned into Russian collectives". Opposition at the Congress polarised around a group of trade union leaders who said that "they were not in opposition but expressing concern that the parties leaders were out of touch with working class feelings and that the trade union base should be strengthened, especially at a time when the working class was being asked to make sacrifices". This grouping also attacked a new law allowing the sacking of "indolent or disobedient employees". In the elections for the 151 strong National Political Commission the left put up an alternative slate to the leadership's and obtained a quarter of the seats. While this opposition around Cardoso and the trade union leaders does not represent a fundamental break, it has obviously arisen in response to more fundamental differences amongst the rank and file working class base of the SP. This could lead to a split and the possibility of a coalition between the Soares leadership and the PPD and CDS then comes to the fore.

The level of the struggle of Portuguese workers is now ebbing and many left wing teachers have been victimised. It remains to be seen whether this is a lull before the Municipal elections in December or reflects a more serious demoralisation of the working class. The CP is strong in the Municipalities. It faces a challenge from the GDUP's which have been maintained since the Presidential elections, though they have been riven with internecine strife between the UDP and the PRP quarreling over the 'heritage' of Carvalho's personal vote which is highly

unlikely to be 'caught' by the GDUP's. The economic crisis has worsened. The Financial Times on November 3rd 1976 stated that Foreign Currency Reserves are still dwindling and unemployed and inflation stand at 13 and 30% respectively. Assistance to the tune of one billion escudos from Western Europe has kept Portugal going since the beginning of 1976. This level of aid can be expected to continue since the right has achieved victory in the Presidential elections and has a potentially strong coalition in the Legislative Assembly.

#### THE ROAD NARROWS

In the short term Soares right-wing social democracy is the best bet for muzzling and confusing the working class. Economic conditions however make stronger medicine inevitable. Soares' government does not have a long life ahead of it. The alternatives facing the bourgeoisie - open military presidential rule or a coalition between the SP and the PPD/CDS (with a possible split-off of the left in the SP) depend on the seriousness of Portugal's economic crisis and the pugnacity and powers of resistance of the working class. The Portuguese workers however are not condemned to a choice between being eaten bit by bit or all at once by their International and national capitalists. The road is still open to the Portuguese workers to seize power - their organisations are largely intact.

Yet the road is undoubtedly narrower and beset with greater dangers than was the case twelve months ago. The continued

fragmentation and impotence of the groups to the left of the CP undoubtedly tempts many militants to despair of parties and programmes and place all their hope on the spontaneity and creativity the workers have shown since April 1974.

The Portuguese workers do not need admirers or flatterers. To chart a course through the difficulties of the coming year needs the highest clarity and consciousness. A programme is necessary which focusses today's struggles over wages, unemployment, democratic rights and the agrarian reform on their only real solution the taking of state power by the workers or organisations themselves.

Recognising that the Portuguese workers, despite their tremendous and profoundly revolutionary energy still place their trust in the militants of the reformist parties, the tactic of the united front, to mobilise resistance and expose the leaders is crucial. Above all the building of disciplined cadre-party, able to formulate and operate both programme and tactics, is the task which cannot be delayed.

A strange silence has fallen over the revolutionary left in Britain on the question of Portugal. Journals and PO papers once loud with the doings of the Portuguese workers, have little or nothing to say. Apparently the "Lessons of Portugal" are only the lessons of success. This attitude betrays contempt both for the British and Portuguese workers. Critical analysis is the least debt internationalists can pay to the workers of the two countries. In its absence practical assistance and solidarity is likely to be missing too.

# SOUTHERN AFRICA

## Imperialism in search of new friends

by  
Sue Thomas

With the forces of the Smith regime engaged in a desperate attempt to smash the border guerilla bases and with revolt in South Africa still simmering, the forces of world Imperialism face a severe crisis of their rule in southern Africa.

U.S. Imperialism can no longer guarantee for itself either a smooth transition to a Rhodesia ruled by an amenable black leadership, nor can it hope to patch up the cracks in the rickety apartheid regime by persuading Vorster to make concessions to the Coloured and African population.

What are the factors that have produced the present explosive situation? We can isolate several key points: the success of the national liberation forces in the ex-Portuguese colonies, the gross economic and social instability inside the white-ruled states and their growing unsuitability for Imperialism. Most important of all is the growth of organisation, consciousness and confidence within the black and coloured populations in South Africa, manifested over the summer largely in the incredibly courageous demonstrations by the young people.

Mozambique and Angola do not stand as beacons of the socialist revolution. U.S. Imperialism is quite capable of adjusting to the new regimes as is shown by the deals made between major oil companies and the M. P. L. A. even while the war was still going on. But the victories of the M.P.L.A. and Frelimo did represent major blows to the preferred U.S. strategy. The Pentagon is still smarting under its defeat and inability to intervene openly against the M.P.L.A. Although the new rulers are not keen themselves to see the spreading over of the guerilla wars, their countries can be used as bases for S.W.A.P.O. and Z.I.P.A. At the same time the liberation of Angola and Mozambique serve as examples to those struggling against white rule in Southern Africa and have given those forces tremendous confidence.

It is now commonly accepted, even by the bourgeois press, that Kissinger's aim in attempting to stitch up a settlement in Rhodesia was to secure white ruled South Africa for continued U.S. investment. U.S. corporations have over

1½ billion dollars invested in South Africa and realise one of the world's highest rates of profit. Vast tracts of Zimbabwe are already in guerilla hands; the success of the liberation forces would not only cause huge (if temporary) problems for Imperialism in Zimbabwe itself but would intensify the threat to white South Africa — 'setting the continent alight'. A negotiated settlement, on the other hand, would prevent the growth of the struggle in the urban working class in Zimbabwe and allow the black leaders to police a smooth change-over. Hence the pressure of the U.S. and Britain to achieve a negotiated settlement for Zimbabwe.

However, not only is the kind of settlement preferred by the U.S. unlikely to occur, given the strength of the guerilla forces and the intransigence of the white Rhodesian Front, but the system in South Africa itself cannot be preserved so easily. The Apartheid system has served Imperialism well, but it is inherently unstable.

Why is South Africa so important to Imperialism — in what way has it served its interests?

The massive investments are attracted by the vast mineral wealth, the fact that South Africa is the West's largest gold producer and by the low wages paid to black workers. These investments have made South Africa the only advanced industrial country in Africa, producing 40% of the continent's manufactured output.

Wages have been kept low, enabling the realisation of super profits, because the South African ruling class has tried to create a working class that does not have its roots or base in the towns. "Separate development" has its ideological justification in racial theories akin to Nazism, but its economic roots lie in the attempt to create a working class whose 'homes' are the Bantustans but whose work is in the rich industrial belt around Johannesburg. In 1973 more than 75% of the income of all Africans in the Bantustans was earned outside of their borders. The Transkei is simply a territory where this policy has been taken to its culminating point of 'national self-determination'.

The policy has, in large part, been successful in preventing the development of a conscious leadership in the black working class. The contract labour system, the pass laws, the ability of the regime to incarcerate political leaders, all serve to suppress the political development of the working class and undermine continuity of leadership.

Not surprisingly, therefore, it was the youth that took the lead this summer. The apartheid system cannot help but create its own opposition. The spark was the attempt by the regime to further enforce its 'Bantu-ization' through 'Bantu education' — which meant the dropping of the use of English as the language of instruction. The revolt over language became one against the whole of 'Bantu-ization'.

However, the students cannot hope to overturn apartheid on their own, and the best of their leaders already know this. The beginning of two essential developments have taken place, the building of unity between the African and Coloured populations and the drawing into struggle of the black working class. The latter was demonstrated by the strike of more than ¼ million workers in the Johannesburg general strike of early August.

Despite the immense difficulties, there has been a significant growth in organisation amongst black workers since 1972. The end of that year saw the dockworkers' strike, the following year the Natal strike of more than 60 000; in 1974 there were 374 recorded stoppages even though strikes are illegal except in very limited circumstances.

There were other reasons for raising wages in the period after the strike wave of '73 and '74. Another contradiction within apartheid is that the maintenance of low wages and the creation of the Bantustans means that the home market is ridiculously small; raising wages could expand it — but raising them in response to the struggle has given sections of the black working class increased confidence.

#### DETENTE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The white rulers are caught in the same dilemma whichever way they turn. Shocked by the demonstrations of unity between black and coloured youth, the ruling class turned, initially, to a strategy long advanced by some of its 'progressive' sections. This was to give more 'rights' to the Coloured population in the hope of giving them some interest in the maintenance of the state. However, the regime cannot easily impose such a solution, small reforms are not enough to stave off growing Coloured consciousness while large ones threaten to upset the whole apple-cart. The entire process of reform opens up splits in the white ruling class.

Thus, despite its intense repressive machinery on the one hand and its attempts to give concessions on the other, the white regime in South Africa remains wracked by the internal contradictions of apartheid and increasingly unable to prevent the emergence of a new leadership.

In his external policy, however, Vorster still hopes to find some room for manoeuvre. The inadequacy of the home market, combined with the necessity to ensure stability in neighbouring states, led the South African government to negotiate with the black African states. In this policy the South African ruling class have a shared interest with U.S. Imperialism. Such internal and external pressures led Vorster to his meeting with Kaunda at Victoria Falls in August 1975, to develop a policy of detente and establish a common interest in the peaceful transition to black rule in Zimbabwe.

The black African leaders have their own reasons for dealing with white South Africa. Not only Kaunda and Nyerere, but also Neto and Machel, have a political interest in compromise and 'stability'. It can bring temporary aid to their economies devastated and ravaged by Imperialism. It can also provide political stability to the black leaders to hold out against the demands of the black liberation forces and the developing African working class. This is so for Neto and the M.P.L.A. as it is for Kaunda. Until a few months ago Machel's Frelimo was denying arms to Z.I.P.A. and holding Mugabe in 'protective custody'.

#### THE OPTIONS FOR IMPERIALISM

At the moment, however, the African leaders cannot be seen by the African masses to be propping up Smith; nor can they drop their commitment to majority rule. The fact that the U.S. has declared itself determined to end white domination opens up the possibility of a stitched up deal with a section of the black leaders, but, at the same time, it clearly will give encouragement to the development of the armed struggle. Frelimo has now handed over border land, previously owned by the Portuguese for guerilla bases and agricultural communes.

In such a situation the options for Imperialism are narrowing rapidly. In order to prevent the involvement of larger sections of the Zimbabwean population in struggle, in order to prevent the growth of the strength of Z.I.P.A., Imperialism pins its hopes on a hurried deal with the black leaders. It pins its hopes on a deal with them before the struggle develops dimensions that Imperialism and the black leaders cannot control. Already Nkomo, Imperialism's greatest hope, is incapable of forcing his will on the guerilla forces.

All sections of the Zimbabwean leadership have shown their willingness to compromise in Geneva. Imperialism, represented directly by Ivor Richards, is showing its desperate wish to strike a bargain with these leaders, a bargain to be struck before the guerilla forces can take both the white Rhodesians and Western investments, by the throat.

Imperialism has treated with the black leaders of Africa. It has struck a deal with the M.P.L.A. leaders. It will seek to do a deal with the black Zimbabwe leaders. We should have no illusions that the nationalist leaders are spearheading a socialist revolution in southern Africa. Only the working class of southern Africa can lead and develop an alternative, socialist, path away from the conciliation and compromise of the black nationalist leaders.

But socialists must not shirk their duty to organise real support and solidarity with those struggling in southern Africa. A defeat for Imperialism's most direct and preferred strategy for exploitation in southern Africa narrows the options and possibilities of world imperialism. It gives new heart and encouragement to liberation forces everywhere. Imperialism will defend its bastion of South Africa at any price in repression and temporary political compromise. We must aid its downfall.

We must organise through the Trade Unions, through the Labour Party, for an end to all economic and military support for white South Africa. We must demand that the Labour Government directly aid the liberation forces with money and arms to pursue their struggle. We must ensure the maximum unity of those in the British Labour movement committed to such a campaign against all complicity of the Labour government in defending the interests of Imperialism against the black population of Africa.



# FAILURE OF A FUSION

## The split in the I-CL

Last November in the first issue of this magazine we made clear our attitude to fragmentation on the Left, to fusions and to unity. The position that we argued stressed our commitment to revolutionary regroupment "around a clear programme - a clear strategy and precise tactics."

"The nucleus of the British revolutionary party does not exist in any of the large revolutionary organisations. Our experience has convinced us that the International Socialists, the largest group, cannot build that party. Those who have broken or are breaking with the dead-ends represented by the leaderships of the major tendencies (compromised as they are by Economism, sectarianism and opportunism) must make a serious attempt to develop an alternative strategy capable of building the party on firm foundations".

"To such a task we dedicate our small resources. We welcome into our ranks comrades with a similar perspective. We shall fuse our organisation with any grouping sharing the same fundamental political principles".

The fusion which took place between ourselves and Workers Fight was entered into by us on a perfectly principled basis. The two groupings had independently adopted principled positions (on such issues as the Common Market, the General Strike and Ireland) that separated both organisations from the rest of the revolutionary left. But agreement went beyond these issues. We shared a rejection of the Cliffite and Healyite traditions of opportunism and sectarianism and an insistence that no democratic centralist International based on an international revolutionary programme was in existence. Against the USFI we both insisted that an International in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky still had to be built. Agreement existed on the need for new work and debate on the nature of Stalinist states. The fused organisation was committed to doing that work.

Tactical differences existed and continued to do so. The principle tactical differences at the time of fusion concerned work in the Troops Out Movement (TOM) and the orientation to the mass reformist party. It would, however, have been criminal of us not to attempt fusion with the only grouping on the Left which could be characterised as standing on the same political terrain as ourselves.

The fusion was not simply to be declared and recognised on an organisational level. Both sides recognised the need for a period of political argument and debate culminating in a conference which would terminate all organisational remnants of the arrangements made at fusion. The primary focus for this political work was to be the production and discussion of an Action Programme; and it is on this issue that the differences of political method between ourselves and the WF were revealed most sharply.

As we will demonstrate for those not privy to the inner life and circles of the fused I-CL organisation, clear political differences did emerge. However, it was the Matgamnaite approach to argument and debate that ensured that those differences were actually obscured inside the I-CL and lost in a storm of slander and manoeuvre.

The Workers Power group entered the fusion with Workers Fight (WF) on the clear understanding that a comradely and objective discussion would take place on all areas of difference. This did not happen. Every political debate of any substance was sabotaged by charges of cliquism, apolitical factionalism (a sample of the flavour of political debate can be gathered by the uninitiated from the hysterical I-CL press releases and letters to Workers Action and Red Weekly). De-fusion coming as the only possible response to the split manoeuvres of Matgamna and Co, as a result, left most of the political differences blurred. This is a bad situation but one which we accept no responsibility for.

Throughout the debate the ex-WF leadership showed a consistent chronic unwillingness and inability to concretise their own positions or to politically characterise ours. At times we were 'semi-syndicalists', 'unregenerated ISers', 'orthodox Trotskyists', 'catastrophists'. Not one of these political characterisations was seriously argued for. With astonishing light mindedness they were raised and dropped at the convenience of the Matgamnaites. It was not always convenient for the Matgamnaites to recognise that political differences existed. Not surprisingly it would have required concretisation and accounting of their political line. For whole periods wild and unsubstantiated accusations as to our political position were in fact dropped in favour of accusations as to our motives, our drive for power, our competitiveness and (most consistently) Matgamna's favourite charge of cliquism. Using such blunt instruments Matgamna absolves himself and his acolytes from any serious political debate and allows him to indulge his talents for Healyite slander and falsification.

Despite the theoretical 'reticence' and 'coyness' of the Matgamnaites we are however perfectly prepared to analyse and detail their politics which explain why the Workers Fight group - which was the healthiest independent tendency on the revolutionary left in this country from 1971 to 1974, is now on the way to sectarian degeneration and irrelevance.

### THE PERIOD AND POLITICAL PRACTICE

Revolutionaries operating in the epoch of Wars and Revolution need a clear notion of the period of capitalist development and class struggle, international and nationally, that they themselves are situated in. This is not because an analysis of the period reveals 'processes' which revolutionaries merely have to

wait for or 'relate to'. It is because the Transitional Programme has to be re-elaborated and fought for on the basis of the concrete period of capitalist development and the consequent perspective for the class struggle. Perspectives and tactics for revolutionaries must flow from the relationship between our understanding of the period and the programme we fight for, and the size and implantation of our organisation. Only on this basis can scientific and concrete perspectives and tactics be developed.

Matgamna, Thomas and Hornung have no serious or consistent appraisal of 'period'. They share, of course, with all Bolshevik-Leninists the tenet that we live in the epoch of Imperialism, of the transition to Socialism. But they have a horror of the sort of theoretical generalisation which directs attention to the problem of period. Matgamna can thus say, as he does, that the present problems of world capitalism are not a down-turn to stagnation but a mere hiccup. What is also revealing that this is not even a serious opinion based on acquaintance with the literature (bourgeois or Marxist) on the subject.

The whole question is seen as an academic and irrelevant one. Thomas, for example, does have a propensity for 'catastrophist and optimistic' revolutionary forecasts. Matgamna is a 'black pessimist' about Ireland, Portugal, and Spain. He envisages a Capitalism still capable of considerable expansion and stabilising itself. Both, however, agree that the question is irrelevant and inconsequential. For instance, Thomas wrote a perspective document for the I-CL during the pre-conference discussion. One draft envisaged a massive upturn in class struggle; the next was far more 'cautious' and 'sober' - the important point however is that the conclusions, the proposals remained absolutely identical!

Recoiling in horror from the automatism - the process politics of the USFI where the "world revolution" does this or that and "the permanent revolution" enforces its will regardless and independent of parties and programmes - Matgamna and Co have fallen into the shallowest empiricism. The safest way not to be trapped into the snare of generalisations is to not make any. Instead they work by the well known rule of thumb principle "where can our group make the biggest gains". This all seems so very practical and down to earth. It is a "sensible" oh-so British method that has led Cliff and IS to sectarianism. It is leading the I-CL there by a shorter route.

A correct understanding of period prescribes tasks for revolutionaries. Tasks which arise out of the needs of the class nationally and internationally. On this point it is possible to err seriously. Organisations like IS with no programme and indeed a contempt for programmes start off from the subjective moods of the class - what are the workers fighting for at the moment. This leads to chronic opportunism over what revolutionaries do not fight over and a low prioritisation of questions such as Ireland and Women.

The sectarian starts from the needs of their organisation which is identified with the only need of the class - the abstract need for a revolutionary party. The political assessment of period, perspective is then skewed to fit the sect's priorities.

This process is visible in the I-CL. Perspective is derived from 'where next', the position of new and hopefully open, opportunities for recruitment. Thomas is already, consequently playing with a theory of a 'revival of Social-Democracy on a world scale. The wilier and more consistent empiricist Matgamna is more deeply suspicious of anything that goes beyond 'we can recruit best in X or Y'. He consoles any nagging doubts about the world outside with the thought that capitalism is stable anyhow, or that (in true Cliff style) he will "bend the stick" the other way if something crops up. Thus the 'principled'

sectarian and the 'non-sectarian' opportunist find themselves in agreement.

Thus it is in the I-CL that Matgamna and Co were unwilling to produce any perspectives, economic, political, Trade union or Labour Party. General trends of development have no interest for the I-CL. Against this paucity of analysis we had to argue our own perspectives which had been worked out over a long period - the Left Alternative Political Perspectives in late 1974, the Workers Answer to the Crisis, in the spring of 1975 and the Political Perspectives of the first WP aggregate in the autumn of 1975 - and in the written contributions made to the I-CL Programme Commission (and incidentally never circulated to the membership).

## THE PRESENT PERIOD

It is worthwhile briefly summarising our analysis :-

A new period of stagnation, instability and insecurity opens before world capitalism. The long boom of capitalism in the 50's and 60's (when recessions were mild and expansion the norm for most capitalisms) is now finished. On the crest of the massive post war expansion of American Imperialism, capitalism temporarily achieved relative stability and growth. But this very stability was increasingly undermined by a whole series of factors which have worked their way to the surface in the world capitalist economy of the 1970 s.

Wholesale destruction of capital, the destruction of working class resistance by fascism and stalinism, and the expansion of US imperialism into new markets enabled capitalism to temporarily offset the effects of the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. That tendency has reasserted itself in a world system where no new openings and possibilities exist on a scale sufficient to offset it.

The creeping stagnation is crowned by an inflation which has been fuelled by the very forces that enabled capitalism to stabilise itself - massive credits, the hegemony of finance and banking capital, monopoly pricing mechanisms and massive unproductive state expenditure bills. Capitalism has failed to maintain the rate of exploitation of surplus value, to perpetually raise the productivity of labour abreast of increasing organic composition of capital.

But the roots of capitalism's present crisis are not to be found inside the metropolitan countries alone. Passing from France and Britain, the mantle of gendarme of world imperialism, and with it massive armament bills, passed to US imperialism. In the 1960s and -70s, US imperialism suffered serious blows from the anti-imperialist forces of Asia, Africa and South America. Anti-imperialist victories in Cuba, Vietnam and now in Southern Africa not only precipitated serious political crises in the metropolitan heartlands (Portugal and the US), they also removed vital national economies from the direct exploitation of American imperialism. US imperialism, itself facing economic instability and uncertainty, has proved incapable of stemming the tide of anti-imperialist national liberation struggles.

The prerequisites do not exist for a new and dramatic period of growth for world capitalism. Stagnation and instability will be uneven, with stronger and weaker links at every stage of the boom/slump cycle. Competition for markets and investment will sharpen between individual capitalisms and trade blocs. The present so-called boom shows clearly how terrified the 'stronger' capitalisms are of triggering inflation by increas-

ed growth. Weaker capitalisms can not look to world 'booms' to drag them through.

Britain belongs, with others, to the weaker links. It has long term, historically inherited weaknesses which require major surgery rather than short term palliatives. Whoever determines the future of British capitalism - Europe or America - will demand that surgery at the expense of the working class.

The strength and size of the working class movement, the trade unions in particular, their shop-floor organisation, present a serious obstacle to this long term solution. The British bourgeoisie can only solve its problems if the working class is prepared to accept, or is forced to accept, a massive change in conditions it has known for the last 25 years. This 'change' to the advantage of the ruling class - drastic weakening of shop floor organisations and action, a fall in real wages, a permanent wages policy, welfare substantially cut, labor mobility involving the creation of a much larger reserve army of labour - is neither finite nor automatically guarantee the stability of British bourgeoisie.

In its vast majority the ruling class prefers to accomplish these changes, whenever possible, with the co-operation of the Trade Union bureaucracy - incorporating the whole trade union structure as a policing agency. It would clearly like to weaken and incorporate the shop floor organisation, stewards committees etc. However it is fully aware of the limits of incorporation and has prepared and is improving and openly discussing the necessary instruments of coercion.

## the ideological offensive

The working class therefore faces a prolonged period of crisis in the 'national economy' with threats to whole sections of industry through wholesale restructuring and massive redundancy. On the wages front the class faces the twin attack of inflation and wage restraint. Social services taken for granted as gains by the Labour movement will continue to be viciously attacked.

A massive ideological offensive accompanies and justifies this attack - the national interest, pulling together to save Britain, charges of selfishness and attacks on non-productive workers-will threaten the working class with division and sectionalism. 'Pure trade unionism' is chronically unable to meet this challenge, prone as it is to sectional and special case arguments, to local particularism. Events in industries as varied as cars, textiles and steel show how far the process has already gone, involving collaboration with the bosses and the scrapping of conditions won over twenty years of struggle.

The 'national political alternative' of reformism, in itself an extrapolation into the parliamentary field of trade unionism's bargaining within the system, minus even the most minimal involvement of workers in active struggle, further isolates and fragments the class in the face of the attack. This is not because the workers have great illusions in the Labour Party but because it is (apparently) the only pro-working class governmental possibility.

The challenge that revolutionaries face is to relate their programme and policies to the impasse the class, under reformist leadership, faces. The Workers Power Group, against the Workers Fight leadership, has a definite conception of the period through which we are living and the tasks with which it faces

us. Baldly, these are the re-elaboration of the Transitional Programme and the fight to build an International.

This task has faced revolutionaries since the war but the heightening period of crisis - the eruption of revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situations in Portugal and Spain, serious economic and social upheavals in Italy, France and Britain makes the urgency of those tasks clearer and sharply tests the strategy and tactics of the major tendencies in living struggles. Linked inextricably with this are the national tasks of relating to the 'crisis of leadership' in Britain, both on the revolutionary left and amongst the vanguard militants in the workplaces. No group which fails to even address itself to the whole new period and to the chaos and confusion in the working class and revolutionary movement can hope to play a significant role in solving this impasse.

The I-CL sits four square with the sectarians. Significant sections of its leadership believe capitalism to be on the eve of a significant upturn. North Sea oil will come to the rescue of British capitalism and the I-CL! In the history of the I-CL the ex-Workers Fight leaders could only accuse comrade Hughes of 'catastrophism' every time our position was argued while producing no written alternative to it. Matgamna and Co know too well that such predictions are dangerous if actually set on paper! The entire ex-Workers Fight leadership shared one thing in common - whatever the likely outcome for capitalism nationally and internationally, it was purely academic to them, their perspectives and their programme.

It is no accident that the I-CL leadership never understood what we meant when we talked of the fragmentation on the left, and the need for an orientation to splits and fusions. Having no notion of 'period', being therefore more guided by having had their fingers burnt in previous discussions, the ex-Workers Fight leaders could only understand our position as meaning, as they said on numerous occasions, that Hughes and Stocking nurtured ambitions of joining other groups and grander regroupments and were, in all probability, having discussions with other groups. (At the July NC of the I-CL it was actually implied that Hughes was talking to at least two other groups.)

## the perspectives debate

The attitude of the Workers Fight leadership to the debate on the period was no accident. Prompted by a day-to-day realpolitik and manoeuvre to maintain and propagate their sect, the Matgamnaites actually reject the need for perspectives for the period and the class struggle. Perspective and tactics for them, and all sectarians, are derived from their needs and the hunches and inspirations of the leaders. It is no surprise therefore that in the I-CL it was the Workers Power comrades who produced all but one of the perspectives documents for the conference (the Economic, Political and Industrial). Our method was attacked by the rule of thumb sectarians as 'perspectivitus'.

Now perspectives are a necessary part of orienting, preparing and arming an organisation. They do not have magical properties nor should they be a "consolation" for impotence. Any organisation should reject the sort of perspectives which outline broad, optimistic historical processes which assure a rosy future for our very limited tasks and endeavours. However it is necessary, unless revolutionaries wish to wall themselves within the confines of abstract propaganda, to focus our activ-

# The Programme

ity on the key problems facing the class nationally and internationally. We need perspectives which coolly assess developments and realistically relate them to our size, situation etc, producing from this a set of realistic and concrete tasks for the coming period. The activity which is focussed by this process is not only our agitation or "mass work" - subject as this is to our size, composition, the state of the Left etc. Our propaganda needs also to be focussed, as for example Workers Fight's was in 1972 on the General Strike. The current period is very different, dominated by different factors and changed situations. We need an analysis of the situation and an honest assessment of our tasks.

Now any membership has a right to expect this. It is one of the most important ways in which they can judge the competence of the leadership they have elected - hold them politically responsible. Matgamna and Co find such a view abhorrent. This is not to be explained by their psychology. Matgamna and Co's political method - their reliance on manoeuvre, on timeless, 'periodless' propaganda - leads them to treat the I-CL membership with contempt, to treat their organisation with the manner of proprietors, with members who will follow and trust the 'judgement' of the leadership.

The organisational state of the I-CL is therefore a product of the political method of its leadership - it has no programme no strategy or perspective for building a party in the class. Such a position can only be defended by an exaggerated polemical stance on the left, and increasingly by lies and falsification. By turning away from involvement in living struggles (as was the preoccupation of the Workers Fight in the 1972 - 1974 period) towards abstract propaganda in the discussion milieu that the I-CL is increasingly relating to.

In fighting for a split with the Workers Powers group the ex - Workers Fight leadership was in fact fighting to defend its prerogative (as it sees it) to direct the organisation free from the accountability that comes from properly outlined perspectives.

The disastrous effect of not using the Marxist method to analyse the world around us was demonstrated most graphically when Matgamna made an abortive attempt to write a programme. This task is a great revealer of political inadequacy. Though it appears to be at the 'other end' of political life from mass action, as with great events in the class struggle, it focusses like a burning glass all the strengths and weaknesses of a party's politics. Duncan Hallas's never to be published draft programme exposed IS's nakedness sharply and clearly, so has Sean Matgamna's, although the left will have to wait for the unveiling of that document.

The most telling points against his programme were made by us on numerous occasions; it did not assess the period but contented itself with a few perfunctory remarks that would not do justice to a filler article in a paper let alone a section of a programme. The Transitional Programme itself was weak on this score as Trotsky himself recognised. He held that serious work remained to be done on Imperialism. Yet he had 20 years of his own, Lenin's, Bukharin's and the Comintern's analysis behind him. The 'great events' of the 20s and 30s had fundamentally endorsed this analysis, requiring little more than short term analysis. We who have lived through at least 25 years of remarkable stability in the 'metropolitan' imperialist states and have, in the 70s, clearly moved into a new period of instability will have to take some account of this!

A further error is the view of the programme as "written for communists not advanced militants". Now in one important sense this is true. Without communists, without a communist party the programme is a dead letter. It is a communist cadre who use the key elements of the programme in agitation and propaganda, who are directed and co-ordinated in their day-to-day work by its general strategy. But in another important sense the programme is written, not only for advanced militants but for the working class.

"A Programme is formulated not for the editorial board or for the leaders of discussion clubs but for the revolutionary action of millions" (Transitional Programme)

It is not merely a disjointed series of theses on tactics. It is not merely a list of topics for educationals. If it were then the the worst sort of eclectic picking up and dropping of slogans or the worst sort of didacticism would be in order; it is a coherent articulation of a general strategy for the seizure of power.

Matgamna and Thomas during the discussions took up a whole series of apparently contradictory positions which it is worth listing. The only internal consistency revealed is a desire to oppose the conceptions advanced by the Workers Power comrades:

1. What is needed is a 'manifesto similar to the Action programme for France'. (Jan, NC minutes - Matgamna)
2. 'To re-write the Transitional Programme at the moment, given our resources and the level of research and knowledge, is impossible.' (March NC / programme commission - Thomas)
3. 'The programme flows from communist principles, not the crisis or the period.'
4. 'Transitional demands are only agitational within the context of class-wide struggle. They are not raisable in sectional struggles, only in the context of soviets.' (Thomas July)
5. 'The programme is for communists; not for advanced

## workers power 4 will include articles on

THE PARTY AND FACTION DEBATE

THE WESTERN EUROPEAN CPs QUEST FOR POWER

THE WORKING WOMENS CHARTER

SCOTISH NATIONALISM

IRELAND

THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM AND RACIALISM

plus REVIEWS and TOPICS OF STRUGGLE

workers. It is a tool-kit of tactics, swivelled as fits the occasion by the party members'.

6. 'Transitional demands are only raisable in the context of government - governmental demands on the Labour government.' (Matgamna - Sept. 76)

What pattern emerges from this, apart from a factional hopscotch performed when faced with the arguments of the Workers Power comrades?

Firstly, a hostility to the Transitional programme as a coherent strategic document addressed to a whole period of capitalist crisis, a crisis reflected in the crisis of leadership in the workers organisations.

Secondly an aversion to the agitational use of key slogans to generalise struggles, to point toward class solutions, to point to wards soviets, to a workers government and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Instead the I-CL/WF view of the programme is as a series of disjointed lectures, the meat of propaganda circle discussion and polemic with other tendencies, but not for rallying the advanced militants around, not for mass action.

The programme, 'manifesto', as a 'tool box' for day to day manoeuvre is revealed most clearly in Matgamna's own introduction to the draft Manifesto/Action Programme. Talking of the programme he has this to say:

"Its revolutionary validity or otherwise is determined not by whether its basic theoretical bedrock and basic analysis is sound, but by the other more immediate, more conjunctural factors - that is all that is specific to the reactions, concrete analysis and practice of the party".

A leadership which has no 'basic analysis' of the period or bedrock perspective for the class struggle needs to reduce the programme to immediate practice - to what we do now, to what we did then . . . . . but never to what we will do or what we argue the class must do.

Given the politics of the ex-Workers Fight leadership we are not surprised that such a misconception of the method of the Transitional Programme gave birth to a disjointed and malformed monster, the Manifesto/Action Programme. Matgamna was incapable of producing such a document and was later to argue that such a document could not be produced. But the I-CL distorted history now views matters differently. This is how one of their absurd press statements reports the matter:

"The discussion on the Draft Manifesto at the February National Committee served to alarm the ex-Workers Fight leadership because of the blatant factionalism of Hughes and Stocking. Many criticisms were made of the draft, most of them accepted by the author of it, S Matgamna. Hughes and Stocking attempted to weave all the disparate criticisms into an argument for a different type of Manifesto - an Action Programme. Instead of a collaboration we had ultra-factional point scoring". (Sic)

As usual Matgamna defends his prerogative to change the terms of the debate - then labels his opponents as cliquists, ultra-factionalists etc. for defending agreements made at fusion.

Despite such factionalism, in the course of the debate on the programme key areas of political difference between Workers' Power and Workers' Fight emerged, that went beyond those on 'the period' and the significance of the method of the Transitional Programme.

## THE TRADE UNIONS

In the old Workers Fight 'Where We Stand' one finds: "Although they cannot organise the struggle for workers power, the Trade unions, are indispensable for the defence of workers interests".

In the programme one finds them described as "the bed rock organisations of the working class, indispensable for the defence of workers interests". Interesting that the authors of these lines should be so indignant about those calling the trade unions "fighting organs of the class", and so hot in their insistence that that was how Workers Power comrades defined the trade unions. The above quotations clearly envisage them as organs of defensive struggle. Actually they are organs of one of the three basic forms of the proletarian struggle distinguished by Engels, economic as opposed to political and theoretical. They are crippled even in this function by a parasitic class collaborationist bureaucracy. But the bureaucracy is not the trade union and is not to be confused with supposed natural limitations (restriction to economic struggle - bargaining within the system) of the Trade unions as Martin Thomas does. Thomas had this to say of the trade unions in the present period,

"The trade unions are fundamentally not fighting organs of the class, but organs of the bourgeois state for domesticating the working class" [from 'Building the ICL']

This negative assessment of the Trade Unions, however, is not a prelude to rank and file-ism, but to turning from the Trade Unions to the Labour Party as the crucial focus for combatting reformism.

It is an emphasis not shared by Trotsky. This grotesquely one-sided assessment contrasts sharply with Trotsky's position:

"The decay of British Capitalism, under the conditions of decline of the world capitalist system, undermined the basis for the reformist work of the trade unions. Capitalism can continue to maintain itself only by lowering the standard of living of the working class. Under these conditions trade unions can either transform themselves into revolutionary organisations or become lieutenants of capital in the intensified exploitation of the workers." (Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay)

Again, from the same document,

"From that point on, (from the emergence of the trade union bureaucracy and its commitment to counter-revolution - WP) the most important task of the revolutionary party became the liberation of the workers workers from the reactionary influence of the trade union bureaucracy."

Trotsky is quite aware of the conservative nature of trade union organisation. He envisaged at least two possible extremes of development as the British working class approached a revolutionary situation; either the trade unions would lag hopelessly behind workplace organisations such as factory com-

mittees or workplace-based delegate bodies like councils of action and soviets or they might even do duty for them in Britain. Workers' Power, which fought economism in IS, has no illusions about the stultifying role of trade union cretinism. For us the key question is the fight for Communist politics in the trade unions. We do not underestimate the difficulties facing revolutionaries there. However, the idea that the Labour Party arena is a more free and healthy milieu because of its 'openness to politics' is an illusion. It also has its particular dangers — parliamentary and electoral cretinism. To say these are less of a problem is to ignore the adaptationism which has crippled every tendency of Trotskyists doing work there. What is more it is a milieu less exposed to the sharp test of mass struggle.

The major historic form of the united front suited to British conditions — because of the great size and authority the trade unions have built up over a hundred years — is a rank and file movement aiming to transform the unions into real fighting organs around a programme of class struggle. To do this a rank and file movement must struggle to democratise the unions from bottom to top, that is to oust the bureaucracy.

Trotsky pointed out, in the Transitional Programme, "A correct policy regarding trade unions is a basic condition for adherence to the Fourth International. He who does not seek and does not find the road to the masses is not a fighter but a deadweight to the Party."

For Trotsky, in the imperialist epoch, the fundamental question facing the trade unions was either integration into the capitalist state or to become, under the leadership of Communists, "organs of proletarian revolution". It is characteristic of Matgamna and Thomas that they present the former tendency as an accomplished fact. Martin Thomas, in the conference document, 'Building the I-CL' writes,

"The trade unions are fundamentally not fighting organs of the class, but organs of the bourgeois state for domesticating the working class." (MT's emphasis WP)

A careless formulation perhaps? Not so. Matgamna embroiders on the same theme at greater length.

"The education system and the media, of course, reinforce the ties of bourgeois ideology over the working class; most important, however, in a situation where the working class has created an organisationally independent political force and has periodically engaged in major struggles with the bourgeoisie, is the role of the trade unions in sustaining the false consciousness created by the basic social relations of bourgeois society (sic!) and restricting the struggles of the working class from breaking through that consciousness.

The trade unions 'socialise' the class to acceptance of bargaining within the system and, therefore, taking responsibility for it in times of crisis."

The turn away from the trade union milieu will automatically make its mark on the I-CL cadre. It is already green and inexperienced in this field. Bolstered by 'new' theories as to the nature of the trade unions, in their essence sectarian, the I-CL will continue to drift further and further away from the central arena for combatting reformism in the British working class. This sectarianism will bear fruit in opportunism. It

already has. The hysterical attacks on those who advocated voting IS in the Walsall bye-election is a case in point. The I-CL's position was defended, in public, by claims to be speaking to the masses (a sudden sloughing off of the limitations of a tiny propaganda group). In private it was revealed to be a collapse into opportunism dictated by the tactical needs of the I-CL.

## THE LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party was created by the trade union bureaucracy caught between a ruling class offensive and a mounting working class upsurge in the period 1900 - 1918. In this respect it was unlike any other European Social-Democracy (except to some extent the Belgian Workers' Party). To an important degree it remains an extension into the parliamentary sphere, of the trade unions. In Trotsky's definition :-

"... the Labour Party which, in England, the classic country of trade unions, is only a political transposition of the same trade union bureaucracy".

"The Labour Party and the trade unions - these are not two principles, they are only a technical division of labour." (Communism and Syndicalism)

We have made it clear, time and time again, that in political terms there are no differences between the Labour Party leaders and the trade union bureaucracy. Yet there is a difference of function between a trade union and a parliamentary reformist party, particularly where the former have over ten million members and the latter, if bloc affiliations are deducted, under half a million. The Labour Party is a mass party of the British working class *via* the trade unions. The Labour Party's strength and influence is based on this link. The Party's funds and, at election times, the bulk of its activists, come directly from the trade unions and are not involved in the wards and constituencies on a regular basis. When the Labour Party / Trade union alliance is strong, as at present, the Labour Party influence appears unshakeable. When it is weak, as in 1969, the Labour Party's influence can appear almost negligible. Neither 'appearance' is quite what it seems. IS, for example, encouraged its members to draw ultra-left economic solace from the post-'69 situation. The I-CL, whose leaders then adopted an attitude to direct action and the Labour Party which they would now regard as syndicalist, are busy building a new 'theory' on the basis of the last two years experience of class struggle and a 're-reading' of the history of the revolutionary tradition in Britain.

To the Matgamnaites now the principle factor explaining the weakness and isolation of the revolutionary tradition in Britain is, in fact, a consistently false tactical line taken by revolutionaries in relation to the Labour Party. In the new history by the I-CL the CPGB's isolation was not a result of the Stalinisation of that party's leadership and the resultant rupturing of the independent potential of the Minority Movement. It was in fact due to an earlier, false, position adopted towards the Labour Party. (This position was expounded by Matgamna at a school in the Midlands where the

early history of the CPGB was dealt with without even a serious mention of the Minority Movement.)

In the educationals of the Matgamnaites the central and most important lesson to be learnt from the Trotskyist movement in the 1930's is the tactic adopted towards the mass reformist parties. The ILP's history is subtly re-jigged, to quote Matgamna,

"The ILP was a pole of attraction until, in the 1930's it broke from the Labour Party — and subsequently, failing to break with centrism, withered away."

The implication being that the ILP withered away because it left the Labour Party.

A wrong tactical position on the Labour Party is also held up by Matgamna as the principle cause of the disarray in the British Trotskyist movement after the second world war. Programmatic confusion is ignored by the Matgamnaites, it was the tactics that the Trotskyists got wrong.

But, some will say, Matgamna is only 'bending the stick' to persuade his own membership to take advantage of immediate opportunities. He himself is fond of warning his present allies that he will see them as a right wing deviation at some unspecified and future date. Such 'faith' in Matgamna's far-sightedness condones a contempt for theory, a pillaging of the history of the movement to find scanty justifications for present orientations and a systematic miseducation of the I-CL cadre by the Matgamnaite leadership.

## the 'open valve'

Workers' Fight always had a peculiarly ambiguous theory about the 'open valve' relationship between the Labour Party and the Trade unions. If all this formula means is that the party and trade union bodies can be linked at all levels, that there is an overlap of activists and that Trade union militants may join the Labour Party as individuals or participate on GMC's etc. as delegates of their trade unions, who could possibly deny it? And why is such a designation as the 'open valve' necessary?

Actually it is an evasive formula — what it suggests is not the possibility of the involvement of the masses of trade union members in the Labour Party, but that this flow is likely, regular, normal etc. This is a pale and shamefaced version of the theory that the working class alternates between political and industrial action. It is a position based on the swing of the pendulum theory.

Matgamna and Thomas now argue that 1974 showed the working class the 'limits of militancy' and they have 'turned' to political action. Hornung, in fact, puts it, characteristically, as a 'defeat of consciousness in 1973' locating it in that year because it had low strike figures (there was no miners' strike in that year as there was in 1972 and 1974!) If this shallow and schematic theory has any kernel of truth, it hinges on a defeat of the working class on the trade union front. Hornung clearly wishes to draw an analogy between 1926 and 1973 only at the level of consciousness. Neither the Tories nor the Labour Government have inflicted such a defeat. The crisis, the society wide nature of the required answers and solutions, and the dangers of sectional isolation, all underline the limits of sectional economic militancy, of the fighting methods that pushed up living standards in the '60's and early '70's.

Developing fatalism, a crisis of political alternative, does buttress the trade union / Labour Party social contract. But it does not drive militants, in large numbers, into the Labour Party.

In fact since the last war the trend of working class involvement has been downwards. This is not an irreversible process. But it would take either a massive 'direct action' debacle, or a fighting left reformist current to either drive or pull militants in on a mass scale. In fact all the signs are that larger and larger numbers of militants are cynical and sceptical about the left reformist parliamentarians while retaining illusions in the TU bureaucrats with identical politics:— compare the barracking Norman Atkinson got at the Nov. 17th rally with the rapturous reception of Alan Fisher. On the other hand large numbers of workers remain totally under the influence of the paralysing 'national crisis' ideology while at the same time less and less interested in voting in a Labour Government to carry out the necessary 'national' (anti-working class) policies. The least organised, least class conscious, are being radicalised towards the open racists of the National Front and National Party or towards the petty bourgeois nationalists in Scotland and Wales.

Workers Fight/I-CL are approaching the dangerous equation; trade unions equal economic struggle, and that therefore the 'hold of reformism' is best challenged via the Labour Party. The identification of the whole trade union structure (minus the mechanically abstracted 'shop floor organisation') with the trade union bureaucracy can only bolster this view. With Trotsky we say '.....The trade union question remains the most important question of proletarian policy in Great Britain'. But we do not say this out of a syndicalist fetish for trade union routinism. The trade unions are the central arena for the raising of communist politics and the fight for a communist programme.

Work inside the Labour Party is an important auxiliary to this. The long term objectives of communists must be the building of a fighting left wing tendency under the leadership of revolutionary ideas (like the National Left Wing movement in the 1920's but without the political errors stemming from Communist Party and Comintern misdirection.) The weakness of revolutionary forces in Britain is likely to make 'the united front from within' an important tactic for the years to come.

## the mass turn?

But it is not the central tactic. Those who see it as such will be increasingly likely drawn away from the advanced militants and the crisis of leadership in the class. This will be so whatever motives and justifications lay behind the tactic. It will be so of those who consciously turn 'the tactic' into a strategy (supporters of the Militant & the Chartist, for example), for those who posit a growth in the influence of 'the Lefts' over workers in struggle and serious splits within the ranks of the Labour Party, and for those who see their tactic as guided by a search for 'raw youth', for potential new cadre to be educated in the politics and line of the grouping.

The Matgamnaites refused to offer a perspective of growth for the Labour Party as a focus and battleground of class struggle. Not for them 'perspectives' or 'scenarios' as they like to call them. For them, as we have already

explained, such issues are academic. Growth for the I-CL now, as a timeless propaganda group, is the crux of the matter. When one of our comrades asked the question is there a real influx of militants into the Labour Party to justify a major turn, is there a refocusing of struggle - Matgamna's answer was:

"Masses and mass trends are relative. If there was a genuine mass influx into the Labour Party, we could not gear into it directly, anyway. We would relate to individuals and handfuls of people directly." This was the revealing answer of an empiricist, obsessed and guided by the inability of his grouping to address advanced militants, who sees the task of Party building purely in terms of the primitive accumulation and education of cadre.

The I-CL turns its back on the crisis of leadership amongst advanced militants in the current period. It is too small, it tells itself, to address these problems yet. As a result it underestimates that crisis of leadership, the crisis of leading workers facing the ideological and programmatic demands posed by a capitalist crisis and reformist collaboration. To the I-CL, therefore, the Right to Work Campaign march, the Walsall by-election Socialist Worker candidature, could simply be dismissed as the work of an 'irrelevant sect hostile to the I-CL, to the mass Party and the working class' (Sean Matgamna's characterisation of the IS candidature in Walsall). In the case of the Walsall by-election the 'irrelevant sect' is compared to the 'mass party of the working class'.

To the I-CL, those workers who have broken organisationally with the Labour Party have, as a rule, sunk without trace into 'sects' such as IS or the CP. In the I-CL view of the world, advanced militants are either of no account because they are lost in 'sects' or else beyond the influence of a grouping the size of the I-CL; meanwhile the masses looking to, and under the influence of, the Labour Party, will be addressed by the I-CL with a view to breaking them from Labourism - 'The militants will not listen to us, but the masses surely will'!

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

In September 1972, those of us who were attempting to form a 'Left Faction' in the wake of the IS betrayals over Aldershot and its chronic tailism over the Pentonville jailings, produced an outline set of theses. On the Revolutionary Party we said:

"The party unites the most politically conscious workers on the basis of its programme, strategy and tactics. It is before anything else the embodiment of political class consciousness."

"The aims of the Party are not simply the same as those held by Trade Unionists in struggle. The Party is not a revolutionary knuckle-duster on a Trade Union fist."

"The need for a centralised party flows from its role as the embodiment of the highest class consciousness as the formulator of scientific (marxist) strategy, on the basis of which all its members undertake their activity."

Thereafter in document after document inside IS we attacked Economism and the organisational view of the party. It might seem strange that Matgamna accuses us now of precisely this. Have we altered our position? No. Not one iota. For us politics and the programme are the bedrock of the party.

"The significance of the programme is the significance of the party. The party is the vanguard of the class. The party is formed by selection from the most conscious, most devoted elements....." (Trotsky - Completing the Programme and Putting it to Work, June 7th 1958). Indeed it will seem even odder to the uninitiated that we are accused of an organisational view of the party and economism by the same people who, at their convenience four months ago, were accusing us of 'orthodox Trotskyism' and 'Programme fetishism'.

The I-CL view of the party is a one-sided version of Lenin's view in, 'What is to be Done?'. Lenin himself recognised that his stress was itself one-sided, determined by his polemic with the Economists. The I-CL leaders have no such excuse. Their stress on class-consciousness as residing almost exclusively in the party was not necessitated by factional polemic. It is intrinsic to their passive, propagandistic notion of the party. Their explanation of the role of the party is based solely on the argument that, 'the working class is a slave class' under capitalism and unable to develop its own ideology except through the party. The party's single essential feature is 'to combat bourgeois ideas in the working class.' Add to this Gramsci's stress on: 'organic intellectuals' and Cannon's 'propaganda group' and you have a thoroughly lop-sided version of the Leninist party. To say that this is a necessarily one-sided stress, a 'bending of the stick' to quote Lenin, via Tony Cliff, is to miss the point that a group's politics cannot afford to be lop-sided. They cannot afford to lurch towards abstraction at precisely the moment when there is an acute crisis of direction amongst the ranks of the most active fighters in the class. The I-CL leaders are increasingly losing sight of the contradiction-racked hold that reformism has over the consciousness of the class. The fact that many leading militants are conscious of questions of strategy and tactics, not only for their sectional battles but for the class as a whole, is almost totally ignored by the I-CL.

It is an understanding of this dynamic, of the very heterogeneous nature of the working class, of the necessity, in capitalist society of a clash of strategies that is missing from the I-CL view of the party. For them, the role of the party is solely that of educator - because the working class is totally in the grip of 'bourgeois ideology'. Matgamna, for example, can write, 'the class naturally accepts the Healey measures because their consciousness is reformist.' The implications for the possibility of socialist revolution are grim indeed if this is believed - 'Communist revolution demands the prior liberation of the working class from bourgeois ideology'! (S. Matgamna, pre-conference perspectives document, published after the suspension of WP c'des from the PC, Sept. 76)

Because they mis-understand the nature of working class consciousness, because they turn their back on the clash, inevitable in a period of capitalist crisis, between the reformist and spontaneously anti-capitalist elements within the class, they are unable to locate the role of the party, as strategist, in transforming that spontaneity into consciousness.



# Democratic

We argued that, in the present period, the clash of strategies occurred, most importantly, among the strata of the class which in the past led the day to day struggles and in 1972 brought Britain to the verge of a general strike. Our argument was, and is, that this strata, broadly speaking, the shop-stewards movement, was not immobilised at present because they accepted Healey's cuts etc, but through their recognition that the previous methods and goals of struggle no longer answered the problems presented to them by the onset of the period of capitalist instability. The role of revolutionaries is to attempt, by all means possible, to win this strata, the vanguard of the class, to a communist programme which, starting from a Marxist analysis of the present period, would highlight the key problems, political, economic and organisational, facing the class and point to the corresponding demands, action, and organisation required to overcome them and go forward to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society.

Our arguments fell on deaf ears. Not understanding the way in which past acceptance of many bourgeois ideas clash with today's needs for struggle in the vanguard of the class, the I-CL rump turns away from the fight to win that vanguard to communism. Instead they look to 'raw youth' - because they are not (so?) enmeshed in bourgeois ideology. Their task as they see it is to educate these raw recruits so that in the future there will be a communist current in the working class. In justifying this approach, the I-CL rump argue that their first priority is to overcome the USFI's 'process politics' which sees the 'world revolution' as something inevitable and doing the job of the party for it. They also seek to oppose the catastrophism of the Healeyite tradition. Their smug sect may well avoid some or all of the theoretical mistakes of these groups but if they do not learn to relate to the arena in which the struggle for ideas within the working class centrally takes place, that will not matter one iota.

## developing the programme

If revolutionary parties are to be built then they will be built through the struggle to develop a programme and the fight for it in the class. If the programme is to be more than the idle fancies of a small group, it must be developed in relation to the actual struggles of the class. As a result the development of the programme, and the party that embodies it, will necessarily involve the arguing through of differences amongst Marxists. Sharp polemic, centred around the key questions of strategy and tactics, is needed to achieve the clarity and unity between Marxists that is, at present, so obviously lacking. That polemic has frequently degenerated into sterile point scoring and factional horse-play, is the result of its not being concentrated on clarifying the strategy and tactics of today's class struggle on an international scale.

Within revolutionary groups, the principles of democratic-centralism - free and honest debate over the issues in question disciplined unity in carrying out agreed decisions and the recog-

nition of the need to regularly review the work of the group in order to revise/amend its practice and theory, are the guarantees of the healthy development of the group.

Between groups, comradely discussion, despite the sharpest differences of opinion, is necessary to test the lines of the organisations in the spirit of a common search of principled unity.

Such ideas find no place in the method of of the WF/I-CL. In discussion with other groups their sectarian manoeuvres and motives hide behind a facade of a thoroughly worthless and phoney 'Bolshevik intransigence'. Within their group the ex-WF leadership do not recognise their duty to hold themselves and their ideas open to challenge and debate by other comrades.

At the present time they are engaged in an orientation toward the mass reformist party and youth, based, not on a hammered out and agreed-on perspective that pointed out the reasons for the change of course, the developments in the class that dictated it or the likely results of carrying it out, but purely on the hunch of the leadership that they could pick up a few more members in this new milieu. An integral part of forcing through such ill-considered changes was the violation of all the norms of democratic-centralism within the I-CL as we outline below.

## Subscribe to workers power

Six months (3 issues) . . . . . £1.10

One year (6 issues) . . . . . £2.20

Name . . . . .

ADDRESS . . . . .

. . . . .

. . . . .

. . . . .

FORWARD TO : Workers Power  
1a Camberwell Grove  
LONDON SE 2

# Democratic

# Centralism

# and the I-CL

To have explained the differences is not necessarily to have explained the split, this we accept. Many on the left, including I-CL members, will say, was it necessary to break off the fusion? Surely such differences could have been accommodated in the I-CL? Surely the split took place before the issues had been properly argued out before the members of the I-CL?

One point we must repeat. The differences were not clarified in the I-CL. Of this most comrades are aware. In fact the entire history of the fused I-CL is a history of a deliberate clouding and avoiding of the issues by the leaders of the ex-Workers' Fight that made political debate impossible. Slander, manoeuvre and demagoguery characterised the internal life of the I-CL, on every key issue, the ex-Workers' Fight leadership sought to confuse, avoid or cancel political debate and decision.

We will outline the history of the argument in the I-CL, in order to illustrate our point. We consider the behaviour of the ex-Workers' Fight leadership flows directly from their view of party building, of theory, of tactics and strategy which we have outlined in this document.

It proved impossible to carry out the tasks set by the fusion of the Workers' Fight and ourselves. It proved impossible to argue and debate the differences. A break was inevitable with the politics of abstract empiricism and manoeuvre espoused by the ex-Workers' Fight leadership, we fought to break the I-CL from Matgamna's politics, not to split the I-CL. That the split came when it did — i.e. immediately before the I-CL conference — is the direct result of the ex-Workers' Fight leadership's attempt to hijack the leading bodies of the organisation, to suspend leading Workers' Power members as their last contribution to the "debate" and "argument" before the I-CL conference.

We do not feel hard done by — as the I-CL proclaim — we outline the history of the arguments inside the I-CL to put the record absolutely straight. Once all the Workers' Power members on the Political Committee were suspended (unconstitutionally by a lower body), all vestiges of democratic centralist unity were broken.

It is the membership of the I-CL/Workers' Fight who must seriously evaluate why their leadership ruptured the fusion with Workers' Power — why their leadership replied with slander and organisational reprisals to the attempts to democratically and openly debate perspectives for the I-CL. It is for the I-CL/Workers' Fight membership to call their leadership to account — not for us.

To the arguments for programme and perspectives, the WF-I-CL leadership had one reply. Those that opposed 'their' positions, did so because of 'motives', because of 'factionalism', because of 'hostility to Matgamna'. The history of the 'debate' in the I-CL is the history of a refusal to debate the concrete differences outlined above.

## THE ACTION PROGRAMME

### 'DEBATE'

Clear and concrete differences emerged over the Action Programme. This we have explained. How did Thomas and Matgamna argue their case? How were the differences discussed?

The charges of "factionalism" was first raised in the Action Programme debate. It was made by comrades Matgamna, Thomas and Semp at a drafting commission meeting on 19th March. It was announced to comrades Hughes and Stocking that the Steering Committee of the ex-Workers' Fight group had met and expressed concern at the discussion of the Action Programme/Manifesto. Hughes and Stocking were charged with having been uncomradely and unconstructive in their attacks on Matgamna's draft Action Programme/Manifesto in combining in an unprincipled fashion with NC members against it, with cliquish jockeying for positions, with organising a campaign against Matgamna and with supporting a demagogic cry for "perspectives". This was all put down to Hughes, Stocking, King and McSweeney's having been a faction within IS and now failing to break up "their" faction within the I-CL. We were invited to "break up your faction" with the alternative that "they" (i.e. the whole ex-Workers' Fight steering committee) would have to take "counter factional action". We were further invited to take part in a campaign "against factionalism" and against the "cry for perspectives".

Was there any substance in such accusations? No. Firstly the "Action Programme". The fact is that the draft that Comrade Matgamna produced was very different to the one the Political Committee commissioned. Cde. Matgamna admitted that his conception had changed as he was writing it. Before embarking on the draft he had said that whilst re-writing the Transitional Programme was too grandiose a task, creating "something in the nature of the Action Programme for France" was a possibility. Hughes outlined the format he wanted to see. "The format should be capitalist crisis/resultant attacks on the working class (and also middle class sections) and on specific sections of the working class / response of reformists / workers' answer to the crisis / thus popularising the workers government/key goals for the working class / how the working class should prepare itself / question of Labour Party and Trade Union bureaucracy / Labour Movement democracy / rank and file movement." PC21.1.75. No one disagreed with this outline; no one objected to its immediacy or its focus on "the working class response to the crisis".

The draft appeared shortly before the Feb. 29th NC. It had been discussed at a PC the night before where Cdes Stocking, Hughes and King expressed their criticism. It should hardly be surprising that they did since the Left Faction inside IS argued for an action programme — the faction platform was called, "A Workers' Answer to the Crisis" and outlined the analysis, tactics and demands.

which would constitute one. As this document was never criticised during the fusion discussions (though subsequently Cde. Matgamna has admitted that he did not bother to read it) and Workers' Fight comrades announced that we had no political disagreement, we assumed that there would be no problems that could not be resolved by open and democratic debate. It is curious that in all the accusations of catastrophism, programme fetishism, "orthodoxy" that have been levelled at us since, no reference has been made to the Left Faction documents submitted to Workers' Fight before the fusion and reprinted in the April internal Bulletin. Since then we produced documents for discussion on the crisis, the crisis of leadership, the British working class in the coming period, for the programme commission. Cde. Hughes produced the economic perspectives. Again no charges of catastrophism were substantiated from these documents. They have not because they cannot be substantiated. Cde Matgamna, Hornung, Thomas and Semp in December expected, like us, an Action Programme relating to the change of period in world capitalism, to the long term crisis of British Capitalism and the the problems posed to the vanguard of the British working class by these long term problems. One relating to their sharply posed present forms — unemployment, cuts, inflation, the TUC/Labour Party alliance, the inadequacy of apolitical militancy, a 'transitional' programme relating today's struggles to the fight for workers' power.

Despite subsequent mythology there was nothing concerted, 'put up' or factional about the fact that four or five other NC members expressed their agreement with Hughes' and Stocking's criticisms. In fact, c'des Matgamna and Thomas took up a violently defensive stance of their 'new' programme. What is worse, they tried to broaden the issue into a them/us confrontation, to draw in all sorts of extraneous and irrelevant issues and to de-rail the issue under discussion. The differences over the nature of the programme were lost in a welter of accusations as to the factionalism of Hughes, King and Stocking. The charge, "Have you dissolved your faction?" has exactly the same effect as the old, "Have you stopped beating your wife?". Either response, yes or no, proves the charge. When the charge was denied this did not, "reassure the comrades - rather the reverse", i.e. if we said we were not a faction, particularly if we said so indignantly, then it was, "very likely to serve as a factional banner". (Thomas)

The debate on the programme collapsed inside the I-CL. The programme commission stopped meeting. The political issues were lost but the accusations and methods of factionalism by the ex-WF leadership remained.

## THE JULY CONFERENCE

As the July conference approached, attention focussed on the drawing up of documents, resolutions and perspectives for it. The first document produced, 'Building the I-CL', did not pose clearly the difference, (pre-dating the fusion) of the practical priority of either an orientation to the mass reformist party or the Trade Unions. Its drift was clearly toward the former (the words of c'de Hornung). It contained a series of warnings against 'pseudo mass work' by which was meant, it appeared, agitational work in the unions. The latter were characterised one-sidedly as, 'fundamentally organs for integrating the working class into the bourgeois state'. That there

should be a difference over tactical emphasis on perspective should not have surprised the ex-WF leadership. Comrade Thomas had himself drafted into the fusion agreement a statement that a substantial section of the organisation would argue for a heavier orientation towards the mass reformist party and youth, at the coming conference. That conference was to mark the final fusion of the two groups, the end of organisational arrangements such as parity on leading bodies within the I-CL.

It was agreed by all concerned that the process of discussion and amendment of 'Building the I-CL' was fudging the issues and that c'des Hughes and Stocking should produce political and industrial perspectives documents and that c'des Thomas and Matgamna 'Building the I-CL' and Labour Party perspectives respectively, in the hope of clarifying the issues. It was likewise agreed that to continue 'amending' these documents would be counter-productive.

## charges of factionalism

The agreed documents were produced by c'des Hughes and Stocking. Matgamna produced nothing. He refused, for his own convenience, to commit himself or his perspectives to paper. A fortnight before conference c'des Matgamna and Hornung produced a vitriolic document re-raising in exaggerated form the charges of factionalism. The ex-WP comrades on the political committee were an unprincipled and a-political faction trying to turn the I-CL into a semi-syndicalist sect, it was claimed. They had, simultaneously (if illogically) 'given up hope for the fusion'. According to later charges we were also engaged in some sort of deal with the Workers' League and the IMG.

On these grounds Matgamna and Hornung demanded the cancellation of the conference, 'or a split would be far from the least likely outcome'.

Under protest, in an attempt to save the fusion, we agreed to the cancellation on the clear understanding that the political issues be debated and the charges of factionalism dropped. This, alas, did not happen. Instead Matgamna started a campaign for the removal of two ex-WP comrades from the Political Committee, this would have produced a committee comprising four ex-WF and two exWP, as against the constitutionally guaranteed parity.

The July conference was rescheduled as a cadre school. It was turned into a school against the positions of the Workers' Power group spiced with uncomradely attacks by the Matgamna faction. The debate on perspectives and orientation, like the debate on programme before it, was turned into an unpolitical maul over 'factionalism' and 'cliquism' by the Matgamna leadership.

In the summer, when it became necessary for one of the exWP comrades to stand down from the Secretariat, the Matgamna faction, through a temporary majority on the Political Committee, debarred comrade Hughes from replacing him on the grounds of his factionalism. As a result the Secretariat consisted solely of the ex-WF leadership.

## THE SUSPENSIONS

In early September, C'des Hughes, Stocking and King replied to the whole campaign of character assassination and vilification, expressing the view that the whole fusion had been seriously threatened by the behaviour of the ex-WF leadership. Immediately, the Matgamna/Thomas faction circulated a document for signature to NC and non-NC members, stigmatising the ex-WF leadership as splitters 'unwilling to submit to the fusion'. At the PC of September 10th., the two ex-WF comrades able to attend were subjected to a cross-examination centring on whether they would accept the decisions of the rearranged conference if they were in a minority, whether they accepted the fusion as an accomplished fact and that there were no longer either WP or WF groups only a split between themselves, as factionalists, and the I-CL majority in the form of the ex-WF members of the PC, and whether they intended to join the Workers' League or the IMG.

The comrades replied that the responsibility for breaking up the fusion rested with Matgamna, Thomas and Hornung, that the norms of democratic-centralism were based on comradely discussion, not on character assassination, (this time the charge was that Hughes was a 'cult figure' (sic!) with a group of friends around him) and that they could not announce in advance their submission to the decisions of a conference yet to take place. At the Midlands Regional Aggregate, Matgamna and Thomas announced that Stocking, 'had placed himself outside the organisation' and that he would probably be suspended by the PC. Therefore, he could not speak at the aggregate to explain the Workers' Power position on the dispute on the PC. Fortunately the Midlands comrades reacted strongly against this and when challenged to explain by what authority they could announce the suspension, Matgamna and Thomas beat an unceremonious retreat.

Unsatisfied with their showing in the Midlands, Matgamna, Thomas and Hornung returned to London, held a secretariat meeting and suspended the remaining ex-WF comrades on the PC from the organisation. They then called in c'de Landis, the only other PC member and, as an quorate but unconstitutional PC, ratified the decision of the secretariat. Now it might seem strange that comrades so full of 'party spirit', so zealous to defend democratic-centralism, should have overlooked the point that a vital principle of the latter is that lower organs are subordinate to higher ones; that a secretariat is not empowered to suspend PC members, nor to summon PC meetings when three members are not notified because, 'suspended'. To add a touch of farce to this melodrama, the locks on the I-CL headquarters were changed on the morning of the secretariat.

One outraged ex-WF NC member tried to arrange an emergency NC to re-instate the suspended PC members. The Matgamna-ite secretariat/PC refused to call an NC until the morning of the conference and persuaded the recalcitrant NC member that though the action was unconstitutional, 'the safety of the organisation was the supreme law'. The ex-WF comrades were told they could 're-instate' themselves providing they gave a 'formal written repudiation of the attitudes on democracy, the forthcoming I-CL conference and their relation to it' which they had expressed at the PC and the Midlands aggregate.

The suspended PC members demanded re-instatement on the sole 'condition', one which they had never 'flouted' or 'denied', that they accepted the authority of all properly constituted bodies of the I-CL from branch to NC. That they intended to argue, before the fusion conference, that it was not competent to consummate the fusion, the pre-conference discussion having been wrecked by the Matgamna grouping; and that they were, as was their right, intending to call a meeting of all I-CL members who agreed with this position. This condition the Matgamna grouping would, in no circumstances, accept. Their repeated demand was that we recognise the existence of the fusion. They, nevertheless, set up a hypocritical cry that we, 'would not go to conference' and were 'deserters', were showing 'contempt for the membership'.

The overwhelming majority of ex members of the WP group refused to continue discussing 'orientation' and 'priority' as if a fused organisation existed. We were clear that, unless the (ex-WF) majority of the I-CL were prepared to break with their leaders and destroy their factional hold on the organisation, then we had no choice but to consider the fusion to have been finally broken. At a meeting on September 19th 1976 we decided to reconstitute ourselves as an independent political organisation.

Since then a series of lies and distortions have been issued by the ex-WF rump of the I-CL. These hinge around the charge that 30 or so comrades have been duped into following a 'personal clique' - a 'circle of friends' grouped around a 'cult figure', into a split. The charge of cliquism and circle politics, repeated in letters to the left press, is merely a continuation of the WF/I-CL leadership's policy inside the organisation - a total refusal to even look at our political arguments.

'... peculiar idealisation of workers in the factory place' 'workerist romanticism' and 'peering in fascination at the mysterious world beyond the factory gate' (both quoted from I-CL perspectives document, by Matgamna, published after the suspension of the WP members of the PC). That is how they characterise an orientation to the unions, to the factory floor, to the rank and file, in arguing which we explicitly, time and time again, recognised the tremendous ideological battle with reformism, sectionalism, craft-consciousness, sexism and racism that this would involve. When this level of dishonesty and distortion is reached and when every norm of democratic-centralism has been violated, then the accusation that we lacked 'party spirit' and were deserters, rings hollow indeed.

The differences which racked the I-CL were, at root, serious political ones intimately related to the deepening period of crisis that faces us. Can revolutionaries break from the crippling split between an ossified programme and opportunist tactics and re-elaborate an international programme capable of rallying the proletarian vanguard? Can Marxists break out of the propaganda circle mentality that has fostered sectarianism? - a sectarianism which, as Marx said, 'is historically justified' only so long as, 'the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historical movement'. The period of capitalist expansion and social stability of the '50's and '60's is decisively over. To these questions, which the new period of social crisis presents, the I-CL leadership insisted on replying with a resounding 'No!'. That is their own condemnation - their own sentence to irrelevance.

# WHERE WE STAND

**1** Capitalism condemns the vast majority of mankind to poverty, insecurity and war. Once a progressive system which vastly enlarged the productive forces on a scale hitherto unknown

known, it always rested upon the concentration of ownership and control in the hands of a few while the vast majority laboured in conditions of poverty and squalor.

Capitalism, having as its source the exploitation of the working class, is constantly impelled to increase the rate of exploitation in the interests of the competitive survival of each unit against its rivals. Blind production for profit, ever sharper rivalry and competition, result in periodic, more or less sharp, economic crises of over-production. Capitalism is torn with contradictions internal to itself; the most general is the conflict between the tremendous expansive powers of modern large scale industrial production and the fetters imposed on it by production for profit, national barriers and the planless rivalry of world market. The constant revolutionising of science and technology and the potential this holds for improving the lot of mankind is never realised under capitalism. Millions starve in a world of abundance. Indeed, the gap between the wealthy and the poor becomes ever wider.

The so-called communist countries are not communist or socialist. The proletariat does not hold state power in these countries. The mode of production is bureaucratic state capitalism and the bureaucracy is the ruling class.

The increasing intensity of competition between multinational cartels and nation states (including the Stalinist states) threatens mankind with economic ruin and war. The capitalists and the Stalinist bureaucracies are driven to intensify their exploitation of the working-class to escape from the crisis of their own making. From the deepening crisis and stagnation capitalism can only escape by crushing all the independent organs of resistance of the working class.

**2** Imperialism marks the maturing of capitalism into a conflict ridden world wide system of exploitation. It marks the opening of the epoch of wars and revolutions

Imperialism condemns two-thirds of humanity to super-exploitation and systematic under-development of their countries, crushing the development of their productive forces and making them sources of super profits and raw materials for the 'advanced countries'.

The exploitation and oppression practised by capitalism and imperialism call forth forces of resistance both from the working class-the proletariat- and the oppressed masses and nationalities.

The working class, itself the product of capitalism, has shown its power to challenge and overthrow this system in a series of struggles unprecedented in the history of all exploited classes.

The exploited nationalities, victims of imperialism, have also shown their ability to challenge and overthrow the forces of the strongest imperialist powers. The successful socialist outcome of such struggles, however, depends on the conscious leadership of the working class in national struggles under the leadership of a revolutionary party basing its programme on the theory of the permanent revolution: the independent organisation of the working class for power, the leadership by the working class of all anti-imperialist forces, the spreading of the revolution beyond the boundaries of a single state. The working class must take up, as its own, struggles of all oppressed classes and social strata: peasantry, oppressed nationalities, races, women etc. It must take up as its own, every serious democratic demand of the broad masses. It alone can lead these struggles to final victory.

**3** The bourgeois state must be smashed by the working class. It must be replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat over the exploiters. Democratic collective control over the means of production and distribution is possible only by a state of workers' councils. The dictatorship of the proletariat is only a transitional period, ending with the complete withering away of the state and the abolition of classes - Communism.

Though a workers' state can come into existence in a single country, prolonged isolation opens the way to defeat or degeneration. The proletarian revolution must expand internationally or perish. The working class is the only class capable of leading an international onslaught against the bourgeoisie, though all oppressed classes and nationalities have a direct interest in supporting and forwarding its struggles.

**4** At the same time, the nature of capitalist production, the development of technology, its increasing concentration makes more and more possible and necessary the replacement of bourgeois relations by true social production - democratically planned production for social need.

Only a social revolution led by the working class can accomplish this transformation. Such a revolution would transfer the means of production into common property and abolish the division of society into classes, liberate all the oppressed and rid society of distinctions of class, creed, race and sex.

The working class gains the experience to revolutionise society by constant struggle against the ruling class, through mass organisations created in the course of that struggle - trade unions, factory committees, workers' councils, and through the struggle of the oppressed for their own liberation.

**5** However, the more intense and concentrated the class struggle, the deeper the social crisis, the more does the bourgeoisie seek to divide and confuse the forces of the working class, attempting through its various agencies to sow sectionalism, craft consciousness, nationalism, sexism and the worst poison of all, racism.

In the class struggle the working class must develop a clear class strategy for conquering power. History has shown that the indispensable instrument for this is a party basing itself on a Marxist programme and rallying the most class conscious militants to it.

The party sets as its tasks the overcoming of the unevenness of working class experience, the fighting of bourgeois ideas and forces in the working class, the presentation of the lessons of past struggles and the bonding together and unifying of all fragmented struggles. All this with the aim of developing a conscious and coherent offensive against capitalism.

Such a party must consist of revolutionary working class militants, it must be the real vanguard of the class. The creation of such a party is the urgent task of all revolutionaries and working class militants.

The revolutionary party cannot be built on a national basis alone. We fight to build an international democratic centralist party – to combat the bourgeoisie on the basis of an international programme for workers' power. Such an international programme and party must be built on the lessons and experience of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and the re-elaboration of the 1938 programme of the Fourth International.

Workers Power does not believe such an international party exists. Neither has the necessary programmatic work been completed. The Fourth International needs to be re-created around a re-elaborated transitional programme, on a democratic - centralist basis.

**6** In the twentieth century capitalism's survival has principally been the result of two forces:-

i) The reformist and Stalinist leaderships in the international labour movement. After World War I, capitalism, challenged by the first workers' state and a mass revolutionary wave, was saved in its heartlands by the reformist parties of the Second International. The incorporation of the reformist workers' parties and Trade Union leaders has remained a vital component of capitalist stability.

After World War II capitalism could not have survived and consolidated without the conscious support of the Stalinist parties. Notably in France, Italy and Greece the Stalinist parties disarmed the potentially revolutionary forces, giving power back to the bourgeoisie. In East Europe independent working class, peasant and nationalist movements were subordinated to the interests of the Russian bureaucracy (stability and shared spheres of interest) by the creation of client states to the Russian bureaucracy.

Born of the isolation of the Russian Revolution, nurtured on the destruction of the vestiges of workers' power in Russia and the elimination of revolutionary vitality in the Comintern, the Stalinist parties crossed to the camp

of the bourgeoisie. In Russia and East Europe they have created states that must be destroyed by workers' revolutions. In the West they offer only collaborationist, national reformist programmes.

Stalinism and Stalinist parties are reactionary, an obstacle on a world scale, to the Socialist Revolution.

ii) In addition to the conscious counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist and reformist workers' parties, capitalism has only survived as the result of the wholesale destruction of capital in two imperialist world wars and the subordination of the world economy to American Imperialism's massive expansion after World War II.

The exceptional stability and expansion of world capitalism after World War II has to be understood primarily as a result of these two factors. However, capitalism in the twentieth century cannot free itself from the pressures of inflation, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, increasing instability and a sharpening of competition on a world scale except at the expense of the working class.

**7** The working class has, over the last 150 years, fought to create organisations capable of leading the struggle for Socialism. The early workers' organisations (e.g. the Chartists in England) the Social Democratic and Labour parties the Communist parties of the 1920's, all, at their foundations, were looked to by the workers to accomplish their emancipation. Yet the bourgeoisie and its agents in the working class exerted enormous pressure to corrupt and destroy them as weapons of class struggle.

This corruption has taken the form of reformism and capitulation to chauvinism. That is, the supposedly gradual transformation of capitalism through parliamentary reform and the identification of the working class with "its" nation and ruling class against the workers of other nations. The Labour and Communist Parties are thoroughly corrupted in this way – although many of their members and supporters sincerely wish to destroy capitalism.

**8** The Labour Party, in its programme and policies, is firmly tied to the bourgeois state, committed to managing capitalism. It is a bourgeois party. In periods of boom, under working class pressure, it has enacted limited reforms which, however, leave the fundamental power bases of the ruling class intact. In periods of gathering storm like the present it acts as the bosses' most subtle weapon to claw back the concessions made over decades, attacking workers in struggle again and again.

Yet the Labour Party is a party rooted in the working class movement. The Trade Unions finance and support it and provide it with most of its activists. The vast majority of workers vote for it and see it as their party – as the one that should act for them and against the bosses. It is a bourgeois workers' party. In this contradiction lies the possibility of overcoming the crippling illusions in a peaceful parliamentary road to Socialism. We fight to strengthen every anti-capitalist action of the rank and file members within the Labour Party, every attempt to use it in the service of the class.

The Labour Party claims to be the party of the working class based on the Trade Unions. We defend the right of all varieties of Socialist thought to exist and organise in the Labour Party.

**9** The revolutionary Left consists of fragmented and dis-united groups stemming from the only consistently revolutionary tradition to emerge from the collapse of revolutionary ary communism in the 1920's and '30's, the followers of L.D. Trotsky and the Fourth International movement. Opportunism, sectarianism and dogmatism have wreaked havoc within this movement. However, the recreation of revolutionary parties and an International can take place only on the basis of the fundamental elements of this doctrine and method applied creatively to the new period of capitalist crisis opening before us.

The Workers' Power group sets itself the task of fighting for revolutionary unity based upon a principled programme. The elements of this programme are the basis for our current work and activity. We will co-operate in a non-sectarian fashion with all who agree with us in whole or in part. We seek fusion with all those with whom we have fundamental programmatic agreement.

#### THE PRINCIPLE PLANKS OF OUR PLATFORM

For a workers' revolution leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The parliamentary road to Socialism is an illusion demonstrated time and time again, most recently in the Chilean catastrophe.

For a revolutionary party based on a transitional programme and organised according to the principles of democratic-centralism - full freedom of political debate, disciplined unity in action.

For the reconstruction of the Fourth International on the basis of an international transitional programme and a democratic-centralist practice.

For unconditional support to all national liberation struggles against Imperialism and practical opposition to "our own" ruling class' policy of oppression.

No platform for Fascists. Against all forms of racism and immigration controls. For the right of immigrants to organise in their own defence. We fight mercilessly against racist ideas and leaders in the Labour Movement and for Labour Movement based united fronts to fight for these policies.

We support the workers of the so-called Communist states against their bureaucratic oppressors, considering that only a workers' revolution can transform them into true Workers' States. Such a revolution would mean the creation of Soviets, the smashing of the secret police and army and its replacement by a workers' militia, the smashing of the bureaucratic state apparatus and its replacement by soviet democracy and democratic, workers' controlled planned production. We adopt a defeatist

position in any conflict between the Russian/East European bureaucracy, itself imperialist, and U.S. / West European Imperialism. We, however, defend Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, China against imperialism as these countries are non-imperialist powers.

We fight for complete social and political equality for Women, supporting their fight against male domination a feature of capitalism as of all previous class societies. We fight for all immediate demands promoting this aim while recognising that only the transition to Communism will remove the last vestiges of women's enslavement. In particular we fight for working class women who suffer both oppression as women and super-exploitation within the workforce at present. We fight against male chauvinism and the unequal treatment of women in society and the Labour Movement, for full and equal rights in the workplace. We fight for a woman's right to control her own fertility, for the socialisation of housework and for a mass working class women's movement. We support the struggle of gay people against discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

In the workers' movement and the Trade Unions we fight for:- the total independence of the Trade Unions from the State and from all legal shackles on the right to organise and to strike.

We fight to democratise the unions, putting them under the control of the rank and file. We fight for militant class policies; for all immediate and partial demands which increase and strengthen the morale and confidence of the working class. Against all attempts to make the workers pay the enormous cost, in terms of the loss of the partial gains made by generations of workers' struggles, for the British bourgeoisie to rationalise and re-structure industry for their own benefit.

For a working class counter-offensive, fighting to impose workers' control (not participation) of production, the only conclusion to this struggle is a planned economy and a workers' state. It is the duty of revolutionaries to convince the masses of workers in struggle and step by step, of the inevitability, necessity and possibility of achieving Socialism the only alternative offered to mankind is barbarism.

For practical solidarity with workers in struggle throughout the world. For the international unity of trade unions and especially for links between the rank and file of different countries.

We commit ourselves to polemic, debate and discussion with other tendencies of the Left to clarify the political differences, the possibilities of joint work, and to lay the basis for a principled regroupment on an international and national basis.

