

# THE CRISIS OF BRITISH CAPITAL

part 2 ~  
consequences

Proletarian  
Pamphlet  
No:2



40p



Part 2: Consequences

Contents:

- p.1 SECTION III: What Comes Next?
- p.12 SECTION IV: Proletarian Perspectives
- p.13 The Longterm Objective of the Proletariat
- p.14 The Mediumterm Objective of the Proletariat
- p.15 i. organising the proletariat as a class
- p.20 ii. opposition by the proletariat, on an organised basis, to its class enemies
- p.25 iii. winning support for the proletariat while consolidating its own ranks
- p.27 A. Neutralising Vacillating Strata or Classes
- p.29 B. The Development of Proletarian Assertiveness and Confidence for Ruling
- p.29 C. The Development of Proletarian Organs of Power that come into Opposition to the Capitalist State Power
- p.30 WORKERS' COUNCILS AS THE POLITICISERS OF INDUSTRY
- p.32 The Strategy and Tactics for the Growth of a Revolutionary Workers' Council Movement
- p.39 HARBINGERS
- p.47 Great British Practicality
- p.48 THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
- p.49 What Characterises the (Genuine) Communist Party
- p.53 APPENDIX A: Computation of the Average Industrial Wage
- p.54 APPENDIX B: The Formation of Soviets Through an Interlocking Conciliar Structure
- p.56 APPENDIX C: Note on the Value of Labour Power
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## SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

"It is the specific duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer understanding of the theoretical problems, to free themselves from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old conception of the world, and constantly to keep in mind that Socialism, having become a science demands the same treatment as every other science - it must be studied."  
(Engels: 'Preface' to 2nd edition of "The Peasant War In Germany")

COBI is the only organisation in Britain which is resolute in declaring its total allegiance to the principles of Scientific Socialism, and actively practising it.

Scientific Socialism - Marxism - like all sciences, is a process of active intervention in the world. Like other sciences, the knowledge that it produces in this intervention is relative, not absolute, specific not 'general'. Relativity and specificity of knowledge have two aspects: knowledge has to be remade as the object of a science changes/develops; and knowledge advances in its scope/effectivity, developing on the basis of success/failure.

Thus scientific statements always have a 'provisional' character. Science intervenes, without guarantees of success, on the basis of past achievements, and under the discipline of its practices plus the resistance of the concrete reality being studied.

So, in COBI literature and practice there is nothing final, absolute, closed -- no work can contain 'our very last word' on any subject -- only the latest. Neither do we 'adopt positions' on any subject until we have ourselves researched the area. Even then our findings are always provisional, subject to emendation or rejection in the light of experience. Examples of this come from such varied fields as the characterisation of 'What Is COBI' (compare Proletarian No.1 with our current Platform); our position on parliamentarism (compare the introductions to Pamphlet No.1 and Pamphlet No.3); or the first edition of 'The Crisis of British Capital' (Pamphlet No.2) should be contrasted with the second edition.

From theory to practice and back again to improved theory in a continuous spiral, this is the only dialectical, scientific method, and the only one COBI shall pursue.

"Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment). If man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond he will fail in practice. After he fails, he draws his lessons, corrects his ideas to make them correspond to the laws of the external world, and can thus turn failure into success."  
(Mao: 'On Practice')

### III. WHAT COMES NEXT?

In parts 1 & 2, we outlined the economic origins of the present crisis as the inevitable result of the working out of the laws of capitalist development, and, following on from that, what social forces this development had engendered. But this history has culminated in the present moment, a moment of crisis, a potential turning point in historical development. It has produced a situation that some see as revolutionary in its potential. How can the situation develop from here, what courses are open to Britain society? What courses are advocated by the different political tendencies?

Without an assessment of these possibilities it is impossible for revolutionaries to orientate themselves in the present situation. Firstly, is it or is it not potentially revolutionary? To this we must answer, not yet. Lenin defined a revolutionary situation as follows :-

"Only when the 'lower classes' do not want the old way and when the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way - only then can revolution triumph. This truth may be expressed in other words : Revolution is impossible without a nationwide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that for a revolution it is essential that, first, a majority of workers (or at least a majority of the class conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for revolution and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it...." (Left Wing Communism, our emphasis)

In the light of this definition, a revolutionary situation cannot presently be said to exist in Britain. The upper classes may not be able to carry on in the same way, but the masses are not convinced of the necessity for revolution and do not want to go on in the same way as before. The working class is certainly struggling, but in the main it is struggling to maintain the position that it gained during Britain's imperial prosperity.

The crisis in society's economic base demands change, in fact its full resolution demands the end of capitalist commodity production. But this solution can only be practically realised under a workers' state. Until this is established events will continue to work themselves out within the framework of capitalism, and that does not mean stasis, but crisis. A workers' state of course, is the state power of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that sets out to build socialism.

The old Keynesian method of state control of the economy has become impossible. It was adequate for dealing with the old capitalist problem of underconsumption, but it was a treatment of symptoms rather than causes, and as a permanent remedy for the disease of falling profits it can produce only accelerating inflation. The continued development of production under capitalism demands an increase in profits that would enable new investments to take place in technically advanced plant and machinery. This can still occur within capitalism. In this section we present some of the measures open to the 'upper classes' to resolve the crisis in their own interests. In the next we present measures open to the proletariat to develop the situation in the interest of the 'lower classes'.

Broadly speaking there are two opposed capitalist solutions to the crisis. One is plainly reactionary, the other reformist. Neither is likely to be enacted in the 'pure' form, there will probably be some combination of the two. We present them as distinct strategies in order to show what remains to the bourgeoisie in the way of room to manoeuvre. The reactionary, or 'Right' course, would be to abandon Keynesianism for the strict monetarism presently advocated by sections of the Tory right wing, (though this creed is daily spreading). This would mean a balanced budget, or at least a much reduced budget deficit, restricted government expenditure, and a curb upon the expansion of credit. The government

\* For full treatment of inflation, see 'Inflation, Class Struggle and Scientific Communism'; Proletarian No.2.

would abandon its attempt to manage capitalism and leave the free market to run itself. Theoretically this would curb inflation at the expense of high unemployment and economic stagnation. This alternative is reactionary even in capitalist terms, and self contradictory in practice. It represents a return to the pre-keynesian ideology, and would sacrifice both the standard of life of the masses and the development of production to the maintenance of an illusory monetary standard. It would precipitate an intensification of the class struggle, which would have to be met by a strengthening of the state power. The petty bourgeois would have to be mobilised to the defence of the established order, with the emergence of forces of citizens' volunteers to break strikes and factory occupations. Such a course, which overtly sacrifices the interests of the working class, throws millions onto the dole and millions more into chronic insecurity, would cause a serious rupture in the political superstructure. The current capitalist ideology which stresses class harmony and national unity, would be difficult to maintain. The ideological damage would be a long term threat to the capitalist class, undermining the political stability of which our ruling classes are so proud. 30 years since Keynes have taught the masses that unemployment is not some unavoidable natural calamity. Popular belief now blames government, not nature, and whilst this over estimates the power of capitalist governments, it certainly makes it no easier for the bourgeoisie to get unemployment accepted. There would have to be a shift from the present form of bourgeois rule, which relies to a large extent upon the consent of the ruled, to one which relies much more upon the coercion, and repression of the proletarian organisations accompanied by a barrage of patriotic and racialist propaganda to demoralise the working class. Under these conditions the bourgeoisie might be forced to withdraw from the EEC in order to cement the support of the more nationalist section of the petty bourgeoisie, and split the proletariat on a nationalist, populist basis. The policy is self contradictory, because it is presented by its ideologists as a means of allowing the economy to regulate itself, but in current conditions, far from stabilising the situation and diminishing the role of the state it would require a much more naked and coercive role for state power.

As it is so reactionary and contrary to even the short term interests of industrial capital (who would lose in the ensuing depression and benefit that they might gain from the reduced wage inflation), and because of the political damage that it would inflict upon the superstructure, it is unlikely that a majority of the bourgeoisie would support it. When the use of state coercion to hold down wages becomes unavoidable, the interests of industrial capital would be better served if this were done via a wages freeze and a comparatively low level of unemployment. From their view point the avoidance of open conflict between the working classes and the state power is desirable, but if it cannot be avoided, there is no reason why it be accompanied by an unnecessarily intensified recession.

The other main alternative, the one which at present would probably provide the best conditions for the perpetuation and reconstruction of British capitalism, is a reformist Labour government. This would carry out measures that are formally progressive, in the sense that they modify still further the free operation of the market in order to allow the further development of production under the hegemony of the existing ruling class. It necessitates a move towards a much more state capitalist economy, combined with measures aimed at the ideological incorporation of the proletariat within capitalism. This is the policy of the social contract as it is advocated by the more radical and imaginative Labour politicians like Benn.

Here, instead of the economic role of the state being restricted it is extended, with private capital no longer being able to provide the funds for the purposes of accumulation and investment, the state steps in. Since profits are declining, investment must be financed out of tax revenues. Government money would be converted into industrial capital by such organs as the National Enterprise Board,

which would take into state control an increasing sector of industry. The tax system, from being a mere source of government revenue and regulator of the overall level of economic activity graduates to become the paramount engine of capital accumulation. This would be the most striking testimony to the total bankruptcy and decadence of the capitalist mode of production, as it would indicate that it had become incapable of self reproduction, incapable of perpetuating itself as a system of exploitation. What distinguished capitalist exploitation from previous forms, was that it came about through the mechanism of free commodity exchange, and the surplus product assumed the form of surplus value, monetary profit. Now this mechanism of exploitation has failed, and the system must resort to such archaic and obsolete forms as taxation, and the depreciation of the monetary standard. In addition to this the state would have to assume increasing power to 'steer' or direct credit towards those sections of capital that will use it to finance productive investment, rather than using it for property speculation and gambling on the commodity futures market. This sort of operation, whilst very helpful and profitable to those concerned, in no way helps the bourgeoisie as a whole compete on the world market.

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Table 3.1.

Rent as a % of total surplus value.

Year	(1)	(2)
1960	27%	30%
1961	29	30
1962	31	31
1963	29	30
1964	29	31
1965	30	31
1966	33	33
1967	33	36
1968	36	40
1969	41	42
1970	48	48
1971	47	46
1972	48	52
1973	52	70
1974	77	1053

(1) is calculated according to the formula  $R/S$  where R is rent, and S surplus value calculated as the sum of profits of private companies trading surpluses of nationalised industries, plus rent, minus stock appreciation and depreciation.

(2) is calculated using the formula  $R/(S-T)$  where T is trade deficit (visible). This gives rent as a fraction of domestic surplus value since it corrects for the latter brought about by a trade deficit. The absurd figure for '74 is a result of the total collapse of capitalist exploitation in Britain whilst landowners continued to derive revenue as a steady surcharge on the national income.

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In the current situation, the diversion of surplus value into ground rents (see Table 3.1.) is a significant obstacle to the development of the productive forces. The form of ground rent that predominates is of course capitalist differential rent, largely derived from urban land. The landowners merge with the bourgeoisie, rather than constituting a distinct social class. But the high level of rent diverts surplus value away from profits, and into speculative building rather than industrial investment. Within the framework of capitalist production, this could be avoided by the nationalisation of land and the diversion of rents to public expenditure or the accumulation of state capital. In formal historical terms, the nationalisation of land is just a measure of radical capitalist democracy, part of the expropriation of the old landowning aristocracy. The class of large agrarian landowners have of course long since lost their economic and political significance, they no longer constitute an important fraction of the

ruling class. But in modern Britain there remain: big obstacles to the nationalisation of land, since capitalist ground rents compose such a large portion of bank and insurance reserves, that even rent controls threaten their solvency. All these measures of state capitalist nationalisation would be accompanied by much rhetoric about socialism from the Labourites and the anguished howls from sections of the establishment press about the deprivations of that red revolutionary commissar: the ex-Viscount Stansgate. In order to add to the socialist credentials of these measures, (many workers now being rightly sceptical of capitalist nationalisation), various bureaucratic schemes for workers participation would be introduced in the new nationalised industries, along with the sponsoring of a few tame workers co-operatives. Preferably the latter would be set up in bankrupt, technically obsolete companies, with full compensation paid to all shareholders and creditors.

The objectives would be to : i) 'revitalise' British industry with an injection of new capital. ii) to win workers support for the voluntary restriction of wages, or if this fails to provide the necessary ideological cover, for the state regulation of wages.

The Labour Left presents this reformism as "Socialist Policy". Quite apart from the imbecility of thinking that socialism can be a 'policy' that may be introduced by a government at will, this line has to be opposed. In purely formal economic terms there is no denying that the social contract policy is progressive for it allows the development of the productive forces and it accelerates the concentration of capital. But it is progress only within the limits of capitalist society. It is no more than the bare minimum of measures needed to enable capitalism to continue advancing. It certainly does not help the proletariat develop as an autonomous class in order that it may supplant the bourgeoisie as ruling class, and that alone is what revolutionary strategy is all about.

In the eyes of the Labourite: State Socialists, all social progress is to come about through the medium of the state. Their socialism is no more than a policy for the expansion of a state power that already constitutes a vast, unproductive, parasitic excrescence upon the body of society. It frees workers from the rule of the private capitalist, only to subordinate them to the tyranny of the government official. In the present period - that of state monopoly capitalism - the struggle for socialism is evermore a struggle against the state power. The seizure of state power has always been the objective of revolutionary classes, for only with the conquest of the centralised political power can the organised resistance of the old ruling classes be broken. But as Marx wrote of the first proletarian revolution, the Paris Commune:-

"This state power forms in fact the creation of the middle class, first as a means to break down feudalism, then as a means to crush the emancipatory aspirations of the producers, the working class. All reactions and revolutions had only served to transfer that organised power - that organised form of the slavery of labour - from one hand to the other, from one fraction of the ruling classes to another. It had served the ruling classes as a means of subjugation and of pelf. It had sucked new forces from every new change. It had served as an instrument of breaking down every popular rise and served to crush the working classes after they had fought and been ordered to secure its transfer from one part of the oppressors to the others. This was, therefore, not a revolution against this or that, legitimate constitutional, republican or Imperialist form of State Power, it was a revolution against the State itself, of this supernaturalist abortion of society, a resumption by the people for the people of its own social life. It was not a revolution to transfer it from one fraction of the ruling classes to the other, but a Revolution to break down this horrid machinery of class domination itself. (First draft Civil War in France)

Now in the stage of monopoly capital, when the very productive forces are in revolt against the alien domination of capital, the state power becomes the last support of the capitalist economy itself. The state is no longer just a machine of class rule, but thanks to its taxes and tributes which support an army of



functionaries, sinecurists, bureaucrats and ideologues, has become the main social support for the established order. It is this juggernaut that the left labourites with their gaggle of trotskyst 'infiltrators' present to the working class as liberator.

Of course nothing else is to be expected of a 'Labour' party that has itself become a department of state. But how do the independent left, the Trotskyite groups like the IS and the IMG respond to the situation? Do they present this expanding state power as the principal enemy of the workers, or as a possible instrument in their liberation?

Steeped as they are in the pragmatist tradition of the British ruling class, the left concentrate on 'practical struggles' and leave such continental fads as Marxist economic theory to their academics. Theory, it seems, is OK for window dressing, so long as it is restricted to academic journals such as the New Left Review. Politics, however is something else, a practical matter to be determined by practical considerations. It comes therefore as no surprise, that they present the working class with no coherent Marxist analysis upon which they can claim their tactics to be based. It is therefore at times difficult to tell whether they actually have any strategy, or just an eclectic agglomerate of opportunist tactics. As far as can be made out, apart from their nationalistic shibboleth of opposing the EEC, the IS and the IMG have two main strands to their economic strategy, (for their political/electoral "strategies" see Proletarian Pamphlet No. 3)

- i) To smash the social con trick by advocating increased trades union militancy in an attempt to increase real wages.
- ii) To demand that the state, for its part, honours the social contract, by extending nationalisations and raising social services expenditure.

The first of these gives workers advice just where they at present least require it: on the subject of trades union militancy for wage demands. With its long trades union tradition, the British working class will engage in wages struggles as a reflex response to the crisis of British capitalism. They are quite capable of doing that without the advice of revolutionists. It is the duty of such to offer more. Revolutionary Marxists should have an overview of the economic and social dynamics of the crisis, which would make possible a conscious rather than reflex proletarian response.

It is a fact that British capitalism is going bankrupt, the rate of profit has been declining for decades. British industry has only been kept going over the past few years by foreign loans on an unprecedented scale. Real wages have only been maintained by the huge import deficit that these have made possible. Foreign loans during 1974 amounted to a subsidy of £3.55 per week on the wage of every employee in Britain. Meanwhile as a cause and effect of the low rate of profit productivity stagnates.

It is also a fact that the capitalist world is immersed in the worst period of recession since WW2, and that would tend to produce a worsening of the already enormous trade deficit of the UK. Consequently the foreign loans that are keeping British capital solvent, may at any time be withdrawn. The conclusion that follows is that there is no possibility of a general and sustained increase in real wages and salaries for at least the next two years (see table 3.2. overleaf).

If the deposits of the oil states are withdrawn a fall in real wages will become inevitable, in addition to that which is already taking place and which will continue for another couple of years, rather than there being any possibility of a rise in real disposable income. Contrary to populist demagogy, this is dictated not by the evil machinations of the 'gnomes of Zurich', the City of London or the IMF, but by the objective requirements for continued capital accumulation in Britain. Capital can only accumulate if its share in the national income rises, and this means its diversion from a) working class private consumption; b) working class and salaried social consumption - hence 'public spending' cuts; c) rentier capital, if industrial capital is to be forthcoming in the massive doses required. Thus the Left's expansionist Shibboleths are totally obsolete. Britain's contemporary disease is not underconsumption like in the '30s, but underproduction relative to its present consumption.

Table 3.2. The fall in real domestic income

	(1) (£ millions)	(2)	(3) (as per cent of base date)	(4)	(5)
1972	12,875	12,875	100	100	100
	13,564	13,578	100.1	98.2	98.2
	14,020	13,936	99.4	96.5	93.7
	14,710	14,122	96.0	94.6	89.8
1973	15,324	14,407	94.0	92.3	89.0
	15,973	14,405	90.4	89.5	88.4
	16,445	14,028	85.3	88.2	82.8
	16,992	13,815	81.3	85.3	81.6
1974	17,626	13,184	74.8	81.8	82.6
	18,341	13,407	73.1	77.2	83.0
	19,325	14,64	76.4	75.4	82.6

Note to the above table 3.2

All figures given quarterly

1. Total domestic income at current prices.
2. Real " " calculated by deflating (1) by the terms of trade.
3. Terms of trade, i.e., ratio of import to export prices.
4. Domestic purchasing power of the pound.
5. External purchasing power of the pound.

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The left has been advising workers to fight the cuts, smash the social contrick and press militant wage demands. It does not go into the source of the revenue that is to provide the higher wages for productive and unproductive workers alike. Up to early '75 the capitalists' response had been simple: in order to finance the ever growing numbers of unproductive workers that it employed, the state had been running a growing budget deficit financed by expanding the money supply. In the years of Tory government the money supply was rising as much as 30 per cent a year. The easy credit that this provided allowed firms to borrow the money necessary for wage increases at interest rates at or below the rate of inflation. It also allowed an upsurge of investment in speculative property development which directed capital away from the productive sector of the economy. But all this leads to ever accelerating inflation as a growing unproductive sector is supported on a narrowing productive base. The inflation and taxation necessary to finance the growth of state expenditure squeezed real wages of industrial workers. To the extent that they were able to increase their money wages whilst the strict tory price and dividend control measures held down profits, the main burden of the increased unproductive sector was borne by private capital and the balance of trade. As a result the begining of '75 saw negative profit rates and an unprecedented trade deficit.

Under laissez faire capitalism, intense accumulation brings in its train wage increases and consequent profit decreases which in turn precipitate recession and unemployment. Keynesianism initially seems to avoid this dilemma, but as dialectics tells us, the solution of one contradiction is the cause of the next. Yesterday's Keynesian solutions to underconsumption, become the cause of today's problem of underproduction. The demands of leftists are a hangover from the spontaneous consciousness of the Keynesian epoch, but with that epoch passing they become unrealisable and irrelevant utopias as a bourgeoisie whose consciousness is developing beyond keynesianism begins to explore methods for resolving the new crisis and thus prepares once more to outflank the working class. Militant trades unionism, of which leftism is the theoretical expression, does no more than exploit the opportunities that the labour market and state fiscal policy offer by ensuring that labour power sells for the maximum price. Faced with structural crisis whose resolutions may range from the hegemony of state capital to the abolition of the free labour market, it is powerless. Spontaneism now faces a law of diminishing returns.

Whether the capitalist system survives, or is replaced by socialist economic organisation, a free market in labour power has become incompatible with economic growth. The defence of free collective bargaining, has now in historical terms become reactionary. All attempts to defend it i.e. the existing wages system, are destined to fail. So long as the left do this, rather than struggling directly for the abolition of the wages system, they provide no assistance to the working class.

On the other hand, like the covert reformists they are, the left deny this and maintain that it will be possible to gain wage increases and maintain full employment. The IMG in its 'Programme for the Crisis' issued during the October 1974 election campaign said;

" Capitalism claims that unemployment is caused by high wages. This explanation is absurd. There were no high wages in the 1930's. It is the system of production for profit, not high wages, that throws people on the dole. The working class must accept no responsibility for the problems caused by the capitalist system. Until the economy has been taken out of capitalism's hands it must be the employers and their state that take responsibility for unemployment. Only a class wide offensive can ensure this and also the right to work. We fight for:

\*The right to work. \*Reduction of the working week in all industries to 35 hours with no loss of pay. \*Work sharing with no loss of pay where redundancies are threatened. \*All factory closures and redundancies to be met with occupation strikes. \*Nationalisation without compensation under workers control of all firms creating redundancies. \*Immediate nationalisation of the building and motor industries."

The simple logical errors in their demagogy are obvious. The fact that high wages are not the main cause of unemployment during the 1930's, does not prove that wage increases are never one of the causes producing unemployment, it certainly does not prove that wage increases now will not cause unemployment. The 1930's were a deflationary period, when the main problem facing capitalism was under-consumption. The 70's are an inflationary period when the main problem facing capitalism is the low rate of profit. In the 30's wage rises would have helped to solve the problem of under-consumption, and so resulted in lower unemployment. Now, wage rises reduce the rate of profit and tend to produce more unemployment. It is totally dishonest of the IMG to claim that we could have the best of both worlds - steadily rising wages and full employment. Equally dishonest is their moralistic play on the meaning of the word "responsibility". Nobody is morally responsible for unemployment; economics is not a question of morality, but a matter of facts and of social laws. Responsibility can have no material meaning unless those responsible for something are capable of preventing its occurrence. The capitalist state is now unable to prevent unemployment - unless it is able to control wages through the social contract, the militarisation of labour, or whatever. The capitalist class is incapable of assuming responsibility for ensuring full employment, unless it can impose its will on the proletariat. Only working class control of the economy, leading to the abolition of capitalism can ensure full employment and the steady advance of productivity required for higher living standards. The only policy by which the proletariat can defend its interests, is by struggling to wrest economic control ( and this responsibility ) from the hands of the capitalist class. The proletariat cannot wait until, as the IMG put it, "the economy can be taken out of capitalism's hands"; it must start forthwith to seize the economy and thus relieve the capitalists of their 'onerous responsibility'.

The only practical measure that the IMG advocate is to pressurise the capitalist state into nationalising 'without compensation under workers' control' those companies creating redundancies. On this they are joined by IS. This once again shows that whatever their 'theoretical differences', when it comes to the politics urged on the working class, all the major 'revolutionary' organisations advocate the same thing - militant social-democracy; ie left-labourism. How then can they not give 'critical' support to the Labour Party and Government ?

In the October IS national committee policy statement we read:

"Our platform (Where We Stand) contains the item 'For nationalization without compensation under worker's control'.

"In some circumstances this can be an important agitational or propaganda slogan. For example, in the case of closures or in relation to nationalization proposals put forward by the Labour Party (shipbuilding, aircraft, etc.)

"The no compensation demand is particularly relevant in both cases. The stress needs to be put upon the fact that the industries are either bankrupt or heavily dependent upon state subsidies, that compensation is a free gift to the owners. From this point our propaganda can generalise about property rights in the means of production in general (who creates wealth, etc.).

"Nationalization measures are state capitalist measures not socialist ones. This will always be true so long as the nationalising state is a capitalist state. In many cases (e.g. coal, railways) they are in the economic interests of the capitalist class as a whole. However, there is often a conflict between economic and political interests (not to mention the sectional interests of particular groups of capitalists). At present virtually the whole capitalist class is strongly opposed to the government's nationalization measures because it fears that they may encourage workers to demand much more especially when closures are threatened, and so seriously hamper rationalization and interfere with redundancies.

"In this situation we support nationalization measures critically (raising the issue of compensation and control) but unconditionally. That is, our support is not altered when our full demands are not met. At the same time we oppose all schemes for hiving off sections of existing nationalised industries or denationalization."

To demand "Nationalization without compensation under worker's control", sounds very revolutionary. But as Marx said: "whomsoever one seeks to persuade one acknowledges to be master of the situation." (Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte). The IS and IMG are presenting nothing other than a more militant version of the Labourite state socialism. The working class is once more cast in the role of relying upon an all-powerful state. The strategy contrives once more to present the state as a means, rather than an obstacle, to the liberation of the proletariat. The state is once more seen as an ally rather than an enemy. The IS, famed opponents of state capitalism, end up giving unconditional (but of course 'critical'!) support to the state capitalist solution to the crisis. The ever so critical remarks about worker's control turn out in practice to be just so much face saving window dressing. With genuinely bankrupt firms, there is anyway no question of compensation even in terms of bourgeois right, as the case of Rolls-Royce shows. On the other hand in the case of non-bankrupt firms, it is hopelessly utopian to demand that the state - the very embodiment of capitalist legality - should abrogate capitalist property rights. State capitalist nationalization and genuine worker's control are of course incompatible. It would either turn out to be a means by which workers would manage their own exploitation, 'in the interests of the nation' of course. Alternatively, it would be no more than defensive opposition to the policies of the state management, a mere extension of trade unionism. This, it turns out is what the IS means by workers' control:

"The fight for workers' control is fundamental but must not be confused with workers' self-management. Workers' control implies the existence of a capitalist (or state capitalist) management. It is control over the activities of such managements that can be achieved in varying degrees before the establishment of a workers' state. The struggle for workers' control is a struggle to encroach upon managerial rights. That struggle

will be especially concerned in the near future with destroying the management's power to declare redundancies. It is equally relevant in nationalised and in private industries. The essential difference from this point of view, is that nationalised industries cannot go bankrupt." (IS national committee policy statement).

Or in another article in the same issue of the IS journal:

"Workers' control in this context can only mean the continued strengthening of shop floor union organisation. The sort of organisation that has the power to restrict the management's ability to manage. They used to call it restrictive practices! Thereby ensuring the ability to maintain full manning levels, working conditions and wages. It does not mean the participation of the workers in their own exploitation.

"Such demands are not calls for the building of socialism in one factory. It is a means of using nationalization as a means of defending jobs."

Here we can see the IS trying to preserve the traditional role of trades unionism in its most futile form. One in which workers find themselves in the rut of opposing management decisions which may often be objectively progressive, i.e. which involve an improvement in the productive power of labour. In the 160 years that have passed since the collapse of the Luddite movement, attempts to hold back the development of labour-saving technology have time and again been proved hopeless in the long run. The working class achieves nothing by defending the technological status quo - unless you count the dubious achievement of enabling capital to continue to present itself as a progressive force. But even when such fights meet with success it is only temporary, sooner or later it is wiped out by competition. In this context, restriction of the management's right to manage merely hides the reality that the management is itself no more than an agent of the laws of capitalism. Rationalisation and technical change are forced by the imperatives of capitalist competition and in the long run all struggles to resist them will be defeated. IS fantasise that it will be possible to maintain the status quo with present manning levels, if only firms were to be nationalized. Even if we disregard the experience of the present nationalised industries, this begs the question of how the state will be able to afford to run nationalised industries at a loss.

There can only be one answer, by increasing taxes. So, in effect, the IS are asking that the rest of the working class subsidise those in the nationalised industries. A very socialist policy! Even if workers in nationalised industries were to achieve this highly sectional objective, it would not help in the long run. The world market cannot be wished away. The maintenance of the status quo in this country whilst the rest of the capitalist world modernised, would drive British goods from the world market reducing the working class to penury.

The state of course would never allow the situation to deteriorate this far; it would be forced to intervene and extend itself to restore the social equilibrium. The process by which this would be likely to occur reveals yet again the fundamental conformity between the policies of the IS and those of the Labourite and state socialists; a conformity that stems from them both being variants of economism, what Lenin called the 'bourgeois politics of the working class'.

The politics of both IS and the Labour lefts, are expressions of the spontaneous economic/corporate consciousness of the workers organised in trade unions. The political objectives of both are limited to a desire to use the existing state to redistribute national income towards the working class. Neither of them deal with the problem of how the working class is to exercise mastery over social life, how it is to raise itself to the status of ruling class. It was for this reason that Antonio Gramsci argued that trade unionist politics (or as he called

it, 'theoretical syndicalism') is the twin brother of liberalism, the classical form of bourgeois politics.

"Consequently, laissez-faire liberalism is a political programme designed to change - insofar as it is victorious - a state's leading personnel, and to change the economic programme of the state itself - in other words the distribution of national income.

"The case of theoretical syndicalism is different. Here we are dealing with a subaltern group, which is prevented by this theory from becoming dominant, or from developing beyond the economic-corporate stage and arising to the phase of ethical-political hegemony in civil society, and domination of the State." (New Machiavelli).

With both the Left Labourites and the IS the working class is equated with its economic organisations, in the one case the trade unions, in the other 'Rank and File' caucuses of trade unionists. The political field is left to the state. The economic intransigence that the left dresses up as politics, represents in fact an abdication from politics, being no more than the instinctive economic response of the trade unionist. The most that it can achieve in political terms is to speed up the pace of capitalist development.

Economic intransigence will tend to drive capitalist firms into bankruptcy. The factory closures, redundancies, etc., that ensue, would force the state to take into public ownership many of these enterprises. Being unable to buy all these up for cash, it would be forced to pay for them with government bonds. The state subsidies required for the impossible task of keeping up real wages in these nationalised industries in the face of mounting costs of food and raw material imports, would bring accelerating inflation. This erodes the value of fixed interest bonds, as is graphically shown by the recent state of the stock market, thus the paper with which the rentiers were paid for their firms depreciates, promising to become valueless in a matter of years, or even months. A political crisis ensues, with calls from the rentier section of the ruling class for the resignation or overthrow of the government, rumours of coups d'etat. The Left and the Labour Party call on the workers to defend "democracy" and nationalised state property. In the conflict that follows, either the rentier interest triumphs, and in the extreme the workers' movement is massacred in a Chile style coup; or, more probably, the rentiers are defeated, and the crisis provides the opportunity for organising wage restraint in the interests of 'democracy and the nation'.

Net economic result: means of production increasingly concentrated in the hands of state capital.

Net social result: a reorganised ruling class in which the old entrepreneurial and managerial strata are merged with upper ranks of the state bureaucracy.

Net political result: working class pressure has been utilised to dispose of an old ruling strata and consolidate a new one, just as in 1832 it was used to enfranchise the bourgeoisie against the opposition of the aristocracy. At no stage does the working class organise itself independently of state capital to achieve its own political objectives. All that it would have achieved is a strengthening of the state. A thing against which the British socialist movement was warned as long ago as 1917:

"The extension of State control will bring with it armies of official bureaucrats, who will only be able to maintain their posts by tyrannising and limiting the freedom of the workers. The nominal wages of the workers may rise but it will be at the expense of their relative position in society and of the limitation of their freedom. Within such a system the workers will be a little better than serfs. And instead of having to overthrow a system buttressed by a

handful of individual capitalists, the workers will be faced with a system reinforced by a gigantic army of State-subsidied officials, who will fight like tigers to maintain their status and power. Such indeed is the logical outcome of the advocacy of State or National ownership. It is a social despotism organised from above."

"Thus the social reformers and State 'Socialists' have been urging the formation of a condition of things which by its very nature, not only brings the mass of the workers under the despotic rule of State officials, but which, as a means of controlling the workers, has become one of the last and most effective props for prolonging wage slavery. In the last analysis State ownership is more a means of controlling and regimenting the workers than of controlling industry."

(William Paul: "The State, its origin and function").

The economic policies of the Left turn out to be either:

- a) dressed up versions of state capitalism, or
- b) impossible and utopian in the current capitalist crisis, or
- c) reactionary and counter-productive in practice.

The proletariat is the only fundamentally progressive class in British society, but if the IS and IMG are allowed to present themselves as its most advanced political representatives it can make few, if any, advances from the present capitalist crisis. Unless the working class (or at least its most class conscious, thinking, politically active members) adopts the policy of revolutionary communism, then the class struggle will result not in the "revolutionary reconstitution of society at large", but "in the common ruin of the contending parties", as the Communist Manifesto puts it. For, as Gramsci has made explicit:

"It may be ruled out that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historical events; they can simply create a terrain more favourable to certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life." (The Modern Prince).

But instead of taking with both hands this rare opportunity for posing anew the fundamental problems of capitalism, socialism and communism, all the British Left does is demand return to the status quo ante - the halcyon days of 'never had it so good' Keynesianism. However a new 'fix' must replace Keynesianism; and it is to the outcome for which workers must fight that we address our next, and longest section.

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COBI PUBLICATIONS IN PRINT : (see also p.53)

Pamphlet No:3 - Parliamentarism and Communist Strategy. The classic debate collected in documentary form - Lenin, Bordiga, Bukharin, Gallacher, Pankhurst, Murphy and Wm. Morris - plus Cobi analysis and Statement on Parliamentarism. 30p and 15 post.

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--- Section IV : Proletarian Perspectives ---

"The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism).

Unfortunately for the working class, the "science of leadership" is completely ignored by those who would claim to be the revolutionary leaders of the class. The Left in Britain pay lip service to the goal of 'revolution', 'socialism' and ultimately 'communism' but that is all; the ingrained ouvrierism of the labour movement in Britain has carried over into the self-styled 'revolutionary' organisations and given rise to the revisionist attitude that "the movement is the means, and the means is everything." Strategy is conceived purely as the sum of tactics, and such tactics as exist must be tailored to fit the twin idols of "mass work" and "the practical struggles of the masses". Such tactics have come to centre on the economic class struggle and reforms, thus excluding revolutionary strategic considerations from the centre, and even the periphery, of the British 'revolutionary' stage. But reforms do not of themselves make for revolution, and reformist tactics do not ultimately amount to socialism.

"Marxist strategy - as the overall programme of action - is derived from analysis of past and present using the tools of dialectical and historical materialism, enabling the goal of communism to be attained sooner rather than later, with less suffering rather than more. Strategy then, is the trajectory from the present to the distant but discernible future.

"Tactics are the sequence of points ('plots' in both senses) along the line that is the resultant of those of least resistance and of shortest distance in bridging capitalism to communism. Tactics therefore, exist as the implementation of strategy over time. Hence communist strategy must not become the reification of tactics, still less of expediency; for tactics are merely the coordinates and springing points of the strategic line as a process.

"So there is a qualitative difference between strategy and tactics; strategy is not formed by, nor even approximates to, the mere assemblage of tactical action. Rather, tactics represent concrete furtherance by implementation, of the programmatic line in a specific situation. Strategy is primary, tactics are derivative therefrom; role reversal in this key area is always one of the first and surest signs of revisionist disease and is endemic to all forms of social democracy, whose 'pragmatic' practicality always consists of what alone it is expedient for capitalism to concede; therefore social democrats from bright yellow (Labour Party) through to bright pink (CPGB) can have no strategy, for they have no consistent world-view." (Proletarian No.I).

"To a reformist, reforms are everything, while revolutionary work is something incidental, something just to talk about, mere eye-wash. That is why, with reformist tactics under the bourgeois regime, reforms are naturally transformed into instruments for strengthening that regime, an instrument for disintegrating the revolution.

"To a revolutionary, on the contrary, the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are by-products of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the bourgeois regime, reforms are naturally transformed into instruments for disintegrating this regime, into instruments for strengthening the revolution, into a base for the further development of the revolutionary movement.

"The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work, to intensify under its cover, the illegal work for the revolutionary preparedness of the masses for the over-



throw of the bourgeoisie.

"THIS is what making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism means.

"The reformist on the contrary, will accept reforms in order to renounce all illegal work, to thwart the preparation of the masses for the revolution and to rest in the shade of "bestowed" reforms.

"THIS is what reformist tactics mean.

"This is the position in regard to reforms and agreements under imperialism", (and, indeed, capitalism in general). (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism).

The Left in Britain focus upon defence of trade union rights, protecting the living standards of the workers, and nationalisation "under workers' control"; they have been unable to look beyond these to define seriously what constitutes the real long and medium term revolutionary interests of the proletariat as a class. Yet no strategy is possible without such definition and the obsession with immediate economist measures can lead only to reformism, never to a revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat. The definition of these long and medium term proletarian class interests must therefore be the first task for communists in identifying a revolutionary strategy and tactics for the current situation.

#### THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE OF THE PROLETARIAT.

The long-term revolutionary objective of the proletariat is communism; a classless, Stateless society, with production organised in the interests of the producers.

On the face of it, this would seem to be the same as the professed 'goal' of organisations on the British Left - a simple statement of an ultimate aim which can be taken for granted by anyone calling themselves a 'revolutionary'. But it is a coincidence which true communists should not be fooled by, for nothing arouses more confusion than the term 'communism'; all have their various views about what communist society will be like. What is lacking in the British Left is a clear definition of just what does and does not constitute a communist society.

What communism does not mean is a society where the whole of industry is 'nationalised', the whole of the workforce is 'unionised' and the whole of the 'product of labour' is equally distributed leading to better wages all round. Yet to judge by the proclamations and 'revolutionary' tactics of the Left in Britain, such is the society to which we should all aspire and struggle.

What communism does mean is a complete abolition of class society, i.e., the total destruction of capitalist social relations; hence the need for a socialist transition from capitalism to communism, when, after the revolutionary seizure of state power by the proletariat, the dictatorship of the proletariat will take responsibility for finally dismantling all remnants of capitalist social relations. Simplistic solutions posited by left organisations in Britain and the abolition of private ownership of the means of production of itself cannot achieve the destruction of capitalist social relations - the negative experience of the Soviet Union and the positive experience arising from the Cultural Revolution in China serve to prove this fact.

To attack capitalist social relations in any meaningful way, communists must be clear as to what constitute the bases of those social relations. There are five identifiable bases upon which capitalist social relations are predicted:

(1) The separation of units of production one from another leading to commodity production and market anarchy.

(2) Separation of the individual producers from the means of production. Machine industry means that the individual producer is incapable of setting the means of production into motion.

(3) The conditions of production exist independently of the producers as capital. As a result, workers are forced to exchange their labour power against variable capital, leading to the wages system which is both the product of, and the continuing cause of, the separation of producers from the means of production.

(4) Capitalist class society entails a rigid social division of labour; the separation of mental from manual work; the separation of the function of direction from the function of execution; the separation of male and female roles in society. This social division of labour, with its narrowing and stultifying effects, reproduces in perpetuity the incapacity of the producers to master the conditions of production. The collective labour of the producers remains an alien power administered by the functionaries of capital.

(5) The separation of the collective functions of the community from the community in the form of a state power, which stands above society posing as the universal representative, whilst in fact serving to maintain the entire system of class domination.

The struggle for Communism is thus a class struggle that aims to destroy all of these five foundations of class society.

#### THE MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVE OF THE PROLETARIAT

The abolition of capitalist social relations is impossible so long as the capitalist state power continues to exist. The medium term objective for communists must therefore be to organise the proletariat to smash the capitalist state. This objective requires:

(a) the formation of the proletariat as a class in opposition to the bourgeoisie, forcing the intermediate strata to split into those who support and those who oppose the proletariat.

(b) the development of the proletarian assertiveness and confidence in their ability to rule.

(c) the development of organs of proletarian power that come into opposition to the capitalist state power.

#### (A) THE FORMATION OF THE PROLETARIAT AS A CLASS IN OPPOSITION TO THE OTHER CLASSES IN SOCIETY.

Firstly we must define our terms and analyse who constitute the proletariat and determine the classes they have to oppose in society.

The communist strategy of class alliances has always been built upon four objectives:

- i) Constitute and unify the proletariat as the leading revolutionary class.
- ii) Isolate the exploiting class holding state power as the main enemy.
- iii) Win for the proletariat the active, or at least passive, support of those non-proletarian classes and/or strata that are oppressed by the existing social system.
- iv) Neutralise, or as Lenin put it, 'paralyse with instability' the vacillating classes and/or strata.

(i) ORGANISING THE PROLETARIAT AS A CLASS.

It will be claimed by many on the left that the British working class already has class organisations in the shape of trade unions and that the task of communists is to ensure that each member of the working class becomes a member of a trade union - thus the emphasis by IS and the CPB(M-L), to mention but two, on the need to encourage and become absorbed in the present economic struggles of the working class so as to advance the cause of trade unionism.

Such an approach makes amockery of 'revolutionary politics' and abandons Marxism-Leninism for pure opportunism. Let us take a serious look at existing trades unionism and its potential for "organising the proletariat as a class".

The very name "trades unionism" exposes the character of these organisations developed by the British working class in their historical economic struggle with the bourgeoisie. In existing unions, workers are not organised on a class basis, but on a craft and sectarian basis, according to membership of a trade not membership of a class. What has been the result of this organised sectarianism? The following analysis of trades unionism in practice was made by the Socialist Labour Party over sixty years ago and is still an apt description of the present organisational position of the working class:

Trades unionism's "farical fight with capital may be compared to that of two armies. One of them is strong and well-organised; its well-drilled battalions officered by capable leaders, all acting together on a common plan. The other is numerically strong but utterly disorganised. Its leaders are incompetent, treacherous and at variance with one another. Its different regiments are more often engaged in internecine strife than in manly combat with the enemy. When one brigade attacks the foe, the others stand idly by and watch their comrades being cut to pieces, or actively assist the other side. All this division and disorganisation arises naturally out of the capitalist basis of the union - the acceptance of the principle that "the interests of capital and labour are identical", that the unions exist to protect the "just-rights of employer and employee." Where the class struggle is denied, the conception of class solidarity, of common class interests is necessarily absent. It is only by a recognition of class struggle, not as a mere theory, the fine mouth-filling phrase of the political orator or a historian's scientific measuring rod - but as a fact evidenced in our daily experience, that the working class can attain unity either on the political or the economic plane. Once unity is obtained on that basis the labour union becomes an irresistible revolutionary force that all the powers of capital are incapable of withstanding. Therefore those politicians and labour leaders who profess belief in the class war and at the same time oppose Industrial Unionism and defend the system of organised inter-trade scabbery known as craft or "trade" unionism, reveal the fact that with them the class war is a mere formal belief, a sort of political credo that has no real basis in conviction. The fakir is most dangerous when he pretends to be a socialist. The great founder of the socialist Movement, Karl Marx, ably stated the present defects and the future potentialities of Labour Unions in the following:

" 'Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system.' " (The Development of Socialism In Great Britain).

Class antagonisms are a form of social relations, and as such, they ultimately derive from production relations.

"Like all its predecessors, the capitalist process of production proceeds under definite material conditions, which are, however, the bearers of definite social relations entered into by the individuals in the process of reproducing their life. Those conditions, like these relations, are on the one hand prerequisites, and on the other hand results and creations of the capitalist process of production; they are produced and reproduced by it. We saw also that capital - and the capitalist is merely capital personified and functions in the process of production solely as an agent of capital - in its corresponding social process of production, pumps a definite quantity of surplus labour out of the direct producers, or labourers; capital obtains this surplus of labour without an equivalent, and in essence it always remains forced labour - no matter how much it may seem to result from free contractual agreement." (Capital III, 818-819).

This forced labour extracted from the direct producers - the industrial proletariat - underlies the whole system of class antagonism in modern society. The dominant capitalist system of production, gives rise to the two fundamental classes of modern society, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The situation is rendered more complex by the way that the reproduction of capitalist production at the level of society as a whole engenders a whole mass of intermediate strata who are neither proletarian nor bourgeois, and by the fact that neither of the two fundamental classes is homogeneous. A detailed examination of this is outside the scope of our present pamphlet, and will be examined in a forthcoming publication. Here we will restrict ourselves to the following observations.

The intermediate strata will, in acute class struggle, split three ways:- into the inseparable allies of the bourgeoisie; the allies of the proletariat; and the vacillating strata. The first group will be composed of those who both enjoy privileged conditions of life, and also fulfill social functions that will vanish under socialism. The second group will be made up of those whose conditions of life are near to those of the proletariat, and whose jobs will either remain necessary in a socialist society, or whose jobs, whilst socially useless in future society, hold no special attraction to those who fill them under capitalism. The vacillators will broadly speaking be composed of those whose functions may persist in the future socialist system, but whose privileged conditions of life tie them to the present system.

It follows therefore that the proletariat, in seeking to form an alliance with sections of the intermediate strata, cannot base its policy upon a recognition of their special interests or privileges. In the modern world the proletariat and the bourgeoisie alone represent viable modes of production, either the bourgeoisie and its capitalism, or the proletariat and its socialism; these are the only alternatives. Thus, in coming over to the side of the proletariat in the class struggle, the intermediate strata must identify with their place in the future socialist society, rather than attempt to defend their position under capitalism, or translate it directly into their own version of "socialism". The proletarian policy of class alliance must be based upon a resolute refusal to make any compromises with the particular interests or privileges of the intermediate strata in capitalist society. It is explicitly on these principles that we put forward the following policies.

There remain two problems; how to organise the proletariat as a class; and the means by which the proletariat can effectively oppose other classes so as to begin the assault on capitalist social relations as a whole, such that it lays the basis for the future dictatorship of the proletariat.

All that exists at present to counter the competition between existing unions is the Trades Union Congress and its General Council. But this body is not capable of offering class leadership, even on the limited plane of economic class struggle. Only 44.7% of the employed population are organised in member unions of the TUC. Furthermore, only 57.6% of the industrial proletariat are organised in member unions of the TUC (see table 4:1). Even though this percentage is only an approximation (giving the manual membership of TUC unions as a percentage of productive employees in specified industries), it nevertheless contradicts the widespread illusion that the industrial proletariat in Britain are fully organised (give or take a percentage point or two). And 29.3% of the membership of unions in the TUC are classed as "non-manual" workers (see table 4:2). So the most the General Council can try to do is to reconcile, as best they can, the widely differing interests of its numerous member unions (132 of them in 1972).

Yet history shows that the TUC General Council cannot exercise leadership over its existing member unions - the inter-union rivalry persists and with it disarray within the ranks of the proletariat. The so-called 'revolutionary' Left in Britain can offer no alternative to this situation except a call

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 Table 4:1 : The relationship of member unions of the TUC and the employed  
 ..... population, 1972 \*  
 .....

1. Employed population\*: 22,120,000
2. Total membership of TUC unions : 9,894,881 (44.7% of Employed Population)
3. Productive Employees\*\* : 11,784,000 (53.3% of Employed Population)
4. Manual membership of TUC unions : 6,978,881 (57.6% of Productive Employees, 70.7% of total TUC members)
5. Non-manual membership of TUC unions : 2,916,000 (29.3% of total TUC members)

.....  
 TUC statistics from 1972 Conference Report and 36th Conference Report of Non-Manual Workers' Conference, 1972.

\* Obtained from Annual Abstract of Statistics.

\*\* Obtained from Annual Abstract of Statistics by totalling Manufacture + agriculture + forestry + fishing + mining + quarrying + construction + gas + electricity + water + transport + communication.

≠ 1972 figures have been retained to enable the Non-Manual Workers' Report figures to be incorporated - there having been no qualitative change since.

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 Table 4:2 : Non-Manual Membership Within the TUC, 1972\*  
 .....

Trade Group	No. of Unions With Non-manual Membership	Non-manual Membership
Mining and Quarrying	1	15,000
Railways	2	82,000
Transport (other than Railways)	5	130,000
Shipbuilding	1	2,500
Engineering, Founding and Vehicle Building	3	10,000
Technical Engineering and Scientific	5	385,800
Electricity	1	13,000
Iron Steel and Minor Metal Trades	2	25,000
Building, Woodworking and Furnishing	1	100
Printing and Paper	3	48,300

	No. of Unions With Non-manual Membership	Non-manual Membership
Trade Group		
Textiles	4	1,800
Clothing Leather Boot and Shoe	3	5,000
Glass, Pottery, Chemicals, Food, Drink		
Tobacco, Brush-making and Distribution	5	245,200
Agriculture	-	-
Public Employees	10	998,300
Civil Servants	11	569,900
Professional, Clerical and Enter- tainment	11	346,900
General Workers	2	35,200
Total	70	2,916,000

\* Taken from Report of Non-Manual Workers' Conference 1972.

for 'rank and file' democracy in existing unions. No mention is made of attacking sacred trade union principles such as "job demarcation" and "pay differentials"; though all would pay lip service to the plight of the 'lower paid' none can offer an effective remedy to the present chaos and back-stabbing. Indeed, with the best will in the world, the very institutional position of trades unions locked within the ambit of free collective bargaining, means that nothing other than market commodity trading can be undertaken. Therein, those with the most to sell (in terms of skill) and best organised in terms of the cartelisation of the vendors of those skills, will inevitably achieve income in return for their labour power much in excess of income achievable by those less skilled and less organised (e.g. agricultural workers, clothing machinists, shop workers), who are actively disadvantaged by the free-for-all known as "free collective bargaining".

So the British working class has still to be organised on a class basis even on the level of the economic class struggle, let alone the political level. Quite unlike the 'lefties' enamoured of trade union struggle as a means to socialism, even an enlightened Labourite like Bryn Roberts could see the futility of present working class organisations:

"The bench has largely given way to the conveyor belt. The shovel has been replaced by the excavator, and the productive system hitherto dependant upon the hand and eye of skilled craftsmen is now giving way to automatic processes and mass production.

"Both the craft and the general union forms of organisation, instead of reflecting industrial needs, are now in conflict with them, and, try as hard as they may, it is impossible for them to ensure their survival and also fulfill their original trade union purpose.

"Until this is acknowledged and the craft, general and other unions adapt themselves to present day requirements and remove all forms of competitive trade unionism, with its accompanying disorder, there is little likelihood of any real progress being made towards the establishment of a socialist Britain....

"And while the influence and effectiveness of this great movement declines and drifts from its original principles, the TUC General Council, which represents the leadership, (our emphasis - COBI) has been content to look on...

"The fact is, as the record shows, that the TUC leadership has no desire to take an active role in general trade union affairs. It prefers to remain

'above the battle' when Unions are fighting the employers or when Unions are fighting one another...

"Although I believe that trade union reconstruction will never come about on the initiative of the undemocratically elected TUC leaders, whose desire to perpetuate the present anachronistic TUC machine transcends all other considerations, other forces will surely arise to achieve it" (The Price of TUC Leadership, 1961).

So what is the communist alternative to the existing chaotic economic organisation of the working class? The answer was furnished by the SLP three-quarters of a century ago, and the 'revolutionary' movement in Britain has tried to ignore it ever since (the ignorance of most 'revolutionaries' and ordinary workers only testifies to how well this attempt to hide a revolutionary alternative to the status quo has succeeded). The alternative lies, not in a more militant or democratic trades unionism, but in revolutionary Industrial Unionism.

"Trades Unionism cannot function within the modern factory or industry. And being functionless it is dying from atrophy. It refuses voluntarily to give way to the modern and scientific organisation of Labour - revolutionary Industrial Unionism. But institutions do not pass away when their missions have been fulfilled. They struggle to live, and they exist functionless and fossilised. It is because of this historical law that Industrial Unionism rises and throws its gauntlet at the feet of the old reactionary movement of sectionalism." (William Paul: Scientific Socialism, Its Aims and Methods)

The working class in Britain must once more be made aware of Industrial Unionism as a revolutionary alternative to their present stalemate and imprisonment within the limited economic class struggle. Even within this struggle Industrial Unionism is qualitatively superior to the existing trades unions. For they organise the class within each industry into one single fighting force opposing the bourgeoisie, strengthening the arm of the proletariat in its economic struggles.

"The Industrial Union, on the other hand, organises the workers as a class. This does not mean, as the opponents of Industrial Unionism have sought to maintain, that no account is taken of the different trades and industries in which the workers are employed; that it contemplates one huge, unwieldy union in which workers are enrolled indiscriminately and quite irrespective of the different functions and conditions of the various elements. Industrial Unionism does not propose to substitute confusion on the gigantic scale for the disintegration and separatism of the existing unions. On the contrary, order and correlation are essential to its very nature.... the organisation of each section or subsection of an industry, while it will possess perfect mobility as a fighting force, will no longer be cursed by the impotence which the isolation of Pure and simple unionism involves, but will act in unison with the other divisions of that industry, supporting them and supported by them. In this manner the working class will be organised from one end of the country to the other in such a way as to place the complete control of production in its hands. The enormous power that will result from this change of posture is obvious." (The Development of Socialism in Great Britain, SLP).

Given the necessity of overcoming purely "trade" or sectional unionism, why the specifically industrial form? Why not something geographically oriented like area Trades Councils?

The condition of the working class is rooted in the division of labour in general and in the internal conditions of different industries specifically. A man is a steelworker whether he does his work in Glasgow, Port Talbot or

Corby. When employed his conditions of life are largely determined by the nature of the steelplant as a unit of production of the industry as a whole. Pay, conditions of work, health, etc., are all negotiated with regard to the whole industry and only very secondarily according to the area in which the plant happens to be located.

When unemployed, he will generally seek work elsewhere in the industry, even if it means moving right out of the area. Of course, the reverse also occurs sometimes - workers seeking other employment to remain in a specific area. But whatever alternative is chosen (or forced), it is conditions within and the future of, particular industries as national, not regional entities, that is the primary reality. So union organisation - being the basic, primary organisation of workers - has to be rooted in the distinct industries.

The class, as opposed to trades solidarity of the proletariat would be further strengthened by a Confederation of Industrial Unions, providing class integration and co-ordination on an inter-industrial basis from district to national level, allowing the proletariat to mount an effective assault on capitalist social relations, which will necessarily bring them into opposition on a class basis to other classes in British society.

(ii) OPPOSITION BY THE PROLETARIAT, ON AN ORGANISED CLASS BASIS, TO ITS CLASS ENEMIES.

The important question for communists is: how is the proletariat to oppose effectively the interests of its enemies, while at the same time advancing its own revolutionary class interests by beginning the assault on capitalist social relations? The answer is fourfold:

a) by waging the fight for an 'average industrial wage' to combat existing wage differentials which perpetuate the division of labour intrinsic to capitalist social relations. This is obviously a fight for which Industrial Unions are a requisite to success; since the co-ordinated collective bargaining required to enforce an 'average industrial wage' for all cannot possibly be conducted by existing trades unions for whom 'maintenance of differentials' is the breath of life.

We have quoted Marx and Engels at length on the necessity for workers to break out of the Wages System - the nexus of capitalist production relations - if they were to break free of capitalist social relations; i.e. break free from the dominance of capital over society, which is necessarily moulded according to continued reproduction requirements of capital as a social force standing over and against workers as a class of wage labourers.

"Capitalist production, therefore, of itself reproduces the separation between labour-power and the means of labour. It thereby reproduces and perpetuates the condition for exploiting the labourer. It incessantly forces him to sell his labour-power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labour-power in order that he may enrich himself. It is no longer a mere accident, that capitalist and labourer confront each other in the market as buyer and seller. It is the process itself that incessantly hurls back the labourer on to the market as a vendor of his labour-power, and that incessantly converts his own product into a means by which another man can purchase him. In reality, the labourer belongs to capital before he has sold himself to capital. His economical bondage is both brought about and concealed by the periodic sale of himself, by his change of masters, and by the oscillations in the market price of labour-power.

"Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities



not only surplus value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage labourer." (Capital I, p.633, Kerr).

Marx and Engels, as the founders of scientific socialism, in contradistinction to the utopian, moralistic, wish-fulfillment sort, were under no illusions that the Wages System "was evil" and therefore could be wished away on the eve of, or upon the advent of, the Socialist Revolution.

On the contrary, they saw the attack on the Wages System as instrumental in breaking workers away from the ideological hegemony of capitalism, by asserting the fundamentally common interests of all workers in the face of the mystified division of labour under industrial capitalism.

The Wages System cannot be "abolished", it can only be rendered obsolete by revolutionary changes in production relations. But as a key part of its battle to alter those production relations, the working class in its permanent struggle over wages, has already the question of "relativities" in mind; a rough measure of what a job is "socially worth". Now, until Communism ("from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"), through Socialism ("from each according to his ability, to each according to his work"), and of course, especially under capitalism, social worth is measured and rendered in terms of money income.

It is already implicit in the consciousness of industrial workers, that all those necessary to the functioning of the industry are 'worth' basically the same, with differentials based only on extra exertion, physical and mental; e.g. wage increases have been fought for and won for miners as a whole, with extra for the hardest/most dangerous jobs underground and at the coalface. When the attempt was made to get differentials introduced between areas simply on the basis of differential productivity within the industry, this was thrown out almost unanimously, and in doing so solidarity was greatly re-inforced.

An 'average industrial wage' then, would be the mean of all the wage rates existing in industry. It recognises (since it is the result of) differences in effort within (say) Mining, and between Mining as a whole and (say) Railwaymen, but working from a common 'industrial' base rate recognises no differentials for skill or status, only effort, danger and unsocial hours or conditions of work (eg travel time). The politicisation of wage struggles would then be to raise semi-proletarians (like shop and store workers) to the level of the Industrial Average, while holding back the 'right' of middle class elements to gain wage increases, keeping their conditions of life ahead of that of the workers' average. In so doing, we make the working class' conditions of life the central pivot of political/ideological struggle, and thus help impel the class as a whole into the centre of the political arena. The working class increasingly becomes the arbiter of social conditions as a whole, instead of merely lashing out in contradictory economic sections against the vagaries of the market.

b) Reduction in the Working-Day: this displaces the narrow concern with wage levels as ends in themselves and attacks exploitation at its source (in the extraction of absolute surplus value) in these ways: 1) less hours worked for the same wages; thus less surplus-value is available to pay for operatives in the state ideological apparatus (eg university, school 'humanities' teachers and social-workers) and state coercive apparatus (armed forces, police). 11) causes more workers to be taken on and/or increased investment in constant capital. 111) most importantly, reduction in the working day and the ban on overtime, leaves workers more energy and free time to raise their political-cultural level.

c) By waging an open attack on the capitalist mystification and reification of the division of labour in society, especially the split into mental and manual labour. This attack would be mounted simultaneously with the fight for the "average industrial wage" by the proletariat organised into industrial unions. By asserting that all workers in industry should receive the same basic wage, manual and whitecollar,  
\* See appendix for mode of computation.

the proletariat would be attacking the economic effects of the division of labour; at the same time forcing those in white-collar jobs to realign - into those who support this demand - identifying themselves with the interest of the proletariat, and those who oppose the demand and side with the continuing interests of capital.

d) By waging an attack upon 'professionalism', functionaries of capital and all parasitical strata in society; but especially upon 'professionalism', guaranteeing as it does private property in knowledge. This is an attack which the Industrial Unions could not carry out on their own, as it would require the establishment of actual organs of proletarian power, for what is at stake is the whole ordering of society. Social-Democrats and sociologists - those graduated flunkeys of liberalism - defend privilege by saying that the division of labour is 'merely a result of specialisation', inevitable as disparate skills in society develop.

Seeing society as an entity that is homogeneous rather than divided into classes, what they never ask is (1) how did the 'specialised tasks' get structured in the first place; (2) just what is this 'society' that benefits from a rigid hierarchy of the division of labour - if the majority are thereby stultified, cui bono? The historical materialist answer to the first question that the demands of capital, more particularly its own self-expansion, gives us the modern form of the division of labour - that which allows the most surplus-value to be pumped out of the most people; the answer to the second question being the owners of capital, for whom the separation of knowing from doing, command from execution, are the fundamental prerequisites for control over the social force that is capital. In the chaos of fragmentation that the regime of private property makes inevitable, the bourgeoisie and their state then appear as the indispensable organisers and integrators of all those 'specialised functions' and competing interests.

This is no 'ruling class plot', but an automatic result of social evolution. Once specialised skills and roles have developed in the breakup of the primitive communism of tribal society, then the objective basis exists in their social utility for the practitioners so to organise their mental/corporeal property that by organising scarcity and protecting it with 'mystique' further entrenchment and private enrichment can proceed. Thus today we have our 'learned professions' - doctors, lawyers, scientists etc. - with earnings, conditions of life and therefore worldview quite antithetical to the interests of the working class. Most pernicious however is the spreading of the 'professional' mentality into the working class itself, where craft unions pioneered this ideology of the 'skilled responsible engineer' etc., and which is now generalised throughout the whole trade union movement in the form of 'rights' to certain jobs and skills; ie to private property in jobs. But precisely because all jobs are a function of the division of labour in society as a whole, no individual or group can be accorded a right to any particular job, except as an application of bourgeois right, ie, implemented by force and whose bourgeois ideology/inequality is sanctioned by an appropriate ideology. This can only be anti-working class conceptions throughout the working class; a role that only their displacement by industrial unions can end.

The elucidation of the requisite bourgeois ideology - which changes with circumstances - is centrally dependent upon the activities of the agents within the state ideological apparatuses, prominent among whom are teachers of 'humanities' in higher education, social and community workers etc. Far from attacking these and seeing in 'The Cuts' a status quo ante (which as we showed in part 1 of this pamphlet was impossible anyway) by 'fighting all cuts and defending every job'. This reflex includes not only those parasitical upon the working class (like commercial employees) but worse, those whose very job is the manipulation of the class. And so we find Max Morris, prominent CPGB member and past President of the NUT, saying in his current capacity as Chairman of the NUT Action Committee: "If the present plans are implemented, next year may see 40,000 unemployed teachers, double this year's figure of young people trained to teach but frozen out of their rightful jobs". (emphasis ours). But not content with Morris' remarks on right and propriety, the paper of the 'anti-stalinist revolutionary alternative' WRP, concluded its favourable report of his speech with the commentary: "The NUT spokesmen however failed to expose the government's real plans, which is to run down the education service, particularly in the liberal arts and social sciences, in order to impose slump conditions on the working class". (News Line 21. 10. 76). Apart from that last non-sequitur, and the actual fact that the working class already experiences slump conditions, Marx was explicit on the qualitative distinction between productive and unproductive labour - on what was productive for capital and inimicable for labour: "It is characteristic that all 'unproductive' economists who achieve nothing (but apologetics) in their own speciality, come out against the distinction between productive and unproductive labour. However

in relation to the bourgeois, it is on the one hand an expression of their (and the whole ideological stratum's -COBI) servility that they present all functions as serving the production of wealth for him ("create value" as the left has it); then on the other hand, they present the bourgeois world as the best of all possible worlds, in which everything is useful, and the bourgeois himself is so educated that he understands all this". (are part of the 'collective labourer' as the left further claims), (Theories of Surplus Value, Vol.1, p.290).

Professionalism is at its worst where traditional ideology coincides (through historical continuity) with a specialism that is a matter of life and death - medicine. Its extreme hierarchical organisation is a function of the extreme deferentiality inherent in the working class's relationship to it. Further, it is an archetypal redoubt of the property-consciousness in skill being fully developed and sustained, since every medical practitioner has the real possibility at some time in his career of setting up on his own; i.e. as a fully fledged petit-bourgeois operating his own capital and exploiting the labour-power of nurses, auxiliaries, etc. Accordingly, medicine is a key area for the struggle against professionalism as a pernicious form of the division of labour. No matter how inchoately, the struggles in the NHS over paybeds, doctors' pay and Nurses' pay and training etc., is the development of the class struggle into an area the petit-bourgeoisie had previously kept free of such contamination. (For more on this see the Broadside on 'The Cuts') Fancy making matters of life and death into political issues after all!

It is the duty of communists to give point and direction to those badly formed struggles for class dominance over the NHS, by fighting for the establishment of Councils to control the functioning of hospitals, clinics, etc. This has two prerequisites:

1. sustained ideological offensive against professionalism.
2. a key part of which is campaigning for the "Bare-Foot-Doctor" concept of informally trained lay health-workers practising mainly preventive medicine, but also able to tackle common ailments. This has enabled formerly disease-ridden China and Tanzania, not only to wipe out all their (many) endemic diseases, but to offer a thorough curative service as well - and at a fraction of the cost. For financial reasons the WHO now recommends such an approach to the whole underdeveloped world: for ideological reasons we recommend it in the developed. Nurses are the obvious workers to fill this "doctor's" role, but if they are not to be little more than glorified health-visitors, then the internal structures of hospitals, clinics, and so on must be altered, and that can only come about to the extent that a council representing all the workers in medical institutions, is able to wrest real control from the appointed administrators and consultants.

Likewise in schools, colleges and universities the real fight is not 'against the cuts' or for 'better staffing ratios', and still less to have 'every graduate employed'. The revolutionary fight is over the nature and the content of education itself - for whom - is the question never addressed by 'educational radicals'. Until this central ideological question is grappled with all controversy between 'progressive' and 'traditional' forms of tuition are mere diversions. And the only way the content and orientation of teaching can be seriously raised, is by the struggle for control. This and this alone brings home to the proletariat that education is not a neutral body of objective knowledge for the learned to impart, but rather a key field of class ideology and class struggle. (For an attempt to clarify this by application, see Cultural Action for Freedom and Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire; unfortunately he fails to think the required concepts clearly, being trapped within a humanistic frame).

In this it is usually the teachers that are conservative and the students that are revolutionary, as the experience of the Schools Action Union showed. Concerned with their status as 'professionals' and for a 'proper career structure' this is scarcely surprising amongst teachers, even strongly present among those still training. What is shocking is that (IS) Teachers' Rank-and-File promotes such 'concerns' ever more stridently, and is not condemned by the rest of the 'revolutionary left for so doing; for whatever the doctrinal differences, when it comes to glorious, practical politics (halleluja!) the positions are the same- social democratic. (Try for example, to find substantive political differences between, say, the IS and its many disparate breakaways, or between them and the CP in practice).

COBI's perspectives are of course quite different, it is for councils in schools, colleges and universities, to wrest control of these institutions from the 'duly constituted authorities' in to the hands of those that participate in them; i.e. students, teachers, workers and local proletarian bodies. Structurally this means clearing away the headmaster/principalship etc., and with it the whole 'proper' career structure, in order that proletarians can be involved in education organically to determine (increasingly) its content. And who can say this is 'impractical' after the SAU, RSSF, and the events of '68 throughout Europe?!

Another key category of professional workers are those state employees trained by the universities for the role of social pacification. Obviously we have in mind the legions of social, community, youth etc. workers, who minister to capitalist social relations by applying cosmetic treatment to its sores. This of course helps to disguise the diseases endemic to capitalism - that inevitably and always its controlled anarchy produces 'social inadequates' - suitable cases for treatment. To their professional ideology that only expert handling and 'sufficient resources' in their hands are required to 'solve people's problems', is added an equally pernicious superstructural element in the service of capitalism - that it "cares". To the 'soulful corporation' they add the illusion of the "compassionate society" represented by the "caring state". So pervasive is this ideology, that even Keith Joseph of the Tory rightwing, now speaks of the need for a "social market economy".

"Compassionate" ideology has an extra, and major windfall bonus yet to provide the bourgeois worldview. Or rather it helps keep that which they have intact; for it keys-in perfectly with the idealist ideology of Christianity, which of course is compassionate enough to provide a better life for all souls in the next world, and really does care that they not be infected with materialism in this.

So in social administration by social workers, the professional function and ideology comes full circle, through the merging of old and new varieties of social cement. It comes as no surprise then to find that even the terminology is the same- social workers minister to 'clients', just like lawyers, chartered accountants, architects, etc., etc.

As residential councils develop their hegemony they will necessarily displace social workers from their areas, and provide real material-ideological support for working class residents. Meantime, they must beware sabotage and outright hostility from those professionals (that includes priests) whose whole social being would be rendered null by the awakening of the class to self activity. The prerequisite for success, here as elsewhere is, of course a sustained uncompromising ideological campaign. And each ramifies the other as Marx has shown:

"The great mass of so-called 'higher grade' workers - such as state officials, military people, artists, doctors, priests, judges, lawyers, etc., - some of whom are not only not productive, but in essence destructive, but who know how to appropriate to themselves a very great part of the 'material' wealth partly through the sale of their 'immaterial' commodities and partly by imposing the latter on other people - found it not at all pleasant to be relegated economically to the same class as clowns and menial servants and to appear merely as people partaking in the consumption, parasites on the actual producer (or rather agents of production). This was a peculiar profanation precisely of those functions which had hitherto been surrounded with a halo and had enjoyed superstitious veneration. Political economy in its classical period, like the bourgeoisie in its parvenu period, adopted a severely critical attitude to the machinery of the state, etc. At a later stage it realised and - as was shown too in practice - learnt from experience that the necessity for the inherited social combination of all these classes, which were in part + tally unproductive, arose from its own organisation". (Surplus Value, vol.1, p.174-5).

e) The attack upon capitalist 'property rights'. This is a crucial attack to be made by the proletariat upon capitalist social relations, since it will involve a complete and irrevocable break on the part of the proletariat with the most fundamental tenet of bourgeois ideology - the right to own property individually, upon which rests the right of the capitalist class to own and control the means of production; and such an attack will bring the proletariat into direct overt conflict with the state, exposing its class nature.

### III) WINNING SUPPORT FOR THE PROLETARIAT WHILE CONSOLIDATING ITS OWN RANKS

All of these attacks on capitalist social relations will require an unprecedented degree of proletarian class assertiveness, but where is this to come from? A channel is obviously needed for the latent assertiveness in the British working class - and this brings us back to industrial unionism. Once the positive advantages of organisation on an industrial basis are made clear to the working class, they will be prepared to fight for such a form of organisation. It is a sign of the contempt in which the majority of so-called 'revolutionaries' hold the proletariat, that they tail-end the class, and assume it incapable of adopting as its own any form of organisation other than the existing sectarian unions. COBI has infinitely more respect for the intelligence and potential of the proletariat and firmly believes that the class, given the guidance, will eventually embrace industrial unionism as a step in its revolutionary struggle for power.

No doubt some philistines on the British left will accuse COBI of being 'impractical', and will point to the absence of any movement among the British working class to establish organisations along the lines of industrial unions. But this ignores not only the existence of one successful approximation to an industrial union, the National Union of Mineworkers, and periodic attempts by sections of the class to work towards industrial unionism (c.f. the attempt of NUPE in the late 50's to establish an industrial union for all local government employees, thwarted by unions like T&GWU and NUGMW with their own vested interests in the status quo); it also ignores the fact that for the past 55 years there has been no widespread propaganda of industrial unionism in Britain. But as communists we cannot deceive ourselves into thinking that the fight to establish industrial unionism in Britain is going to be either a quick or easy process. The odds are heavily weighted against us at this point in time and much hard and persevering leg-work will be needed to change those odds and bring the mass mobilisation of the proletariat.

The question to be asked is: where is the optimum point at which to begin the propaganda for industrial unionism, to get the movement off the ground? Obviously the skilled and semi-skilled workers already highly organised in traditional unions, will be very reluctant to abandon that form of organisation in the near future - they have after all a subjective interest in the maintenance of pay differentials and job demarcation.

But what of the non-unionised section of the working class and semi-proletarians (the 42.4% of productive employees outwith TUC unions for example)? There is a limited long term potential for establishing industrial unions among these workers, but two points need to be made in this connection: 1) These workers are very disparate in character and dispersed over many occupations, mainly unskilled and extremely poorly-paid jobs. The task of unionising such workers would therefore be a very difficult one and aggravated by the fact that 2) they are frequently transient (moving freely from job to job) and often possess an antipathy towards unionism of any sort. This is not to say that they are dogmatically opposed to any form of unionisation: it is just that, being inexperienced in organisation, they lack a basic solidarity - thus as the SLP experience at Singers' shows, although industrial unions can be established among the non-organised, they are easily intimidated when brought under pressure, because of their inexperience and lack of solidarity, and such unions can be easily broken. So although this is certainly an area for propaganda, the results will not be immediate and it should not therefore be the central focus of the campaign.

Another obviously fruitful area for industrial union propaganda is among the lower paid, who have had organisational experience but whose unions, because of their non-central position in the production process, tend to be weak in the sphere of 'free' collective bargaining, as well as financially weak. These workers will recognise that it is in their interests to put forward the demand for coordinated collective bargaining and an average industrial wage for all. Since they lie below the level of the 'average' they have everything to gain from a fight on differentials, and their past experience will already have convinced them that this can only be achieved by getting the better organised, skilled workers to join them in a combined struggle for this. Such workers would be very amenable to the ideas of industrial unionism, since they suffer most in the present union rat-race, faring badly in the competitive labour market.

The propaganda for industrial unionism must therefore be concentrated at the beginning on the lower-paid. It has to be recognised that the skilled labour aristocracy will not be the "advanced section of the working class" when it comes to industrial unionism and the fight for the "average industrial wage for all". Their successful wage claims will only raise the level of the "average industrial wage" - they will not, in all probability, at this stage in time accept that all workers should receive the same wage, or fight consistently to secure the "average industrial wage" for those of their class in a less fortunate position. In all probability, industrial unionism will take root soonest among the low paid and non-unionised elements of the proletariat and semi-proletariat, with the skilled labour aristocracy being the last to embrace such revolutionary organisation. This is not to say that we can afford not to mount a propaganda campaign among skilled workers. But, judging by past experience (especially the WWI shop stewards' movement), it will need a direct threat to their position as a skilled labour aristocracy to sufficiently mobilise this section of the class for them to become amenable to the ideas of industrial unionism. Were Britain to really become financially bankrupt in the not too distant future, with her present sources of credit terminated, then the situation would become more than fluid enough for industrial union propaganda to permeate even the skilled working class.

The fight for industrial unionism, once undertaken by large sections of the working class, will inevitably bring them into conflict with the existing trades union officialdom, who will not stand idly by and watch their own demise. Being the 'labour lieutenants of capital' they will fiercely oppose the fight for industrial unionism trying to neutralise the new movement at birth (as they did with the World War I Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement). In the ensuing struggle the proletariat will generate a class solidarity and assert its interests as a class over and above its sectional economic interests.

More importantly, the proletariat will acquire through this struggle for industrial unions a growing political awareness of itself as a class with its own distinct interests:

"The industrial Union will create political unity in the working class. Those who are united in the economic field, organised on class lines, as opposed to the craft divisions of the old reactionary unions, drilled and disciplined in the intelligent prosecution of the class struggle, enlightened from day to day as to the relations existing between themselves and the exploiting class - such a working class will not drop its class consciousness its oneness of purpose and aim when it turns to the field of politics. Craft divisions, conciliation and arbitration methods, and capitalist economics in the union have as their inevitable result divisions, compromise, and reformism in politics. The unity of economic organisation, the class war basis, and the clear scientific thought and propaganda of the Industrial Union will effect the political unification of the workers on uncompromising revolutionary lines, with the overthrow of the class State and class rule as its avowed aim." (The Development of Socialism in Great Britain, SLP).

Industrial Unions will be opposed not only by the existing trades union officialdom and bureaucracy, but also by some sections of the bourgeoisie, who would prefer the working class to remain an 'army divided among itself', and will correctly see in the emergent industrial unions the beginnings of a proletarian class threat to the hegemonic power of capitalism in British society. The proletariat will be brought, therefore, not only into economic but political class conflict with the bourgeoisie, and will gain increased assertiveness in their struggle to develop, coordinate and retain industrial unions.

**NEUTRALISING VACILLATING STRATA OR CLASSES**

The most systematically sophisticated piece of revisionism ever undertaken in this country, is undoubtedly the CPGB's 'British Road to Socialism' (sic) It's own crashing ineffectuality is also its own best standing condemnation - much more eloquent than reams of theoretical attack. The British Road could not, in the full quarter century of its existence to date, mobilise the proletariat because it is not a Communist, a proletarian programme. Instead it is a populist mish-mash of something for everyone that could subjectively consider themselves members of an 'anti monopoly alliance'. (c.f. Proletarian Broadside on Populism). Objectively of course, the only class or strata with such interest is the petit-bourgeois who are menaced by large capital, such as the small shopkeeper, carrier or trader. Larger capital is anxious to become, or be incorporated into large capital, while the proletariat has a short, medium and long term interest (prior to socialism) in the greatest possible accumulation of capital. It is just such an unprecedented accumulation, and therefore amelioration in conditions of life, that proletarians in all developed countries have seen since the war. As Marx and Engels showed, the inevitable result and cause of such accelerated accumulation is the extension of 'great monopolies' i.e. the operative form of large capital.

\* So the alternative title is 'The British Road to Lost Deposits', amen.

If historical experience teaches us anything it is that the backbone of reaction, always and everywhere, is the petit-bourgeois; the entrepreneur who because of the smallness of his capital is constrained to work himself; plus the 'professionals' and 'intellectuals' unable to find employment for their "superior talents". The backbone of the Nazi Party through thick and thin, of Mussolini's fascisti, of Franco's Falangists, down to the 'gremios' in Chile that made the Generals possible (not the CIA!): are the (aptly named) 'small men' perennially struggling to increase their capital, or find a secure niche. While the big bourgeoisie are the ruling class, the petit oppositionist struggles have the appearance of a progressive movement, seeming 'objectively' to align them with the working class. But as the ~~petit's~~ whole struggle is to gain more scope (say by lowered taxation or the retention of resale price maintenance) for the better exploitation of the working class, their interests and those of the proletariat can never coincide under industrial capitalism. However, their ideology and that of the left can often coincide when the latter become merely oppositionists to the initiatives of the ruling class, to the advance of large capital. The EEC Campaign is a classic, though not untypical case; the caving-in before Nationalism is another. The highest expression of this mentality is the "British Road", which also includes in its oppositionist list even diametrically opposed interests like 'tenants' and 'owner-occupiers', 'workers and professionals', 'producers and consumers', etc. Unfortunately, however, such un-Marxist shopping lists of 'allies' are not confined to the CPGB, but are general, if elsewhere less clearly articulated (and the practice of the IMG with its caucuses for all tastes needs scrutiny). However it is the CP's Social-democracy that is classical:

"In this way the broadest possible alliance against monopoly capitalism (note, not capitalism itself - COBI) can be built up, embracing all working people. Thus workers in factories, offices, professions (sic), working farmers (!), producers and consumers, owner-occupiers and tenants, housewives, young people and students, pensioners, workers in the peace movement and all those active in defence of democracy - all those whose lives are immediately affected by policies framed to perpetuate and uphold monopoly capitalism can be united in struggle." (The British Road To Class Collaboration, sorry, 'Socialism', p.28, October 1968, i.e. third edition).

The least that has to be done to prevent petit capital organising against the workers is to paralyse them with fear. That should not be difficult in this country where the proletariat proper is an overwhelming majority; the Miners' Strikes proved what even a little judicious muscle-flexing could achieve. Only a proletariat uncompromisingly organising in its own best untrammelled interest can thus overawe the majority of the petits by the spectacle of workers' potential violence (c.f. Foreword to Proletarian Text No.2 for full discussion). This use of potential violence puts the initiative into the hands of the working class in the imminent conflict with the ruling class. As Greece and Chile prove, to name but two recent cases, only a class with the initiative in its hands can seize state power.

By eschewing any compromise with the short, medium or long-term interests of the petit-bourgeoisie (even those of the 'intellectual' and 'professional' strata), and sticking unswervingly to its own, the proletariat breaks clearly with populism, i.e. with the ideologies of oppositionism, of turning back the clock, or rather, pathetically attempting to do so. The working class thereby stands out clearly as the only fundamentally progressive class in society; as the only class that is willing and able to make the future by sweeping away existing conditions. So the proletariat becomes the rallying centre for all genuinely progressive sections and individuals in society, winning allies expressly on its own terms, because its own terms are those of history.

The proletariat therefore, can never gain allies by promising them some or all of what they want in their existing situations; solely by winning allies through refusal to compromise on the working class's needs, and it being demonstrable that these alone are the means of qualitative progress.



As both Marx and Engles wrote in the definitive Address of Central Council to Communist League (1850):

"(The German workers) themselves will have to do the most for their final victory by becoming enlightened as to their class interests, by taking up their own independent party position as soon as possible and by not allowing themselves for a single moment to be led astray from the independent organisations of the party of the proletariat by the hypocritical phrase of the democratic petty bourgeois. (and they are not all even democratic! COBI). Their battle-cry must be: the permanent revolution."

B) THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROLETARIAN ASSERTIVENESS AND CONFIDENCE FOR RULING

Without the struggle to secure a class organisation of industrial unions, the proletariat will never develop the rudimentary class consciousness they must possess, if they are ever to develop a confidence as a class in their ability to replace the bourgeoisie as the ruling class. Unless the proletariat can supercede their present sectarian economic struggle (and the fight for industrial unions is the only method by which this can come about), they will never conceive of themselves politically as a class, only as individuals, or groups of workers. And until they think of themselves as a class with political interests diametrically opposed to those both of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeois, the question of the necessity for the proletariat to assume political power and actually rule society will not arise in the consciousness of the working class

Even given industrial unions and a nascent political class consciousness engendered in the struggle for such unions, this does not of itself impart confidence to the proletariat sufficient to make them capable of seizing power. Mere assertiveness as a class is not enough unless it brings the proletariat into meaningful political and ideological struggle with the bourgeoisie and capitalist social relations. Neither the fight for an 'average industrial wage' for all, which the class should be urged to undertake as soon as possible, nor the fight against the capitalist mystification of the division of labour, which industrial unions could begin to wage, would supply sufficient experience to the proletariat to give them the confidence of an imminent ruling class.

For such confidence to come into existence, the proletariat would have to develop its own organs of state power (which are not synonymous with industrial unions) and conduct a confrontation with capitalist state power by fundamentally challenging the continued existence of capitalist organs of social control, i.e., by directly attacking the privileges, prerogatives and directive functions of all agents of capital, and undermining bourgeois property rights.

C) THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROLETARIAN ORGANS OF POWER THAT COME INTO OPPOSITION TO THE CAPITALIST STATE POWER.

"The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form." (Capital III, p.791).

Since social relations are predicted upon the relations of production, and more specifically, since the capitalist state power is based upon capitalist relations of production, organs of proletarian state power must of necessity arise from within the production process.

Workers' Councils as the Politicisers of Industry.

The organs of proletarian power spontaneously generated by the class in times of heightened and offensive class struggle, always take the form of soviets/workers' councils. This is invariably true wherever and whenever industrial workers move to supplant trade union defensive struggle by combat on a political-class basis. While emanating from the point of production, the council movement strives to extend its sway over all aspects of working class life, especially the residential and social.

"Soviets are the most all-embracing mass organisations of the proletariat, for they and they alone embrace all workers without exception". (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism). It is not sufficient for the proletariat to organise their own organs of power at the point of production - for this would leave sections of the class, not directly involved in production, outside the sphere of these organs of power. To directly involve and mobilise sections of the working class divorced from actual production - the unemployed and, especially, working class wives - organs of proletarian power must also arise from the residential situation, taking over and extending the functions at present exercised by tenants' associations. When the industrial and residential committees are co-ordinated at the district level by the workers' council movement, then the full potential of proletarian power is harnessed for the creation of their own class state structure.

Councils are the spontaneous form of organisation undertaken by the class, striving to realise itself as a class with unique interests demanding unique and exclusive forms of organisation - of structures for self-realisation as a class.

This is the clear import of the Ordiovista experience in Italy and the Workers' Committee Movement in Britain, to take but two examples. It is likewise the clear import of the Soviet conciliar experience with three crucial additions that resulted in the latter enabling the working class to seize state power and make itself the ruling class: soviets existed geographically in most of the key areas: they were not confined just to the industrial situation but included the peasantry and soldiers as well as the industrial proletariat; and they were given ideological and political leadership by a vanguard party. In Britain the committees were confined to a few (though major) industrial areas and had no weight in the residential and social spheres: while in Italy the movement was restricted to Turin district and even there had less social weight than, for example, social-democratic cooperatives. The crucial extra ingredient in the Russian situation was the leadership of soviets by a Leninist Communist Party giving theoretical-strategic guidance. In Italy no such party existed, while the correctness of the strategic leadership provided by the Socialist Labour party in Britain was not able to overcome the fact that its membership was physically too limited in geographical distribution to be able to make any serious bid for power.

The oncoming crisis will inevitably engender workers' committees at the point of production to develop new forms of struggle in the new and disquieting situation. But these embryos of a workers' council movement are destined to remake all the old mistakes - to fall into syndicalism, social-democracy, guildism, etc., unless the historical experience of the class as a whole on this matter is made fully available to those so engaged. To this end COBI is undertaking a comprehensive and comparative study of the Council experience, wherever significant movements have existed. But our research thus far enables us to offer strategic and tactical guidelines for the promotion of an effective workers' council movement starting from the objective economic situation which now faces British Capitalism.

First of all, it is necessary to relate the complementary need for both workers' councils and industrial unions. The law of uneven development is an absolute law of history. Given this law it is inevitable that the spontaneous creation of workers' committees at the point of production will necessarily be a sporadic and piecemeal process. Therein lies the greatest danger for the potential growth of a workers' council movement; it was a major factor in the failure of the World War I Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement to achieve its revolutionary potential. The biggest obstacles to the advance of workers' councils lie in the resistance of employers both at the localised plant level, and at the national level through state repression; and equally significantly, from the established trades union movement. Trades union officialdom consistently opposed and tried to sabotage the workers' committee movement during the first World War, collaborating in every way possible with Government and employers alike; eventually they succeeded in stripping the embryonic movement of its revolutionary overcoat and neutralised it by incorporating the newly-formed shop stewards' committees within the official trades union framework. An identical threat would face any new attempt by the British working class to establish their own organs of state power within the production process.

This is where the need for industrial unions becomes obvious. Apart from the superiority of such unions over existing sectarian unions in rousing a purely economic class struggle, industrial unions, by imparting class solidarity and a nascent political class awareness to the proletariat, prepare the ground upon which the workers will be able to build their own state power. In addition the fight for industrial unions will weaken and eventually undermine the strength of existing trades unionism, preventing those 'labour lieutenants of capital' from being able to assist the bourgeoisie in repressing such a council movement before too much damage is done to the further continuance of bourgeois hegemony in society. Industrial unions ease the growth of workers' councils within industry in yet other ways. They are essentially offensive class organisations unlike defensive, blindly oppositionist and deferential character of the present unions), therefore increasing class assertiveness which is an essential prerequisite for the formation of councils. Secondly, they organise the class on the shop floor on a unified basis, so the fight to establish industrial unions will increase solidarity at this level, overcoming the divisiveness of present union groups, which would be a barrier to the unity required for a workers' committee to operate. Finally, by beginning an assault on capitalist "wage differentials" and the awe in which the division of labour between mental and manual, office and shop-floor, is held, the fight for industrial unions will enable the class to see the need to overcome such mystifications, to begin to take upon themselves control of their immediate environment in the factory and assert their right to make decisions hitherto regarded as the hallowed preserve of superior beings - "managers". Thus the stage is laid for the creation of proletarian organs capable of asserting such rights and of assuming the functions at present exercised by management - Workers' Councils.

So it will be seen that the fight for industrial unionism is a perfect foil to the fight for a workers' council movement. But as we have already said the law of uneven development is an absolute one. Workers' councils will spring up in plants before traditional unionism has been ousted by industrial unionism, and there will be those who will claim that one makes the other redundant. This totally ignores two points: one, the dialectical relationship between the two movements; and two, the different functions of the two forms of organisation. Because the relationship between the two forms of organisation is a dialectical one, the fight for one form of organisation will of necessity aid the fight for the other one. We have already delineated ways in which the struggle to establish industrial

unions will prepare the ground for the growth and spread of effective workers councils. But the process works both ways. In those plants where the workers spontaneously establish a workers' council to meet the needs of their particular localised struggle with their employer, this form of organisation will force them to consider the need for organised class solidarity at shop floor and plant level and the need to be able to call on support in their struggles from all the other workers in that industry and related plants. In such a situation they will see the bankruptcy of present trades union organisation, which cannot always guarantee solidarity within its ranks, let alone across trade barriers. Thus they will recognise the need for a union organisation which encompasses all trades within a plant or within the industry - a union which could provide total effective solidarity for the struggle within any one workshop under its umbrella and industrial union.

Finally, the different functions of the two forms of organisation. The industrial unions, as already mentioned, organise the proletariat on a class basis in opposition to other classes in society and forcing those classes to realign for the final stage of historical class struggle: a stage which will not be terminated by a proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but will continue through socialism, until the whole bases of class society are undermined and communism can be instituted. It is an offensive class organisation of the proletariat, enabling them to gain class assertiveness and revolutionary political consciousness. The completion of the struggle for industrial unions is also something which can be achieved without the need for the proletariat to seize state power, because the functions of such unions will not continue under Socialism. Complementing the assertive class offensive of the industrial unions, workers' councils will take that offensive class struggle a qualitative stage further, by laying the basis for a future proletarian state power, and by taking the assault on capitalist social relations firmly into the political ideological sphere, attacking the *raison d'être* of agents of capital by usurping functions they at present exercise, and by denying bourgeois property rights upon which the continuance of capitalist society depends. This could be done by workers' councils expropriating capitalists at the point of production, instituting their own workers' cooperatives, and by residential committees expropriating landlords at the point of residence, with the working class taking over and running their housing estates in the interests of the tenants. The complete triumph of the workers' council movement is something which cannot be achieved whilst the capitalist state power remains; it involves the proletariat in a fight to the death with that state power, culminating in a proletarian revolution and the enforcement of the dictatorship of the proletariat against whatever resistance the capitalist class may attempt to mount. The growth of a workers' council movement will inevitably lead towards socialism, when these organs of proletarian state power will truly come into their own.

#### THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS FOR THE GROWTH OF A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' COUNCIL MOVEMENT.

Given the present near-bankruptcy of British capitalism, it is imperative that the bourgeoisie find some effective means of lessening the level which the economic class struggle has reached in Britain during the last five years. The alternative would be the mutual economic ruin of the contending classes without removing the contradictions inherent in advanced capitalist society.

In the present situation the working class will therefore be increasingly encouraged by the bourgeoisie to take a more active part in the functioning of the production process, so as to ensure the continuation of capitalist production. The problem for communists is: how can the proletariat ensure that this tendency is used to further its long and medium term interests,

i.e., how can the proletariat use this opportunity to assert itself politically in opposition to bourgeois class power?

The bourgeoisie will try to involve the working class further in the production process via "workers' participation", i.e. trade union representatives assisting the management in rationalising production within the factory in return for a free peep at the books. No mention here of involving directly the workers on the shop floor in managing and planning production; instead "worker directors" drawn from existing trade union officials, men who have already become 'labour lieutenants of capital'. The democratic element enters (if at all) by allowing shop-floor workers to endorse trade union appointees. Obviously the way to a revolutionary take-over of production by the proletariat does not lie in this direction: if it did such "participation" would not receive the support it does from the big bourgeoisie.

Mensheviks (whose most classical expression in Britain is the IS) would solve the present crisis of British capitalism via "nationalisation under workers' control", presenting such a move towards increased State Capitalism as an advance to (State) Socialism.

Nationalisation is nothing new to the British bourgeoisie. It has been used in the past by the capitalist class, through its central Executive Committee, the State, to mitigate the inherent anarchy in the capitalist system, especially in the key area of raw material and infrastructural industries (see Proletarian No. 1, pp 36-7). While leaving capitalist relations of production within such industries intact, the myth that nationalisation is a step towards socialism and workers' control of industry, perpetuated by sections of the British Left throughout the century, has meant that since 1945 the class struggle within nationalised industry has lessened - this was particularly remarkable in the coal industry, where the bourgeoisie were able to institute drastic reductions in production and manning levels with the full cooperation of the miners, because they were "producing for social need" and the mines were now "owned by society", not "coal owners". But in the last few years this "socialist" myth has worn threadbare and nationalisation is no longer a social panacea for the bourgeoisie in suppressing class struggle. On the contrary, the miners are once more asserting themselves as the most class conscious section of British working class (in terms of the economic class struggle) and the workers in the steel industry (much to the delight of short-sighted 'Lefties' like IS) have become totally 'oppositional' to proposed rationalisation and modernisation measures for the obsolete parts of the British Steel Industry. But because 'Nationalisation' has for so long been an ingrained 'holy cow' to British Labour movement, yet more industries are destined to come under "public" ownership at the behest of a Labour Government. And this fact is welcomed by IS, who would make such a capitalistic rationalisation measure "socialist", but simply adding the magic ingredient "workers' control" - this vague platitude will make all the difference in the opinion of IS militants, no doubt ousting the last remnants of 'capitalism' from such select industries! But as capitalist production and social relations are not abolished by bureaucratic tinkering like 'Nationalisation', communists cannot look to such 'solutions' as even a means towards revolution; all such "reforms" could perhaps achieve would be yet another era of relative peace in the class struggle, with "workers' control" replacing "public ownership" as the myth with which to divert the proletariat from real, substantive changes enabling the working class to take effective control and possession of the means of production.

The revolutionary answer, then does not lie in nationalisation. For Communists "In dealing with the idea of control and the question of when and by whom this control is to be effected, one must not for a single moment forget the class character of modern state, which is merely and organisation of class

rule." (Lenin, Speech made at the First Petrograd Conference of Shop Committees, May 31, 1917).

Neither does the answer lie in state finance to ailing industries in return for an increased state shareholding in firms: both these solutions leave the relations of production untouched. So do workers' co-operatives on the model of that recently established at Kirby; there the old relations of production have been continued under the new guise of "We're all shareholders now" - in reality the separation between manual and white-collar, productive and managerial functions remains with emasculated "workers' control" used as a sop to the shop floor workers - after all two of their shop stewards are now "managing" directors! How long it will take for the superficial veneer of paper equality to wear off is a matter for speculation, but wear off it will when the workers realise that for all their position as 'shareholders', the right to hire and fire and decide production priorities still lies with 'management'. The tragedy of Kirby is that with the inevitable failure of this "workers' cooperative", the workers directly involved, and those advanced workers watching its progress from the sidelines, will be thoroughly vaccinated against the whole idea of Workers' Control, unless they can be forewarned about the Kirby charade and are shown how to struggle effectively for substantive Workers' Control.

For workers' cooperatives do hold a key to transition towards effective workers' control of the means of production. However, they can only strengthen the workers' own organs of power, workers' councils, and give the proletariat confidence in their potential to rule society, if such cooperatives pose a direct threat to the prerogatives of the agents of capital (managers) and seek to revolutionise existing production relations.

"The cooperative factories of the labourers themselves represent within the old form the first sprouts of the new, although they naturally reproduce, and must reproduce, everywhere in their actual organisation all the shortcomings of the prevailing system. But the antithesis between capital and labour is overcome within them, if at first only by way of making the associated labourers into their own capitalist, i.e. by enabling them to use the means of production for the employment of their own labour. They show how a new mode of production naturally grows out of an old one, when the development of the material forces of production and of the corresponding forms of social production have reached a particular stage. Without the factory system arising out of the capitalist mode of production there could have been no cooperative factories, nor could these have developed without the credit system arising out of the same mode of production. The credit system is not only the principal basis for the gradual transformation of capitalist private enterprises into capitalist stock companies, but equally offers the means for the gradual extension of cooperative enterprises on a more or less national scale. The capitalist stock companies, as much as the cooperative factories, should be considered as transitional forms from the capitalist mode of production to the associated one, with the only distinction that the antagonism is resolved negatively in the one and positively in the other." (Karl Marx, Capital III, p.440.)

The issues of cooperativisation and workers' control have been brought into prominence by contradictions within the existing economic system. The issues are a necessary outcome of objective historical developments, and as such they must be faced by revolutionaries, despite the difficult political problems that they raise. Like every real process, the development of cooperativisation and workers' control, is the result of conflicting, contradictory tendencies. It is not possible for communists to put forward a correct political line in the face of these developments, unless they understand these contradictory tendencies, unless they apply the

## Marxist method of dialectical materialism.

The issues of workers' control and cooperativisation have arisen as a particular development within the system of capitalist commodity production, and as such they are determined by the fundamental contradiction of this system. Marx showed that this basic contradiction of capitalism is that between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This manifests itself in the contradiction between the organised nature of production within individual enterprises, and the anarchic character of production as a whole. This fundamental contradiction will persist throughout the whole development of capitalism and cannot disappear until that process has finished; it cannot be resolved until the final victory of socialism. Cooperatives and other worker controlled enterprises, which will inevitably engage in commodity production, are not a means of resolving it. Identifying this fundamental contradiction gives us a strategic orientation towards cooperatives etc., since the resolution of this fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the strategic objective of communists. Since the setting up of cooperatives will not resolve the contradiction, cooperatives and workers' control cannot be our ultimate strategic objective. In fact, as we have already said, the strategic objectives of communism can only be achieved by the method of proletarian revolution, the establishment of proletarian political power, the destruction of capitalist relations of production, and the construction of a planned socialist economy. Our response to coops and workers' control must be in terms of how they can help or hinder the immediate political objective of proletarian revolution.

Whilst identifying the basic contradiction enables us to repudiate the reformist line that the establishment of cooperatives can of itself liberate the working class, it does not provide us with any concrete tactical line. Just identifying the root contradiction of all capitalist production does not enable us to distinguish between worker controlled enterprises and other forms of capitalist production, for to do this we must look at the particular contradictions that govern their development.

What has made cooperatives and workers' control an immediate issue in Britain today is the falling rate of profit. This process has several interconnected aspects, as we explained in the first part of this pamphlet, which are of varying degrees of importance. These aspects are: i) the declining tendency of the rate of profit as an inevitable law of capitalist development; ii) the intensification of this caused by the resistance of the organised workers, both in wages struggles, and in opposition to capitalist developments of production (rationalisation, etc.); iii) the crisis of the imperialist system and the deterioration of the terms of trade; iv) the increased ratio of unproductive to productive workers; v) the increased share of surplus value going as rent. Obviously it is only Marxists who take into account all of these aspects, but the more consistent advocates of coops, such as Wedgewood Benn, are aware of certain of them, particularly (ii) and (iii). Their hope is that coops and workers' control will either abolish or ameliorate the conflict between capital and labour, thus allowing the introduction of new technology, higher profits, more investments and accelerated economic growth - a social-democratic utopia. As Marxists we know that even if such a policy were put into practice, it deals only with one aspect of the problem - and not the most important one at that. As such, its success could only be temporary. What conflicting economic and political effects would such a development entail?

In economic terms, it is very probable that the development of coops etc., could lead to increased labour productivity, allowing higher real wages than would otherwise have been possible. But such advantages to workers would have to be set against the rationalisations, intensification of labour, reduced manning with consequent unemployment, that the workers would

be forced either to carry out or accept responsibility for. It is fruitless from a communist standpoint to argue whether the economic advantages to the working class outweigh the disadvantages or vice versa. As revolutionaries we assert that the question cannot be decided in terms of economic advantages and disadvantages, for what is important is the political effect of such events. So long as the anarchy of the capitalist world market persists there is no economic strategy that enables the working class as a whole to avoid the alternatives of intensified exploitation or increased unemployment. The real problem is to see what line will most favour the development of political consciousness, cohesion, and combativity on the part of the working class, for it is only by acting as a class in political struggle that the proletariat can free itself.

The political/ideological effects of workers' control and cooperatives are themselves contradictory, and whether progressive or reactionary political effects dominate, depends both upon the intervention of conscious revolutionaries, and upon the intensity and development of class struggle in society as a whole. The main dangers are those of isolation and sectionalism. There is a danger that workers in particular enterprises will be cut off from their class brothers and come to identify their interests primarily with the enterprise in which they work, thus dissolving class consciousness into corporate consciousness. Opposing this there are progressive tendencies. Cooperatives, and also to some extent workers' control within capitalist owned enterprises, enable workers to see that capitalists are unnecessary to economic activity; that production is possible without capitalists. This potentially poses a huge ideological threat to the bourgeoisie, initially to the rentier stratum. To the extent that large scale, economically viable enterprises can be cooperativised, every remaining capitalist is revealed as a parasite. "Cooperative factories furnish proof that the capitalist has become no less redundant as a functionary in production as he himself, looking down from his high perch finds the big landowner redundant..." (Karl Marx, Capital III, p 387). Within the enterprise itself, workers' control can set free the creative initiative of the collective workers to improve production techniques, thus developing the self-confidence of the proletariat as the only productive and progressive class in society. In addition, even the fact that workers in coops can be forced by the anarchy of the market to carry through rationalisation, measures against their immediate economic interests, is not without its progressive potential, as this can reveal that rationalisation, redundancies, etc., are not the product of the greed of individual capitalist proprietors, but a result of the system of commodity production itself. With the removal of the capitalist as the personification of the laws of commodity production, it becomes possible to see that it is necessary to struggle not just against individuals, but against the very system itself.

Comrades in Trotskyist groups, such as IS, view the question of cooperatives one-sidedly, seeing only the fact that workers would have to take responsibility for capitalist rationalisations. They fail to see that in coming to grips with the anarchy of the capitalist market, the masses can come to realise its absurdity and the need to abolish the market system. Thus, seeing things undialectically, they try to trap the masses upon the treadmill of trades union struggle. They fail to see that the transformation of a subordinate class into a ruling class requires the development of its self assertion, self-reliance - in a word, it must assume responsibility.

How can the progressive potential of coops and workers' control be made to prevail over the reactionary potential? Marx and Engels are quite specific: " .. as far as the present cooperative societies are concerned, they are of value only in so far as they are independent creations of the workers and not proteges of the governments or of the bourgeois". (Critique of the Gotha Programme). But how to attain this? It is the ability to specify real, operative means that separates scientific from merely utopian socialism. Those means are:



First. There must be the utmost internal democracy and mass participation. The leadership must be mandated and subject to recall by the rank and file. The rank and file must be made aware of all major technical and commercial questions affecting the enterprise, and must mandate their delegates on policies to be followed. In other words, the capitalist division of labour between those who command and those who obey must be broken down. This provides the best opportunities for the masses to learn from the experience of running an enterprise.

Secondly, Communists must use every opportunity to show how the problems the enterprise faces spring from the anarchy of the capitalist market, and point out the need for a political struggle to abolish the market system.

Thirdly. The problem of isolation can only be overcome if the movement towards coops and workers' control can become part of a directly political class struggle. This means that the property rights of the financiers and rentiers must be directly threatened, forcing a conflict between the movement for workers' control and the state as the defender of property rights. The state has repeatedly over the past few years come into open conflict with strong sections of the proletariat, and has repeatedly been defeated, but these defeats were over wages, not property rights, so the bourgeoisie's right to exist as a class has never been threatened. A conflict over property rights between state power and a movement for coops and workers' control, would be at a qualitatively higher level and would openly pose the question of political power: by and for whom?! At the same time, a movement for workers' control provides the basis for an alternative proletarian state organisation. A movement for workers' control requires workers' councils at the enterprise level. These are the soil from which soviets can spring. A conflict between the state and the workers' control movement provides the opportunity for workers' councils to be transformed from economic to political organisations. A political crisis will make it necessary for the councils to organise on a district, regional and national basis, to create dual power.

The following measures are in the immediate economic interests of the working class, and would provide the threat to property rights that is required.

1. In all enterprises threatened with redundancies or closures a workers' council to be formed that seizes all the company accounts.
2. Drawing up of alternative proposals to meet the crisis based on the principles of minimising redundancies, maintaining production, making the bosses pay, by some or all of these measures.
  - a) Stopping all dividend payments to shareholders and bondholders.
  - b) Stopping all rent payments for land, factories, offices etc.
  - c) All profits to be invested in up-to-date machinery.
  - d) Suspension of interest payments to the banks.
3. Similar provisions to be carried out in coops.
4. Within enterprises unite the workforce and develop production by abolishing differentials and demarcation rules and instituting a flat rate wage.
5. Contact workers in enterprises supplying parts and raw materials, urge them to ensure supplies. This would be in their own interest as the closure of the factories to which they supply parts would threaten their own jobs. Also urge them to follow suit, winning power rather than wage rises.

There is a major problem, however, to be faced and overcome by workers who will take up this task - where is the initial capital needed to launch such workers' cooperatives to come from? So far the source of initial capital has been the State, to whom cooperatives such as Kirby and Meriden look for endorsement and finance. But the State, as the executive committee for the national bourgeoisie, could not finance workers' cooperatives involving management by workers' councils and challenging basic capitalist property rights. On the contrary, as we have already pointed out, the State

would be forced to act directly to repress such cooperatives by all means necessary for that purpose.

At present there is no means by which the class as a whole could defend or finance their own cooperatives. In the interim, therefore, as in the future, self-reliance is the order of the day. It will be necessary for those establishing cooperatives to begin the offensive from square one, raising the necessary launch capital they need by any and all means at their disposal - using the capital stock in the factory when they take it over and selling finished products to hand to raise the capital, as well as appealing to the existing trade union movement for back-up finance (a source which is extremely limited and unreliable). They will be helped in this task by the fact that no compensation, rent, dividends, or capital to pay off previous debts will be required, so all available can be channelled into getting production off the ground.

But so far we have only dealt with the tactics for the workers' council movement in those firms which are likely to go bankrupt in the present climate of economic recession. Obviously, the opportunities presented by this situation will be very limited - most firms will limp through the recession in 'low-gear' and survive.

The area in which the majority of workers' councils will have to develop is, therefore, that of functioning, privately-owned industry. We have already said that spontaneous workers' councils are liable to arise to meet the needs of the changing form of economic class struggle, given the chronic crisis of British capitalism. In such a situation, as such councils are established, they should be actively encouraged to assert themselves in direct opposition to the existing 'management personnel', taking upon themselves by a process of mounting struggle, the functions at present exercised by such 'management'. When these councils have acquired sufficient power for themselves at the point of production, they must be encouraged to establish their own cooperative, expropriating the owners of those means of production.

Just as the attempts to deny bourgeois property right in cooperatives established when the original firm goes bankrupt will lead to a forcible confrontation with repressive state apparatus at some stage, even more so will the attempt to carry out the same struggle in relatively 'healthy' areas of British capitalism. This is not a campaign which can tolerate any adventurism which might jeopardise the whole movement before it has time to get fully underway. Until there exists a broad-based sympathy for the council movement among a significant section of the industrial proletariat, it would be sheer folly to force a confrontation between isolated workers' councils and the state over bourgeois property right - such a move would be doomed to failure, leaving the workers involved in the venture disillusioned and antipathetic towards future struggle in that direction.

So the growth of the workers' council movement must necessarily be slow and cautious, laying a firm, widespread base in the class from which to launch its strategic attack on bourgeois property right. It is imperative that the movement be given a strategic plan of campaign by a vanguard Communist Party, being fore-armed ideologically to expect temporary setbacks in skirmishes with the bourgeoisie and their State power, and the possibly forceful repression of individual workers' cooperatives who may dare to challenge bourgeois property right. If the groundwork has been thoroughly prepared beforehand through widespread propaganda and involvement of workers' in the council movement, and the preparation made for giving the class the physical means to defend its organs of power, skirmishes with the state and the failure of some workers' councils to successfully challenge bourgeois property right need not impart a death-

blow to the council movement as a whole. On the contrary, it will impel increasing sections of the proletariat to rally to the defence of their own organisations of class power and plan the campaign, under the guidance and leadership of their vanguard party, so as to avoid defeat in future struggles. They hold the trump card, in that, without the acquiescence of a majority of the proletariat, capitalism cannot function as a mode of production. Once a majority of the British workingclass come to realise this fact, and decide that the time of acquiescence and collaboration with their exploiters has ended, all the State repression the bourgeoisie throw into the arena will at best only succeed in stopping temporarily an inevitable move towards the socialisation of the means of production through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## HARBINGERS

Of the contradictions inherent in British and international capital are as we have analysed them, then clear manifestations should be present in the form of attempts at transcendence. In particular, if our own prescriptions as to the mode of transcendence are objectively correct, then we should be able to point to specific, if partial, proletarian attempts taking the forms we prescribe.

In fact we find practice affirming theory in full measure; for we have a clear-cut instance abroad (Australia) and one right here in Britain.

The Australian instance centres upon the actions of one union (in New South Wales), since in Australia, Trades Unions are part of a fossilised trades union structure derived from ours. (In passing it should be noted that a crucial feature of social, industrial and political life in Britain especially, is a deep rooted resistance to any real change of any sort: Britain having been too stable too long. So industrial change in the UK cannot just be a matter of more investment, and political change a matter of new parties).

The union in question is the Builders' Labourers Federation, with 16,000 members in NSW, and led by the communist Jack Munday. The situation is important because here is an important union which has lifted its horizons beyond that of the wages system; with a communist leader who has encouraged this trend in complete contrast to Britain's so-called communist union leaders (like the CPB's Reg Birch or the CPGB's McGaghey and Reid). Other contrasts will also become apparent.

As suggested the union itself was looking beyond the cash nexus before Munday arrived. It began to do so in the 1950's in Victoria, when by imposing 'Black-Bans' the union saved historic buildings from the developers. It then went on to save parkland and to hold up a powerstation at Newport Bay until stricter pollution controls were implemented. In the 1970's the imposition of Green-Bans has for example saved 'live theatre' by refusing to demolish the Theatre Royal until the developer agreed to incorporate a new 1,000 seat 'live' theatre into his project. The most famous instance has been the (permanent) refusal to allow a (3,000-place) carpark to be built for the new Sydney Opera House under the adjacent Botanical Gardens, thus jeopardising them. But the most significant ban to date has been the refusal to allow the £500 million "redevelopment" into highrise blocks and freeways of the proletarian 'Rocks' residential district alongside Sydney Harbour. All this unconstitutional action has been characterised by a senior civil servant quoted in New Scientist 6.6.74) as "sinister, undemocratic, extra-parliamentary force". And so indeed it is: but how does Munday himself see it?

Green-Bans are beaut, but the thing they're opening up is workers examining the social responsibility of their labour. Instead of saying thank you boss, I'll build anything, anywhere, at any time, were saying all right, should we build this, is it beneficial to the community? And that's taking away their god-given right to determine what we do."!

"Our policy is towards workers' control, towards invading the sanctity of the employer, as against this bullshit about job participation, job enrichment, all those sloppy words".

Unlike British unions the BLF do not hand out decisions that the rest of the class can either like or lump. On the contrary they are anxious and able to stir the consciousness of the class as a whole, and even win allies for the proletariat as the only fundamentally progressive force in society:

"We're a catalyst assisting (people) to develop their own plans. Take the Rocks. Instead of \$500 million of highrise buildings, the people themselves have drawn up a plan, with a socio-economic mix, high-density low-rise housing instead of commercial. I think this is really participating in democracy (here he betrays his membership of a revisionist party), when people have everyday decision-making. Without our stimulus this would never have happened."

"We have never imposed a ban without some public expression of opinion. Not one of our bans has been imposed without a request from a local residents action group. It was necessary for a countervailing force to come into existence and the residents' action group is exactly that."

"Of 41 bans in New South Wales, the majority are in working-class areas. There are freeways that would rip the guts out of Sydney just to get race-cars (ie sportscars - COBE) away to the Blue Mountains."

Neither are the BLF'S actions confined to environmental issues:

"We put a ban on all building at Macquarie University because a homosexual was chucked out..... Then at Sydney University the philosophy department wouldn't have a course of women's liberation, and we put a ban on new building there."

None of this has been achieved at the expense of the union's basic raison d'etre - securing the livelihood of its members:

"We're also fighting for permanency of labour, a 1-year contract in the building industry instead of the 1 hour's notice that's now in force."

As the new Scientist (op. cit.) put it in respect to classic unionist struggle:

"As in Britain, building workers in Australia have a reputation for violence. In the 1970 strike, the BLF men organised mass occupations of blacked sites, and smashed down anything built by scab labour. This sort of policy may bring a few friends among the establishment, but it has created a powerful democratic union out of what was once a bunch of hoodlums" (on the US model - COBE).

The BLF makes special arrangements for women, immigrant and aboriginal workers. This of course is in stark contrast to the behaviour of British Unions (whatever they may say), but even more in opposition to British practice - especially for CPGB candidates - is the attitude to internal democracy; as of the correct communist dialectic of 'from the masses to the masses'.

To quote New Scientist again:

"(Jack Munday) was elected NSW Secretary in 1967, and when he came up for a second 3 year term in 1970, he persuaded the BLF in NSW to amend its rules so that fulltime officials were paid no more than the average wage of their members and were forbidden to hold office for more than 6 years without a 12 month spell back on the building sites." Whereas, "In most unions in Australia and Britain (all as far as we know - COBI), by contrast officials are paid far more than the members they are supposed to represent, and are often elected for life."

Munday himself says: "our wages are tied exactly to the workers, and when they are on strike we don't get paid."

"The members have got the right of recall. It only needs 1,000 members to give their signatures, and there's got to be a new election, at once."

To conclude the Australian experience, we have Munday directly identifying the wages system itself as what stands between the working class and communism "What's the use of winning higher pay, better conditions (at work) if you've got to live in polluted cities and areas denuded of parks and trees? You can win a 35 hour week or even a 30 hour week, but you've still got to live the rest of the 168 hours. And what do we go for next? 300 a week, 2 houses, 3 cars? We've got to have a revolution in our values. The workers should decide what money is used for, demand its diversion to creches, schools, universities, (revisionist influence again), to public utilities as against the private side. Stop making cars (R. Birch note) and build public transport. And this strikes a chord with workers, believe me. Workers are not that selfish."

If all this was the fundamental threat to the continuation of commodity production we make it out to be - no matter how seminal - then we should expect to find counter-attack from the bourgeoisie. And indeed we are not mistaken.

The New Scientist (4.7.74) reports that the Australian Industrial Court ruled that Green Bans amounted to sabotage, and that at the behest of the Master Builders Association the court ordered the de-registration of the union, which means that employers are now free to establish company unions in opposition. BLF officials have predicted violence if any are set up.

But it seems this is now less necessary. Since Munday's retrial after his second term ( a democratic measure he pushed through), the union has fallen to the Maoists, who, being simply rabid social-democrats, have lifted 'Green Bans' and abandoned "social issue" campaigns for the orthodox labourist economic 'struggle'

We now come to our instantiation right here in Britain. And in accord with what we've been saying as to the character of British Trades Unions, this initiative does not of course come from them, but from a Shop Stewards Committee; just where the SLP had its strength and made its revolutionary breakthrough.

Not only that, but this initiative is located in big industry with high-technology - Lucas Aerospace. The full title is the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee, and it represents all 14,000 manual plus staff workers in the 17 UK Lucas sites. It represents workers in many unions, but its attitude is fundamentally different to that of Trades Unionism: As the New Scientist (3.7.75) put it:

"When Navy Under Secretary Frank Judd last February cast doubt on the future of the navy version of the Harrier Jump Jet' (P1127 - COBI), the reactions of the unions was both predictable and understandable. They

wanted the project to continue, because cancellation of a plane such as Harrier inevitably means redundancy. "Trade unions' national conference policies calling for cuts in defence expenditure mean little when actual cuts are proposed. In the absence of any overall strategy, those at plant level who must cope with redundancies rationalise the continuation of projects which their unions nationally, at least in theory, oppose. For example, George Smithers, works Committee Secretary at Hawkers Kingston Factory said in February: "We believe that the Maritime Harrier is one of the most viable propositions ever undertaken in the British Aircraft Industry, and have great faith in it." But the Combine Committee is not trapped within the mental prison of commodity production, of the sale of labour power to the highest bidder and to hell with what the social consequences are - they have said that defence cuts were "both inevitable and desirable". (New Scientist, 29.1.76). For the Lucas shop Stewards have scientific horizons: "The Chrysler situation is important. We see the public objection to aiding Chrysler and see it is pointless demanding continuation of the same thing. With this plan, the public will see benefits for their money. And we are starting before we are in the Chrysler situation." (New Scientist 20.11.75). So it is not surprising that "parts of the corporate plan have already been used in fights against redundancies" (New Scientist 29.1.76). This workers Corporate Plan referred to was adopted on 14th November '75, and constituted:

"Integrated energy system for housing, with solar panels, windpower devices, and pumping and switching equipment all based on past Lucas work.

\* A 30 Kilowatt fuel cell power plant using gaseous hydrogen and oxygen (Fuel cells produce electric current directly from the chemical reaction of gases which are thus consumed - COBI).

\*Braking systems for buses, combining eddy current dynamometer techniques (for retarders to prevent coaches running away on hills) with anti-skid systems.

\*Airships with a 400 ton constant load (combined ballast and payload) so that gas need never be vented. Vector jets already developed by Lucas would keep the Airship in position in winds up to 128 km/hr.

\*Hybrid vehicle combining electric motor and internal combustion engine.

Road-rail vehicle, using a new light weight aerospace frame (what makes British Rail's APT possible - assuming the idiot government allows it to continue - COBI), and running on rubber tyres. Rotax, a Lucas company, spent £2 million studying such a vehicle 10 years ago...

\*Increased kidney machine production, and design of equipment for the disabled, especially to try to provide a form of sight for the blind.

\*Power units which can alternately drive generating, pumping and hydraulic systems - for use in the Middle East and Third World.

\*Telechiric machines - devices which are operated by remote control by humans (robots are programmed to do specific and limited tasks without people) using existing knowledge about remote control and actuators. Applications include a water turbine driven telechiric firefighting machine and undersea telechiric machines for the oil industry, gathering metal bearing modules, and possible undersea farming." New Scientist, Ibid.)

Nor is this just a restructuring of product ranges, Rather it is a whole restructuring both of the purpose of production and of the stifling division of labour immanent in capitalist production and society.

"The plan also calls for a radical restructuring of production. Integrated teams would incorporate design, development, and production staff, with a high degree of job rotation."

"Scientists, engineers, and the workers... have a profound responsibility to challenge the underlying assumptions of large scale industry (and to) assert their right to use their skill and ability in the interests of the community at large. In saying this, we recognise that this is a fundamental challenge to many of the economic and ideological assumptions of our society."

Again, we would expect to find that something so inimicable to commodity production would be stoutly resisted by management; and so indeed we do: "Lucas management appears hostile to the plan" says the New Scientist of the 20th November. In July it had reported: "The Committee will then decide (after the plan's adoption) whether to present it to the company in a negotiating framework in rather the same way as it would negotiate wages or working conditions." (The Committee have already forced on management the extended production of their only non-aerospace product to date - ball-screws).

This actuality should be compared with the theory we outlined in "What sort of Workers' Control and Why," Proletarian no. 1, January, 1974: "Workers' control which is not worker's collaboration in the perpetuation of capitalism, will be gained by the councils encroaching upon the traditional preserves of the trade unions. Councils will however, be able to act in much more farseeing manner, not being bound by the established functions of trade unions. For these have arisen under capitalism specifically to sell labour-power in the market to the best advantage of the labourers... But some of their functions must accrue to the councils in the interim, so that there is a solid base in the process of production for the extension of consciousness into and through the new organs of power. Therefore in bargaining at plant or industry level money wage claims can be restrained as a bargaining counter, if and only if by this means councils can wrest progressively into their hands on the shop-floor, one management prerogative after another. This will add a much needed new dimension to the closed circuit of economic and welfarist struggles that the working class has become locked within." (p.11).

Environmentalism is an issue of course because it is the registration of disquiet over the abuse of natural resources in the interests of capital accumulation, especially acute in this period of unparalleled advance in the development of capitalism's productive forces.

This is the problematic as seen by historical materialism. However, environmental issues do not automatically produce historical materialists, and much of the environmental lobby with its associated Alternative Technology, and much of the product of mere petit-bourgeois oppositionism - the distributist 3 acres and a cow valhalla of populist ideology since the onset of the industrial revolution; whose utopian-feudal socialism in the persons and schemes of Fourier, Proudhon, Dühring and others was so mercilessly crucified by Marx and Engels (plus Plekhanov and Lenin).

This classic confrontation of scientific versus utopian/rural socialism, would lead Marxists to expect that the environmental/alternative Technology movement as spontaneously engendered would be expression, not of concern as to the forces imminent in capital, but of the petit-bourgeoisie's desire to ensure the tranquility of their country cottages.

Again we find practice confirming to theory when we read: "But the shop-stewards were forced to write their plan with no help from Alternative Technology people. Only last weekend (ie after the plan had been adopted - COBI) did the first indications of help come from the AT community. Last spring, the committee sent letters to 180 people and organisations involved in alternative technology soliciting help from alternative products. Articles in New Scientist and Undercurrents followed. Although they received many letters of support, only three serious proposals were submitted; all were immediately incorporated in the plan. The shop stewards are bitterly disappointed, and see most

AT people as well-heeled middle class dropouts too intent on their own thing to help workers.

"They just repeat the clichés of condemnation of an advanced technological society. In effect, they give us the choice of going off to the mountains, onto the dole queue, or pressing to produce more Chrysler rubbish. Here was their chance to involve the working class, and they did nothing", declared on-shop steward. ...

"The committee refused to attend a conference last weekend run by the Leeds Future Study Centre (FSC), which was specifically designed as 'a response to the initiative taken by the Lucas Combine Committee earlier.'

"With more than 300 people attending, it was one of the largest AT conferences in Britain. The refusal was due to the disillusionment with the AT community (sic), and on political grounds. The FSC intended it to produce a consensus, and they invited Lucas management as well as the shop stewards. One part of the agenda for the conference stressed the need to eliminate 'sides' - workers and management - in discussions. But the Shop Stewards refused to attend with management, who they saw as precisely the people who are sacking their members and preventing the introduction of alternative technology".

What is produced, for whom and how is no inimitable function of the productive forces regarded as some neutral 'given', but a political function of the relations of production in which productive forces themselves are necessary but by no means sufficient, social determinants. Though we would not expect the petit-bourgeois environmentalists to see these class realities, we would not do find the proletariat voicing such awareness: "They (ie AT people) don't realise" said one of the stewards "That AT is a political issue". (ibid) So the Lucas stewards suffer neither technology fetishism, nor a fixation with 'differentials and hierarchy'.

As the orientation of production changes, so too must its organisation:-

"The committee 'also wants to ensure that the work is carried out in the factories in such a fashion...that we depart from the dehumanised fragmented forms of work which are now becoming commonplace, even in a highly skilled industry such as aerospace. The plan goes on to state:

"We have allowed our regard for human talents to be bludgeoned into silence by the mystique of advanced equipment and technique, and so forget that our most precious asset is the creative and productive power of our people".

"The committee hopes to avoid technocratic elitism and the simplistic view that there is an advanced technological fix. 'It is certainly not the view of the Combine Committee, or of the workforce involved, that the kind of capital intensive products which have come to characterise the technologically 'advanced nations' will be appropriate to the newly emergent nations.. Entirely different forms of technology will have to be considered!" (3rd July, p.10.)

All of which reaffirms the correctness of Marx's theses, that:

"in the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage of the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political super-structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.

"...Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation (Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859).



To sum up the Lucas experience so far, the Combine Committee should have the last word: "Perhaps the most significant feature of the corporate plan, is that trade unionists are attempting to transcend the narrow economism which has characterised T.U. activity in the past and extend our demands to the extent of questioning the products on which we work and the way in which we work on them." (New Scientist, 29.1.76.)

Uneven development is an absolute law of history. The realisation and tackling of problems, therefore, even with one society, will show a non-linear, irregular development. Thus we find a body of proletarians at the point of production, not hitherto known as pacemaking elements for the class, qualitatively ou stripping in social consciousness not only the petit-bourgeois environmentalist intelligentsia (not a difficult task) but rather the self-proclaimed vanguard of the class, in particular those professing Trotskyism.

Earlier we quoted Marx & Engels to the effect that Trades Unionism had a very contingent and delimited usefulness for the class - that of serving as the proletariat's kindergarten or primary school; but as soon as that purpose had been served and the formative stage passed, Trades unions served to retard the development of proletarian offensive consciousness into a class with initiative sufficient for ruling. These basic lessons, since they are truly dialectical - the product of inner contradictions - have never been learned by trotskyism. In this it is particularly clear that Trotskyism is but a radical petit-bourgeois version of orthodox Social-Democracy. For what characterises social democracy so much as their propensity to worship at the shrine of existing institutions spontaneously engendered within capitalism: the Labour Party, Parliamentary elections, the State and of course Trades Unions? Naturally, Trotskyism professes to be "struggling" within these forms to 'radicalise' them and so 'push them to the Left' by 'exposing the Right-wing'. All of course but ideological gloss on tailism and spontaneism. Now these are the classic characteristics of Menshevism/Economism and so it comes as no surprise to find those classic Mensheviks, the IS, competing/colluding with the CPGB as to who are the most militant in trade union affairs, and so who can get the most union leadership positions, thus to boast about who are the 'real' leaders of the working class. (cf. I.S.: The Crackup - Proletarian Broadside No. 1.) It is well known that upon public criticism, especially in live debate, the CP always defends its position on anything by asserting it 'has most and best industrial militants, plus great influence among the union leaders.' Those who have heard John Gollen speak (on almost any matter) will know that he is wont to preface his remarks with the talisman that the CPGB possesses all sorts of Trade Union worthies and has done these 150 years. Thus it must be (the party of the working class', and so must, by definition, be right on all things proletarian. As part of its habit of trading on the heels of the CP, the IS behaves in like manner; even to the extent of reviving as Rank and File Movements, the CP's National Minority Movement fractions (of the 1920's) within the Trades Unions. The Leninist position is of course the reverse: "In fact, the ideal leader as the majority of the members of such circles picture him, is something far more in the nature of a trade union secretary than a socialist political leader. For the trade union secretary of any, say British trade union, always helps the workers to conduct the economic struggle, helps to expose factory abuses, explain the injustice of the laws and of the measures which hamper the freedom to strike and the freedom to picket (is to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc. etc. In a word, every TU secretary conducts and helps to conduct 'the economic struggle against the employers and the government.' It cannot be too strongly insisted that this is not yet (Bolshevism). The (Bolshevik's) ideal should not be a trade union secretary, but a tribune of the people, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum or class of people it affects; he must be able to generalise all these manifestations to produce a single picture of policy violence and capitalist exploitation, he must be able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to explain his socialistic and

his democratic demands to all, in order to explain to all and everyone the world-historic significance of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation." (What is to be Done, 1902; original emphasis.)

The socio-political impotence to which economist spontaneism condemns the left (driven home at the EEC Referendum, the unions acceptance of the £6 pay limits etc.) has slowly dawned on those not too compromised by wholesale and lifetime economism to admit. This rules out the CPGB en bloc, plus of course the leadership and much of the membership of IS. But other Trotskyist organisations, and especially the dissident fractions quitting the IS in such profusion, have been seeking solutions by a turn to more explicit Leninism (and covertly less Trotskyism: cf. Trotsky's 1903 reply- Our Political Tasks - to Lenin's What is to be Done.)

Many of these latter day Leninists are understandably anxious to escape the endemic economism of the British Left; but unfortunately few of them take their search for an alternative any further than Trotsky's 1938 Transitional Programme. This has all been criticised by us in Proletarian 3, but since Trotsky and his works occupy such a revered place in the Pantheon of our Leftists it is necessary to return to points that we have made previously. The opportunism of this programme is inherent in the very idea of a transitional demand that, stemming from today's ideas and today's consciousness of wide sectors of the working class, leads unalterably to the seizure of power by the working class. In practice these demands - truly Hegelian in their self development - enable the Trotskyists to dress up all sorts of commonplace reformism as the "bridge" between today's consciousness

and the revolutionary future. Prime among these at the present is the idea of a sliding scale of wages.

A sliding scale of wages can at the most prevent the price of labour power falling below its value. It is powerless to prevent the value of labour power from falling. But it is precisely this that capitalist development produces. Increasing productivity of labour power enables a fall in the value of the necessities of life. But it is these necessities, that determine the value of labour power, if their value falls so does the value of labour power. This can happen even if real wages are rising: "It is, however, possible that, owing to an increase of productivity both the labourer and the capitalist may simultaneously be able to appropriate a greater quantity of the necessities, without any change in the price of labour power or in surplus value.... In this way it is possible with an increasing productivity of labour for the price of labour power to keep on falling, and yet this fall to be accompanied by a constant growth in the mass of the labourers means of subsistence. But even in such case, the fall in the value of labour power would cause a corresponding rise of surplus value, and thus the abyss between the labourer's position and that of the capitalist would keep widening." (Capital 1, p.523) In case anyone should think that these quotes from Marx are mere journalistic impressionism on a par with the works of a Trotsky, rather than a precise and scientific theory they need only refer back to the statistics in Part One of this pamphlet. There we show that over the past 25 years, a period that saw an unprecedented increase in both money wages and real wages, the rate of exploitation rose by almost a half, due to the rapid development of productivity which diminished the value of labour power. What then, can a sliding scale of wages be but a cast iron guarantee of increased exploitation?

Not only does the slogan of a sliding scale of wages have this advantage to the bourgeoisie, but it is actually less progressive than what labourism proposes. In order to get the social contract accepted, the state had to impose on the capitalist class a system of flat rate wage increases. Small though this concession might seem, it represented an attack on the bourgeois principle of hierarchical job differentials, payments for 'responsibility' and other sacred cows of the capitalist division of labour. By retracting to percentage increases, by seeking to preserve the status quo at all costs, the Trots abandon even what is objectively progressive in the strategy of labourism, and completely capitulate to the most narrow and reactionary

trades union prejudices. Not for them the struggle against differentials and for the average industrial wage. Not for them the struggle for the limitation of the working day (not as a mere defensive response to unemployment, but as the only effective means of offense against an increasing rate of exploitation); no, these strategies demand thought, not an instinctive response, and besides they smack of communism.

It is a striking reflection of the shallowness and philistinism of left wing theory that this demand, the ultimate in conservative, defensive, trades unionism, should be considered the last word in Marxist strategy. Consider its implications. A sliding scale of wages demands no more than that workers should receive the same real wage irrespective of the price level. What is this but the adaption to inflationary conditions of the old conservative motto of 'A fair day's pay for a fair day's work' that Engels expressly said should be replaced by the slogan - ABOLITION OF THE WAGES SYSTEM.

It marks a complete surrender to the petty bourgeois illusion that exploitation arises through workers somehow being 'cheated' on the market, through them not being paid 'the full value of their labour', and similar notions that Marx so ruthlessly destroyed in Capital. In fact, such a strategy is absolutely powerless to reduce the rate of exploitation. At the most it can prevent capitalists from forcing the price of labour down below its value. But as Marx showed, Capitalist exploitation proceeds perfectly well even with workers being paid the full value of their labour power, indeed this assumption is the premise of the whole Marxist analysis of capitalist exploitation. As Capital shows, with a constant length of working day, and constant intensity of labour the following laws govern the rate of exploitation:

"1) A working day of given length always creates the same amount of value, no matter how the productiveness of labour, and, with it, the mass of the product, and the price of each single commodity produced, may vary."

"2) Surplus value and the value of labour power vary in opposite directions. A variation in the productiveness of labour its increase or diminution, causes a variation in the opposite direction in the value of labour power, and in the same direction in surplus value."

"3) Increase or diminution in surplus value is always consequent on, and never the cause of, the corresponding diminution or increase in the value of labour power." (Capital I, pp 520 & 522.)

#### GREAT BRITISH PRACTICALITY

Raised against our perspectives was, and will be, the great totem of 'impracticality', and this confirms to us that we are on the right track.

There is little in Britain more traditional than our Left. In fact there is little in Britain more British than our Left, and it manifests this supremely in its obsession with 'practicality'. What this means of course is the outright rejection of the dialectic between theory and practice, whereby what is practicable is that which theory indicates can and should be achieved.

But not our true-blue Left: rather, their notion of what is practical - before which they grovel - is to accept whatever socio-economic forms have been thrown up by history, in other words, by the evolution of capitalist society out of feudal. So that which exists, our Left takes as an absolute unalterable given, and thus what is 'practical' is what is possible within these existing structures. This means of course that all the Left's talk of revolution is so much piousness, so much empty moralising, since both the content of revolution, and the means of achieving it, reduce themselves to such adaptations as the given reality can

"practically" and "realistically" accommodate. Which is of course the substance of the social-democratic worldview.

What is 'practical' politically then becomes more of the same: more public spending measures, nationalisation, fuller trade union rights, etc.; and these provide sufficient change in British capitalism to keep its traditional stability. And it is, of course, out of this traditional mould that our Left have come and which they constantly reinforce by their 'over-practical' activity.

Only theoretical activity providing oversight can enable our subjective revolutionaries to break out of this vicious circle, and into the qualitatively different mode of thought demanded for the qualitative leap that is truly socialist revolution.

Engels wrote to Plekhanov in late 1894:

"one is indeed driven to despair by these (British) workers with their sense of imaginary national superiority, with their essentially bourgeois ideas and viewpoints, with their 'practical' narrow mindedness, with their parliamentary corruption which has seriously infected the leaders. But things are moving none the less."

Under the impact of world events 'outside our (sic!) control' and 'foreign ideas' changing they are indeed. Jack Munday recently spoke here in Birmingham on Green Bans and social responsibility/control. However, even in radical new departures British conservatism and constitutionalism dies hard; whereas the Australian workers asserted themselves, the British perforce must properly petition, and who better to report the fact than Public Service, the NALGO newspaper:

"The POP (post office preservation) campaign has been collecting signatures to protest, is circulating a leaflet through trade unions and other bodies, has got the backing of Birmingham trades council, and has persuaded the West Midlands regional TUC to lead a delegation to the city council to ask that planning permission to develop the site be revoked. The county council planning committee has already agreed to ask the Environment Secretary to rescind his permission for the demolition of the post office."

But at least some are beginning to move in the right direction, for the report continues, quoting Val Stevens, green ban action committee secretary:

"If we can win this battle, then wider environmental issues can be tackled in the same way. The whole question of social responsibility of labour will be aired.... A system must be devised where work is done for everyone's benefit, not for short term profit with its associated destruction of the quality of life." (May 1975, p5)

As our contemporary case studies and historical examples have shown, the working class are already searching for, and in part finding, "Material conditions for the solution of their problems." Rather than assisting by putting scientific theoretical weapons at their disposal, social democracy is actively obstructing the proletariat finding the qualitatively different solution that is socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. To clear the way for the proletariat and to show the way forward, Communists must be formed in and around the communist organisation, and it is to the nature of such vanguard organisation that we now turn.

#### THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

This brings us to the central focus for proletarian perspectives in the present situation - the overwhelming need to build a communist vanguard in Britain to lead the proletariat in their struggle towards a revolutionary political consciousness and the class organisational strength needed to wrest hegemony from the bourgeoisie.

What we have given above is the ground upon which the class must organise itself; what we have called the MOBILISATION PROGRAMME (see Proletarian No.3). But it cannot form-up and move onto the attack - of necessity 'united by combination and led by knowledge', as Marx put it - without creating for itself just such a guiding core; the Communist Party, the party of Marxism-Leninism. This is not a 'mass' communist party, which has so hypnotised yet eluded major sections of the revolutionary movement, in Britain: but a Leninist vanguard of professional revolutionaries, practising the "science of leadership", having the theoretical insight and understanding of social relations that is the precondition for successful political agitation and mobilisation of mass struggles towards the seizure of full power.

"No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory", said Mao in 1938, "unless it possesses revolutionary theory and a knowledge of history and has a profound grasp of the practical movement." Just how the Party is constituted on these bases we examine next.

### What characterises the Leninist Communist Party?

1. It is the party of wholesale and unswerving commitment to Marxism, which it recognises as the only basis of a proletarian world-view: "The Marxian doctrine is omnipotent because its true", wrote Lenin in the 'Three Sources' (1). "It is complete and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world conception which is irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction or defence of bourgeois oppression."

"We stand", Lenin stated in Our Programme (2), "wholly on the basis of the theory of Marx: this theory was the first to transform Socialism from a utopia to a science, to lay down a firm foundation for this science and to indicate the path that must be followed in further developing this science and elaborating it in all its parts." "Our Programme", he stated in 1905, "is entirely based on the scientific that is materialist world outlook." (3)

2. It is a Communist Party in the sense defined by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto (4): "The communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class: but in the movement of the present they also represent and take care of the future of that movement." The Leninist Party then, is the Party of the fundamental, strategic-historic interests of the proletariat:

"Without a programme, it is impossible for the party to be a more or less integral political organism, able always to hold to a line through each and every turn of events. Without a tactical line, based on an evaluation of the current political moment and giving exact answers to the 'accursed problems' of the present, it is possible to have a small group of theoreticians, but not an operative political unit. Without an evaluation of the 'active', topical or 'fashionable' ideological-political trends, a programme and tactics can degenerate into dead 'points', which it is unthinkable to realise in life, and to apply to thousands of detailed, concrete and most concrete questions, of practice, with an understanding of the essence of things, an understanding of 'what it is all about.'

"That is why it is quite natural that (Bolshevism) as the party of the revolutionary proletariat is so solicitous of its programme, so meticulously defines its final aim long beforehand - the aim of complete liberation of working people - and looks so jealously at any attempt to trim down this final aim, for this same reason (Bolshevism) is so dogmatically strict and doctrinally unbending in separating small, immediate, economic and political aims from the final aim. Whoever is fighting for all, for complete victory, cannot be but on the lookout lest small gains should bind one's hands, divert one from the path, forget that which is relatively far off and without which all small gains are but the vanity of vanities. On the contrary this care for programmes, this eternally critical attitude

to small gradual improvements cannot be understood by and is foreign to the bourgeois parties, even those that are the most freedom-loving and people-loving.(6)

3. It is the party of those imbued with and developing, proletarian science - dialectical and historical materialism - the party of theoretical insight and overview:

"Without revolutionary theory", said Lenin in 'What is To Be Done'(7), "There can be no revolutionary movement...the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory".

Engels stated categorically(8) that one had "constantly to keep in mind that Socialism, having become a science, demands the same treatment as every other science - it must be studied. The task of the leaders will be to bring understanding, thus acquired and clarified, to the working masses, to spread it with increased enthusiasm, to close the ranks of the party organisations and of the labour unions with ever greater energy."

4. It is the party composed only of those committed to struggle, a party therefore of wholly committed revolutionaries without room in its ranks for dilettantes or amateurism.

"(Bolshevism) is a certain organised entity, and those people who do not abide by the discipline of this organisation, who scorn it and violate its decisions, do not belong to it. This is fundamental rule."(9)

"(Bolshevik) parties are not debating clubs, but organisations of the fighting proletariat." (10).

These organisations therefore, can only be constituted of those who have 'put politics in command' of their whole lives, and to which everything else is secondary. It is in this sense a party of 'professional' whole-time revolutionaries "an organisation that will consist of professional revolutionaries and be led by the real political leaders of the whole people" (11), i.e., by those who have studied socialism as a science. So, "in order to be fully prepared for his task, the worker-revolutionary must also become a professional revolutionary"(12), skilled in the multifarious tasks of revolutionary preparation and preparedness.

5. It is a party without any national commitment, but on the contrary dedicated to internationalism, seeing itself as but a link in the chain of proletarian internationalism. Proletarian Parties have no country, only the world.

"The recognition of internationalism in word, and the substitution of petit-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism for it in deed, in all propaganda, agitation and practical work, is a very common thing not only among parties of the Second International, but also among those which now call themselves Communist Parties..

"Petit-bourgeois nationalism proclaims as internationalism the bare recognition of the equality of nations, and nothing more, while (quite apart from the fact that this recognition is purely verbal) preserving national egoism intact; whereas proletarian internationalism demands, firstly, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in one country be subordinated to the interests of the struggle on a world scale, and secondly, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the sake of overthrowing international capital.

"Thus, in states which are already fully capitalistic, and which have workers' parties that really act as the vanguard of the proletariat, the struggle against the opportunist and petit-bourgeois pacifist distortions of the concept and policy of internationalism is a primary and most important task." (13)

6. Because "uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of "capitalism" (14), and indeed of history, the Leninist party can nowise be the party of the 'average' or 'typical', still less of the lowest-common-denominator. Those who doubt the reality or import of the law of uneven development should ask themselves why Trades Unions, those spontaneous and inevitable products of workers never cover the whole, and almost always only a minority of the working population. On the contrary "A (Bolshevik) party is the vanguard of a class, and its duty is to lead the masses, not to reflect the average state of mind of the masses." (15) For the party is the catalyst whereby the proletariat is activated to assert its historical right to rule.

"...only the political party of the working class, i.e. the Communist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people, that alone will be capable of withstanding the inevitable petit-bourgeois vacillations of this mass and the inevitable traditions and relapses of narrow craft unionism or craft prejudices among the proletariat and of guiding all the united activities of the whole of the proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people." (16)

"A political party can comprise only a minority of the class, just as the really class-conscious workers in any capitalist society constitute only a minority of all the workers. That is why we have to admit that only this class conscious minority can guide and take the lead of the broad masses of the workers." (17)

In summation: the Leninist party is the scientific, trained, disciplined fighting organisation of the class as a whole, imparting its own ideological and physical combativity permanently to the class, and thus leading the proletariat through being recognised as its sharpest edge for cutting through to class historical goals. \*

Notes:

1. "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism", 1913.
2. "Our Programme", 1899.
3. "Socialism and Religion", 1905
4. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," 1848.
5. "On the Election Campaign and the Election Platform", 1911.
6. "Political Sophisms", 1905.
7. "What is To Be Done Burning Questions of our Movement", 1902.
8. "Preface to the Second Edition of the Peasant War in Germany", 1874, Engels.
9. "Materials on the Question of the Struggle Within the Social-Democratic Fraction in the Duma," 1913.
10. "Collapse of the Second International", 1915.
11. "What Is To Be Done."
12. "Ibid."
13. "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", 1920.
14. "The United States of Europe Slogan," 1915.
15. "Speech on the Agrarian Question, Delivered at the Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies." 1917.
16. "Preliminary Draft of the Resolution of the 10th Congress of the RCP on the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party," 1921.
17. "The Role of the Communist Party: a Speech at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International," 1920.

N.B.: all except items (4) and (8) above are works by Lenin. The quotation from Marx cited in the preamble to this section is from his "Inaugural Address to the Working Men's International Association" (1864), and the quote from Mao from the "Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," 1938.

\* These points are more fully and rigorously discussed in Cobi's PLATFORM.

SUMMARY:

Proletarian interests require:

1. The supplanting of Trades Unions by Industrial Unions in a Confederate structure.
2. The formation of Workers' Committees/Councils to win power throughout industry.
3. The formation of Residential Committees in working class areas to win control from the agencies of government and private landlords.
4. The development of an integrated national structure of Industrial and Residential Committees.
5. A commitment by the revolutionary vanguard to ongoing theoretical work to apply Marxism scientifically.
6. The unfolding by that vanguard of thorough-going ideological struggle against all and every manifestation of the bourgeois world-outlook, especially that posing as 'Marxism'. Currently, this can only be rendered both practical and general, by launching an attack upon bourgeois 'right' and propriety in the division of labour.
7. The formation in the struggle outlined above of the Proletarian Vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, without whose initiating and coordinating functions no proletarian revolution can occur.
8. If you agree with these points and their elucidation in this pamphlet, contact J. Maisels, 3/8 May Court, Edinburgh, EH4 4SD.

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Throughout this pamphlet we have stressed the necessity of eliminating wage differentials among workers so that a real material base is provided for their political unity. The argument for the Average Industrial Wage is a tactical one. It has no autonomy of its own. The real strategic objective is a Standard Wage for all workers - the struggle for the Average Industrial Wage represents this objective in the historical process of its realisation.

The economic conflict involved in the fight for the Average Industrial Wage takes place on two levels - within industries and between industries. There are thus three modes of struggle around the AIW, corresponding to each of these two aspects, and of them taken together:

- A) to eliminate differentials in each separate branch of production, insofar as they reflect differences of age, sex, status, craft, skill etc., retaining only those that genuinely reflect harder, more dangerous or more un-social work (which should anyway be rotated).
- B) to eliminate differentials between industries, with the above proviso; e.g. between printing and transport.
- C) to use the AIW to restrain the pay of, say, doctors, and airline pilots, and raise that of, e.g., farmworkers to the industrial level.

Given that the AIW is strategic slogan and because of the major variations and discrepancies that prevail - variations arising from the uneven historical development of capitalism - no single example can be taken to address itself to the real tactical questions of struggle. Marxists insist that tactics are always specific to the concrete and present.

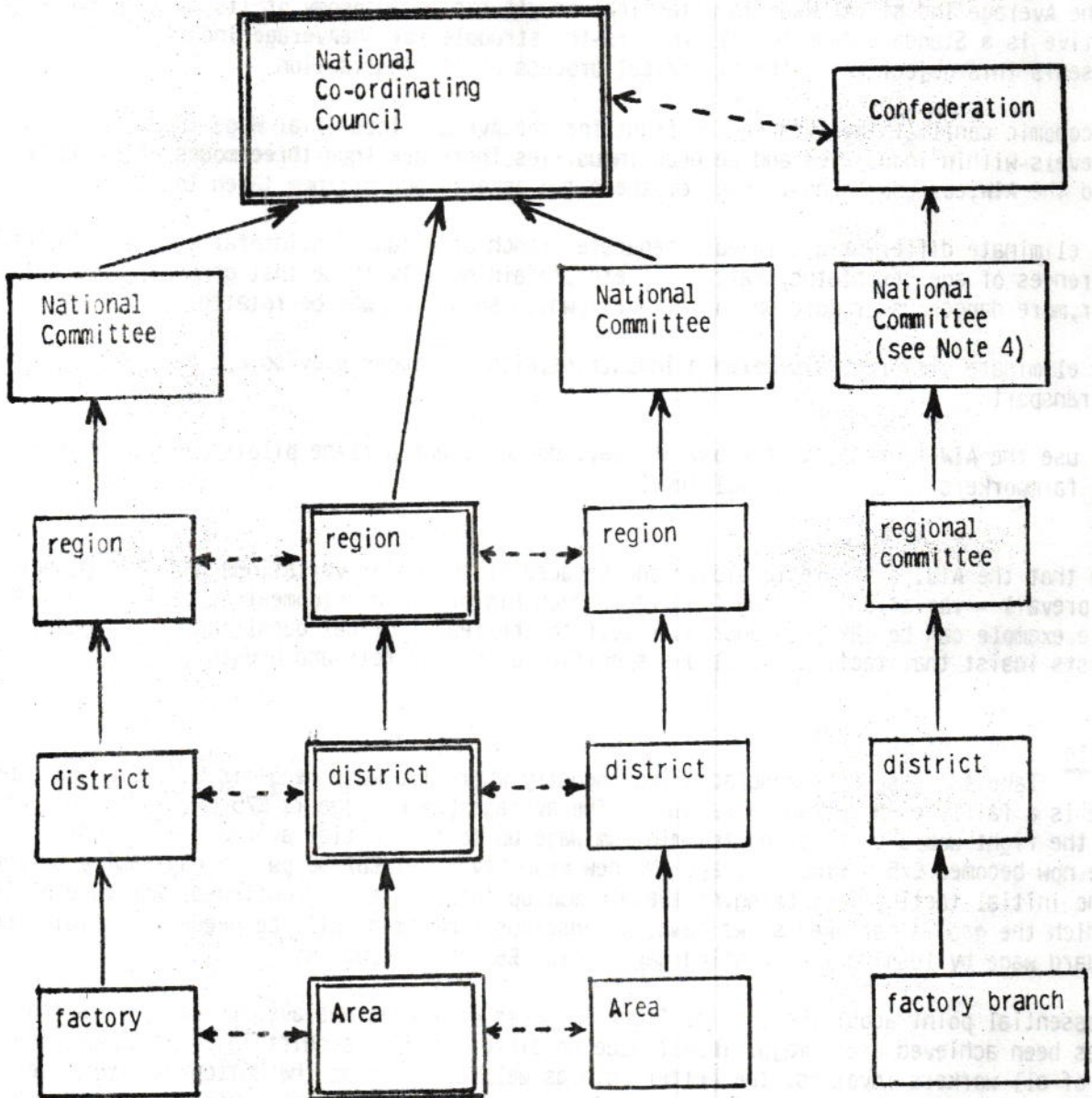
Example:

Take the case of a manufacturing industry where the wage range is £50 - £100 pw. and there is a fairly even spread of earnings. The average (mean) wage is £75 pw. As an initial step the fight would be to bring the minimum wage up to the initial average. This achieved, the range now becomes £75 - £100 pw., and the new mean (average) £87.50 pw. It can easily be seen that if the initial tactic, i.e. bringing the minimum up to average, is continued, the rate of increase at which the gap is narrowed slows down. A conscious commitment will be needed to attain the standard wage by leaping the existing gap from £87.50 to £100 pw.

The essential point about the initial fight in terms of the actual average (mean), is that once it has been achieved and a major impact made on differentials, a shift in consciousness on the part of all workers involved, the better paid as well as those at the bottom of the scale, will have been affected. Clearly, resistance to further change within the workforce is not eliminated at one go, but the basis of resistance has been crucially undermined. Having made the break with the sectional and economic thinking that exists, unchallenged, in the labour movement and the left at present, then a new basis exists for a quantum leap. Such a leap would be the one instanced in our example; from £87.50 average to the upper limit of £100 pw., as the standard wage.

The struggle for the Average Industrial Wage is thus not one struggle but a series; not a once-for-all goal to be attained, but a continuous process of struggle. As part of this process account must be taken of inflation. If higher wage rates are restrained while the lower levels simply inflate upwards, then this represents a falling real wage and a commensurate rise in exploitation. To counter this, COBI advocates that industrial unions simultaneously go for flat-rate wage increases for all, to keep pace with inflation, using it as a base to erode differentials by superadding an amount to the wage of the lower-paid as outlined above.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOVIETS BY AN INTERLOCKING CONCILIAR STRUCTURE



WORKERS' COMMITTEE (shopfloor factory organisation)

WORKERS' COUNCIL (political co-ordinating committee)

RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE (tenants' control organisation)

INDUSTRIAL UNION (in each industry)

legend:



indicates: "sends delegates to".  
indicates: "co-ordination & liaison".

Conciliar StructureNOTES :

Overpage is a maximal and schematic organisation chart for the proletariat to extend its hegemony into all and every aspect of social life. In practice, but especially during the early years of growth, the structure may lack some of the features shown. On the other hand areas we have not designated (like the struggle for control of the Health-Service and Education) may result in councils being established in these institutions. Naturally we welcome each and every extension, and our only inflexibility would be that all councils should be integrated through the appropriate level of WORKERS COUNCIL.

The central pillars of the whole structure, nomatter where other councils are formed, are the industrial and residential, the two main aspects of social life. But an important qualification must be made as to synchrony and commensurateness: while the industrial and residential councils will surely be able to extend themselves under 'normal' circumstances and wrest some power from the bourgeoisie that can locally be considered 'shared' - the reverse is the case with the workers Councils. They will only have a liaison function in 'normal' times - they are not yet Soviets and no illusions on that score should exist. Neither, therefore, should that name be bandied about for them in this 'peaceful' period, for doing so would only devalue it.

When, in a profound social crisis, WORKERS COUNCILS move to ASSERT control over the area for which they have been liaising, then and only then do they assume the character of Soviets by bringing into being another territorial power structure in opposition to the state - then the highly unstable condition of dual power exists.

It is at this crucial point that the WORKERS COUNCILS, to be real SOVIETS, must be in possession of their own armed forces, the core of which are workers militias. The alternatives are outright suppression by state arms, or the decline into gesticulating impotence.

2. Communist Organisation is not here correlated, as it is premised that Communists will function organically at all levels, coordinated by the Party.
3. This outline is an improved version of that shown as Appendix to PROLETARIAN (Journal) No: 1, and replaces it.
4. This ( National Committee) was erroneously printed as 'National Council' in our PLATFORM.

Over the years the medical profession has been subjected to a series of attacks from the public and the press. These attacks have been based on a number of factors, including the high cost of medical care, the complexity of medical science, and the perceived inefficiency of the medical profession. It is the duty of the medical profession to respond to these attacks in a rational and objective manner. This requires a thorough understanding of the issues at hand and a willingness to engage in a constructive dialogue with the public and the press.

The first step in this process is to identify the specific issues being raised. For example, the high cost of medical care is a complex issue that involves a number of factors, including the cost of medical education, the cost of medical research, and the cost of medical care. It is important to understand the underlying causes of these costs and to develop strategies to address them. Similarly, the complexity of medical science is a challenge that requires a commitment to ongoing education and research. Finally, the perceived inefficiency of the medical profession is a concern that can be addressed through a variety of measures, including the implementation of quality control programs and the promotion of evidence-based medicine.

Once the issues have been identified, the next step is to gather the facts and to present them in a clear and concise manner. This requires a thorough review of the literature and a willingness to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of the medical profession. It is important to avoid emotional appeals and to focus on the facts. The goal is to provide a balanced and objective assessment of the issues at hand.

Finally, it is important to engage in a constructive dialogue with the public and the press. This requires a willingness to listen to the concerns of others and to respond in a respectful and thoughtful manner. It is important to avoid a defensive posture and to focus on finding common ground. The goal is to build a bridge of understanding between the medical profession and the public.

In conclusion, the medical profession has a duty to respond to the attacks it has received in a rational and objective manner. This requires a thorough understanding of the issues at hand and a willingness to engage in a constructive dialogue with the public and the press. By following these steps, the medical profession can demonstrate its commitment to the highest standards of care and its dedication to the well-being of the public.

APPENDIX C: NOTE ON 'THE VALUE OF LABOUR POWER'

In our writing we have frequent recourse to a basic concept of scientific socialism, the value of labour power. Especially when discussing the role of trades unions we constantly point out that far from being anti-market forces, what they tend to do is ensure that labourers receive the true value of their labour power as wages.

But just what is this 'true level' of wages, or rather, how is it determined, especially since Marxists have no use for the Malthus/Lassalleian 'iron law of wages'. The whole point is that wage levels are changing magnitudes. Marx says in Volume 1 of 'Capital':

"(The owner of labour power's) natural wants, such as food, clothing, fuel and housing, vary according to the climatic and other physical conditions of his country (and his own activity rate - COBI). On the other hand, the number and extent of his so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilisation of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort in which, the class of free labourers has been formed. In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour power a historical and moral element". (p.190, Kerr edition; emphasis added).

What Marx is anxious to make clear is:

- 1) The 'biological minimum' varies according to country and work.
- 2) That minimum (or rather the money wage required to secure it) is not necessarily the wage-rate (or its median level).

Now this is palpably the case. In countries at the early stages of industrialisation (Britain early in the 19th century, India today, etc.) it is common for capitalists to pay wages below that of the subsistence minimum, since the simultaneous forcible separation of producers from means of production proceeding in the countryside, produces even greater misery there and drives reserves of labour power continually into the towns. As Marx also points out, it matters little to capital whether it has generations of shortlived, sickly proletarians, or fitter longer-lived ones -- their only real concern being that there be ample supplies of labour power, and to them that means a reserve army of unemployed continuously topped up.

However there comes a time when there are no more rural and handicraft workers to be displaced into towns and it is at this point of the drying up of the latent reserve army, that trades unionism on a mass scale - i.e. for anything other than the highly skilled minority - can really get a hold.

Then they proceed to do by organisation, by cartelisation, what the skilled workers had been able to do more readily through the sheer scarcity of their skills - rig the market: further restrict supply so that price is forced up. First of all, what is the non-rigged value of labour power? It is the same as the value of any other commodity - the cost of its reproduction. In the case of labourers obviously their own subsistence requirements and that necessary for their families to raise up another generation of labourers. When capitalists pay less than this they pay wages below the value of labour power; when trades union organisation forces wages above this subsistence level, labour power is selling above its value.

So what do we mean when we say that trades unions enforce the law of value? All value is the result of the action of labour upon nature, in transforming it with the means of labour (tools). In the first instance, the conditions under which labour power could be paid below its value were (and remain) essentially political:

"In England at the end of the 17th century (the forces of primitive accumulation)

arrive at a systematic combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the state, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hothouse fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and so shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power." (Capital, Vol I, p.824, Kerr).

The crucial point is the separation of the direct producers from their own means of production, so that they are forced to sell their labour power to capital, and so produce surplus value for it. Then with the continuous self-expansion of capital by the appropriation of surplus value, sheer economic force will crush out all those not hitherto subject to capital directly. When this process has been completed and all that can be ruined have been, fresh supplies of labour power cannot be thrown onto the market by and for capital. Here is the opportunity for workers' organisations to exert counterforce in the market place and push up the exchange value of their commodity.

The Marxist theory of value clearly distinguishes between the value of commodities, which is determined by their cost of reproduction, and their exchange value, or price, which may rise or fall above the value according to the effects of competition, monopoly, supply and demand, etc.

The demand for labour power is determined by: the rate capital accumulates, the supply, the size of the reserve army of unemployed. In early Victorian Britain or contemporary India, the vast size of the reserve army forced the price of labour power below its value. In post-Keynesian capitalism, the reserve army dries up, whilst the high rate of accumulation boosts demand for labour power. Consequently unions are in a strong position to raise the price of labour power above its value.

This they have succeeded in doing. In most branches of industry, real wages are now well above the subsistence minimum required to reproduce labour power. To emphasise this, we need only think back to the war years when real wages were much lower, but where the rational (rationed) allocation of necessities ensured an adequate reproduction of labour power; and in some ways people were fitter than today. In wartime, the state forces real wages down to the value of labour power in order to finance the war. In addition, the de-skilling of work produced by mechanisation and automation means that the cost of training all but a few experts and specialists is reduced as compared with the days of craft production. This element of the value of labour power has thus been reduced since the last century, whilst real wages have been rising. The opposite holds for a few highly trained specialists whose education is subsidised by the government in order to keep the price of their labour power below its true value.

The fact that trade unions have been able to lift wages above the value of labour power does not mean that exploitation has been reduced. Real wages have risen, but productivity has risen still faster. The workers of today, despite their higher real pay, are exploited more intensively than their Victorian grandparents; i.e. they work shorter hours, but they produce much more in the hours they do work, than under the longer working day.

As for the "moral and historical element" with which we began, insofar as this relates to value it is a matter of:

- a) the costs of training and qualification: this tends to fall with historical development;
- b) the family structure, how children are reared, whether women are engaged in wage labour;
- c) the customary diet; food of the same calorific value etc., requires different amounts of labour depending on its form: e.g. Marx speaks of French workers drinking wine with lunch as against the British beer;

- d) the historical development of the geographical structure of cities which affects necessary transport costs: given USA city structure and absence of public transport, a car is a necessity for a worker to be able to deliver his labour power to the factory gate, costs of transport always being a component of value.

As far as historical determinism of the exchange value of labour power is concerned, then the following four points are the determinants:

- 1) the rate of capital accumulation;
- 2) the reserve army;
- 3) previous generations of class struggle and the degree of labour organisation ;
- 4) the contemporary state of class struggle, and the degree of labour organisation.

As we have seen, all these four points are interlinked and in turn are related to the points (a) to (d) above.

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\* WHAT IS THE COMMUNIST ORGANISATION IN THE BRITISH ISLES? \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

1. COBI is a Marxist-Leninist collective, formed on 1st January, 1974, in secession from the British and Irish Communist Organisation, now become revisionist. Its purpose is to integrate Marxist-Leninist theory with the concrete conditions prevailing in the British Isles, and guided by this concrete development of Marxism-Leninism, to promote the development of communist politics among the working class. It aims, through its activities, to help bring about political and ideological conditions in which the formation of a new communist party will be a meaningful step in the development of communist politics as a link in the chain of proletarian internationalism.
2. We take the natural economic unit of the British Isles as the area of our organisation and oppose any attempts by bourgeois or populist nationalism to fragment working class organisation within the above economic unit. We resolutely base ourselves on the proletariat of the whole British Isles without exception. As a European state develops we shall extend ourselves accordingly.
3. In terms of the development and strength of its economic organisation, the working class of Britain is second to none in the capitalist world; its political and ideological development is, however, much less advanced. In particular it lacks its own political party. Without such a party, a real communist party, it will be unable to decisively defeat the capitalist class, build socialism and advance to communism.
4. The history of the struggle to build such a party in the British Isles has been largely one of failure. The conspicuous exception to this was the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain, whose emblem COBI has adopted and whose valuable experience we intend to assimilate.
5. A major reason for this failure has been the inability of revolutionaries in the British Isles to make a complete break with capitalist ideology; their failure to break with the pragmatist outlook of the British capitalist class has led them to underestimate the importance of the Marxist-Leninist theory of scientific socialism. Without the guidance of this theory there can be no communist politics.
6. For these reasons COBI takes as its immediate tasks: the application of communist theory to the conditions of the British Isles, and ideological struggles against opportunist distortions of communism, such as modern revisionism and Trotskyism.
7. COBI demands the maximum ideological unity amongst its members. All members, in addition to engaging in practical work, must improve their understanding of scientific socialism and contribute to the ideological struggle. Nobody will be admitted to full membership of the organisation unless they have demonstrated their commitment to class struggle and their understanding of scientific socialism.
8. To supplement the efforts of its full membership, COBI encourages a wider group of associate members to work in cooperation with it.

For full elucidation of these premises see Proletarian No.1, and if you wish to know more about COBI contact:

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