

INTERNATIONAL  
MARXIST  
GROUP

FOR  
MEMBERS  
ONLY

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BULLETIN

BUILDING THE LENINIST COMBAT PARTY  
IN BRITAIN TODAY

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## Introduction

The purpose of this document is

- 1) to outline why the Leninist party is a key component part of the coming British revolution; what the norms and procedures of such a party should be; the importance of the transitional programme and method in building it; and
- 2) to indicate the answers to a number of important conjunctural questions facing our relatively small Trotskyist organisation; i.e., to explain what the British section of the Fourth International should be saying and doing today in order to take advantage of the unparalleled opportunities open before us and to meet the responsibilities inherent in them.

For the 1973 Easter Conference the Tendency is also submitting a document which explains why the general line of the European Perspectives Document should be rejected. (The Tendency has not yet taken a position on any of the other disputed international questions before the next World Congress of the Fourth International. We will make our positions on these issues known in due course.)

In addition to the two line documents the Tendency is submitting to the Easter Conference, individual Tendency members are submitting papers drawing up a critical balance sheet of our work in the various aspects of the class struggle over the past period.

## THE CRISIS OF PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP

The history of the past few decades gives many examples where the masses have made colossal and heroic attempts to defeat the capitalist system which exploits, oppresses and degrades them.

Only six years after the Russian Revolution, the German working class confronted their ruling class with massive mobilisations in the streets and posed the question of power.

The 1926 General Strike in Britain which took place against the advice and opposition of the traditional leadership of the working class in the Labour Party and trade unions constituted an open challenge to the British ruling class.

Starting in April, 1931, the Spanish masses made a number of attempts to establish a new society free from exploitation and oppression. Through mass strikes and the occupation of land by the peasants they sought to take the power in their own hands.

The sitdown strikes in France in the mid thirties demonstrated the French workers' hatred of capitalism and their desires to overthrow it. In the same period the CIO-inspired sitdown strikes and occupations in the USA showed a similar trend; i.e., the instinctive efforts by the American proletariat to raise themselves to the level of the tasks imposed upon them by history.

The 1965 Santo Domingo uprising showed that the masses were fully prepared to engage in an all-out struggle to topple their reactionary native ruling class and its United States imperialist taskmaster.

The 1968 May-June explosion in France shows how the masses' discontent with the capitalist system can quickly erupt into a massive political confrontation posing the question of power in a concrete way. This big social upheaval took place in a bourgeois democratic society having a relative stable economy which conceded periodic wage increases. This experience refutes any concept that the masses have to be pauperised before they engage in battle with the class enemy.

The 1969 general strikes paralysed Rosario and Cordoba -- Argentina's second and third largest cities. Worker-student committees began to appear despite the opposition of the trade union and student leaders. Propaganda was made to the soldiers appealing for them to come over to the side of the masses. The 36-hour general strike in Cordoba saw thousands of students and workers involved in battles with the police. These events showed that a large section of the working class of Argentina understood the need to struggle for a fundamental change.

In 1970 the Bolivian students, workers, and armed detachments of peasants poured into the streets throughout the country to block an ultra-right-wing takeover. Barricades were built. The miners called for arms to defend their social gains. Armed civilians freed political prisoners. The miners occupied police stations. These actions started to shake the government from top to bottom and split the army. A few months later, thousands of armed miners paraded through La Paz to prevent another attempted counter-revolutionary coup. The mass movement began to openly proclaim its socialist goal. A "Peoples Assembly" was formed which had the potential of becoming a Soviet.

These examples of class conflict since the Russian Revolution show that, despite the desires of the masses and their willingness to struggle, they were unable to achieve their aims.

The reasons why these struggles did not result in victory for the masses was not because they were unwilling to struggle nor because the necessary objective conditions did not exist. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution on a world scale have existed since the first world war. In the Transitional Programme Trotsky described the objective prerequisites for proletarian revolution as being not only "ripe" but "somewhat rotten."

The reason why revolutionary and pre-revolutionary situations did not result in the masses taking power is primarily due to the lack of a mass Leninist combat party similar to the Bolshevik party in 1917 which was able to give the necessary revolutionary leadership.

The presence of a mass revolutionary party would not have guaranteed the victorious outcome to these struggles but it would have made a victory possible and probable.

In all these situations the misleadership and betrayals of the Stalinists and social democrats prevented the struggle going in a revolutionary direction. Each time the masses took the revolutionary road their traditional and conservative leaderships diverted and channelled the struggle (if only temporarily) into reformist and parliamentary blind alleys. This enabled the bourgeoisie to reconsolidate its grip while the masses retreated in confusion and often in demoralisation. As the Franco dictatorship in Spain today shows, it can take many years for the masses to recover from such defeats before they regain their confidence and see the necessity to struggle yet again. The masses pay a high price for what Trotsky characterised as the crisis of our epoch, the "historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat."

The historical crisis of leadership will only be overcome in one way. This is fully outlined in the Transitional Programme where Trotsky explains that:

"The strategic task of the next period -- a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organisation -- consists in overcoming the contradiction and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between the present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

It is by understanding and applying the transitional programme and method that Leninist combat parties will be built and the crisis of proletarian leadership solved. Attempts to solve this crisis in any other way will fail.

In eastern Europe, China, and Cuba, bourgeois states have been replaced by workers states without the prior construction of a mass Leninist party. This does not mean that the building of Leninist parties is no longer necessary. On the contrary, Leninist parties still

have to be built in the degenerated or deformed workers states of the USSR, Eastern Europe and China so that the political revolution can triumph. It is in this way that workers democracy and socialist norms will be established. While we do not call for political revolution in Cuba due to the nature of the Castro leadership, a Leninist party still has to be built to ensure that the revolution goes forward to establish genuine organs of proletarian democracy.

Our analysis of the role and position of the British ruling class leaves us in no doubt of the necessity to build a Leninist combat party. This class possesses the wealth of Britain and a substantial amount of investments abroad. It has a repressive state apparatus which includes a strong police force and a 200,000-strong army. Through its courts and governmental bodies reactionary legislation is passed and implemented. These are the instruments of state power which must be conquered and replaced as the central tasks of the revolution. In addition to this highly organised and powerful state apparatus, the ruling class has a near monopoly of the means of propaganda.

These three features of the ruling class -- its economic power, its state power and its ability to monopolise the communications field -- enable it to rule as it does, through a combination of concession and repression. Where the former does not bring results the latter is used. Despite the growing crisis of bourgeois leadership, the British ruling class is thoroughly organised and integrated, economically, politically, and propagandistically.

While the British ruling class has been superseded as the world's number one imperialist power, their class consciousness, cunningness and trickery, handed down from generation to generation, is second to none. No other ruling class in the world is more politically astute, sophisticated, and slippery than the British ruling class.

No unorganised, spontaneous movement of the masses, regardless how large, can succeed in confronting this power and defeating it. The present rulers have not only to be removed from their position of power, it is also necessary to replace them. The socialist revolution and its leadership has to solve both these problems. This cannot be done by an unorganised mass no matter how large. The solution requires both leadership and a programme.

History does not give us a single instance where a revolution was made without an organisation. The organisations have differed from one revolution to the other but in each case some organisation was present which provided a programme, gave leadership and won a majority to its views.

### THE LENINIST COMBAT PARTY

#### The Programme

For a successful socialist revolution to take place in Britain a special kind of organisation has to be built, a party with a revolutionary Marxist programme, a democratic centralist structure, a Leninist combat party. The key question for the Leninist party is its programme. All other factors are secondary. The programme must be based on scientific, that is real, objective considerations. It must be based on past lessons and experiences of the class struggle in order to relate to the present and point to the socialist future.

Since the world is divided into nation states, a programme based upon national considerations alone is insufficient in this epoch. Each nation is dependent fundamentally upon the totality of world conditions and no nation can exist as a closed-in entity that can determine its own fate outside of the international complexity as a whole. Therefore, our analysis must be first and foremost international in scope. Within this framework we have to formulate a programme for the coming British revolution based on a scientific and concrete analysis of the class struggle in Britain. Any attempt to cheat this fundamental requirement, to blur over the importance of programme, to try to substitute organisational gimmicks for a correct and clearly-defined programme will end up in disaster.

Superficially it may seem as if the programme is determined by the party and the individuals that make up the party. In reality it is the programme that makes the party. While there is a dialectical relationship between the party and its programme, it is the programme which attracts people. The cadre put forward the programme but it is the programme which builds the party, determines its nature, and assures its viability. In the long run the programme is decisive. Without a correct programme the party is nothing.

The existence of the material prerequisites for a planned economy on a world scale place the socialist revolution on the agenda. The problem is the limitation in political consciousness of the working class. Our activity is orientated towards actions which will help overcome the limitations in the consciousness of the working class and its allies and in the process build a mass revolutionary workers party. The guide used in outlining our tasks and perspectives is the same as our guide to all political activity. It is the method of the transitional programme.

The transitional programme is only part of the fundamental programme of the Fourth International. The full constituents of its programme are drawn from the entire experience of the revolutionary Marxist movement from the Communist Manifesto of 1848 to the latest resolutions of the world body.

At the same time the transitional programme is for us the most important and relevant part of the total teachings of our movement because it represents a method of approach and a set of proposals aimed at mobilising the masses for revolutionary action. It proceeds from the objective conditions and the existing level of consciousness of the workers and other sections of the oppressed to lead them, step by step, through the education they receive in the course of their struggles to the realisation of the necessity for the conquest of power.

#### The Transitional Method

The transitional method consists of finding openings in the class struggle, opportunities which facilitate exposing the inadequacies and failings of capitalism, showing the superiority of socialism in this respect, and advancing the mobilisation of the masses or sectors of them on the broadest possible scale. The class struggle itself thus becomes converted into a school in which the masses gain in political understanding and the cadres of the mass revolutionary party are shaped and recruited.

In this process we put forward three kinds of demands: partial or immediate demands, democratic demands, and transitional demands. We

~~put them forward not as a recipe-book but as a guide to action.~~

Partial or immediate demands are connected with the everyday struggles of the masses in defence of their conditions of life and labour; e.g., wage increases.

Democratic demands are related to the political rights of the masses. Historically, they were struggled for and partially won during the bourgeois revolution. These include such rights as the right to self-determination, the right to assemble, due process of law the right to strike, and others.

But today the bourgeoisie has not only ceased to fight for democratic rights (such as self-determination for Ireland) but more and more the rulers try to take them away. The Industrial Relations Act versus the right to strike, the AIL Trafalgar Square ban versus the right to assemble, the early morning police raids versus the right to be free from arbitrary search and seizure.

The struggle for democratic rights is a "bourgeois" struggle only in an historic sense -- it was the bourgeoisie that first raised and fought for them. Today it is only the working class and its Marxist vanguard who can be consistent defenders of and champions of all struggles for democratic rights. And it is only a workers state that can finish this historic task. Thus democratic tasks are our tasks. They must be fought for by proletarian class struggle methods and not by bourgeois reformist methods (by independent mass mobilisations rather than dependence on parliamentary reform and judicial decision).

Transitional demands indicate the solution to the economic and social needs of the working class which capitalism cannot grant. They lead towards challenging capitalist property rights and the bourgeois state. Such demands include the right to a job, the right to decent pay, housing, social security, etc. Transitional demands, such as a sliding scale of hours and a sliding scale of wages, pertain to the socialist economy of the future and are only realisable under it.

Democratic demands and transitional demands are related in two ways. The first is that capitalism has reached the point where it becomes more and more incompatible with any form of democracy. The defence and extension of democracy thus become proletarian tasks along with the advancement of transitional measures that go beyond capitalism although stemming from its present point of development.

The second and more important way in which democratic and transitional demands are related is in the method by which we defend and advance them. The method is the same in both instances -- the proletarian method of mass struggle. The heart of this method is mobilisation of the masses assembled by capitalism as the human basis of its mode of production. The transitional programme deals with the problem of organising and developing this type of struggle and carrying it forward to its final conclusion in the victory of socialism.

In a period where we can as yet lead no mass forces under our own banner, how do we move towards closing the gap between our numerical weakness and the receptivity of masses in struggle to our political ideas? By maximising our initiatives in building united actions around clear class struggle issues; by fighting organisational exclusion and by keeping such struggles independent from subordination to the needs of any reformist bureaucracies. It was what was done initially with the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and what must be done in our Irish solidarity

campaign and in the struggle for womens liberation. In practice the minds of large numbers can be opened to the value of independent struggle as opposed to class collaboration and militants can be won to the entire Trotskyist programme.

This has guided our proposals to relate to and champion the struggles of every sector of the population against the evils of capitalism. We are unable to choose the field of battle. In the class struggle, battles break out as a consequence of forces over which we have no control at the present stage of our development. The IMG as a revolutionary socialist group has no choice but to engage in these battles; otherwise, we will not grow but will wither on the vine. In fact an audacious and aggressive attitude in this respect lies at the heart of the transitional programme and the method it teaches. The audacity in the transitional approach consists in attempting to wrest these struggles out of the hands of the reformist politicians who seek to utilise them to divert the masses into safe, parliamentary channels.

This is why we explain to the workers the need to first and foremost count on this own strength as a class against the enemy class beginning with the absolute independence of their unions from the state. This is one of the central lessons of the miners' victory. Through these experiences they will test and eventually reject the misleaders of their unions and the Labour Party.

It is by using the transitional method as our fundamental guide to political activity today that we will take the next steps towards the construction of the mass workers party capable of leading the successful struggle against capitalism.

#### The Transitional Method and Our Epoch

In our epoch -- the death agony of capitalism -- the transition from capitalism to socialism -- capitalism is less and less capable of solving the problems and satisfying the needs of those it exploits without bringing into question fundamental capitalist property rights. The capitalist class, more and more often, restricts political rights that it once championed (like the right of self-determination, the right to assemble or freedom of the press) and encroach upon social and economic measures wrested from it earlier (like subsidised rents and the national health plan).

Our epoch is marked not by a stable evolutionary development of the labour movement but by rapid twists and turns and explosive changes in the forms and moods of struggle of the working class. Different sectors of the population come into struggle often in an unpredicable way making demands the rulers cannot meet. They give vent to the pent up grievances flowing from capitalist oppression, exploitation and discrimination directed against their class, language, sex, nation, generation, race or religion. We see this exemplified today in many strikes, the struggles to use the Welsh language, womens' actions, the Irish struggle, youth rebellion and students' actions, immigrant protest actions and the struggle by Catholics in Northern Ireland against religious discrimination.

All the problems created by the entire course of the rise of class society come forward and demand resolution through these various forms of the class struggle. In fact, in the period of imperialist decline, every serious struggle by the workers and the petty bourgeoisie tend to go beyond the limits of bourgeois property rights and the bourgeois state.



Without understanding and applying the transitional programme and method, we will end up just another "Trotskyist" sect, differing only in the degree of sectarianism from the RSL, SLL, IS, Workers Fight, etc.

### Organisational Principles of the Leninist Party

Next to the programme the most important question is the form of organisation of the party.

The party that must be built to lead the British socialist revolution will have to be a mass party with its forces concentrated in the major urban centres and with extensive resources for propaganda and agitation at all levels. It will have to be a thoroughly working class party, in composition and programme, with deep roots within the working class and its varied forms of political, social and cultural expression. It must be a party of workers who are leaders in their own right, who through the disciplined, centralised and coordinated action of the party will be genuine leaders of the class.

Only a self-acting and critically-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating such a party and of solving its problems by collective thought, discussion and experience. "The problem of the party is the problem of the leadership of the party" wrote Cannon. The programme is basic but even in the most favourable situations, the best of programmes cannot build a movement without the necessary cadres "which play the same decisive role in relation to the party as the party plays in relation to the class." (Cannon)

A leadership which aspires to build a Leninist combat party must be united on the basic programme of Trotskyism. If this unity does not exist, then the party is built on sand and will not accomplish its aim. The party leadership must be able to fight against the alien pressures which the movement constantly comes under. The main pressures on us in Britain come mainly from the reformists, from Social Democracy.

On the other hand, the newly-radicalised youth that are attracted towards Trotskyism, while having a healthy contempt for social democracy and its reformist twin, Stalinism, bring with them into the party alien organisational concepts and sectarian and ultra-left politics -- what Trotsky called in the Transitional Programme "the inexperience of the younger generation." If the leadership does not understand this phenomena and constantly miseducates the membership regarding the basic programme of Trotskyism and the need to remain firm to our principles, it will end up by adapting to the weaknesses of the youth radicalisation and not its strengths. If not fought against, these ultra-left and sectarian pressures will eventually turn the movement into an insignificant sect.

Leadership and centralised direction are indispensable prerequisites for sustained and disciplined action. Without a strong and firm national committee which can work effectively as a team, having the authority to act promptly and effectively in the name of the party and to supervise, coordinate and direct all its activities, the concept of a revolutionary party is meaningless. The authority which the national committee must possess cannot be artificially invoked or gained. Such authority must be earned through the ability of national committee members to give a leadership to the organisation and their seriousness and commitment to building the party.

It is from these considerations, based upon the whole of the international experiences of the working class struggle in the last century that the Leninist principle of organisation -- democratic centralism -- is derived. The same experiences have demonstrated that there are no absolute guarantees for the preservation of the principle of democratic centralism, and no rigid formula that can be set down in advance, a priori, for its application under any and all circumstances. Although democratic centralism is based on specific fundamental concepts, the problems of applying it differ under different conditions and stages of development of the struggle. Democratic centralism can only be applied effectively in relation to concrete situations, in the course of the tests and experiences through which the movement passes, and on the basis of the most fruitful and healthy inter-relationship of the leading bodies of the party and its rank and file. In countries where repression and conditions of illegality exist, democratic centralism is applied differently than in bourgeois democratic countries.

Democracy and centralism are not opposing concepts but are complimentary to one another. Only in a thoroughly democratic organisation is centralism possible and a centralised organisation is a myth without the fullest democracy.

#### Responsibilities of Leadership

The leadership of the Leninist party is not a power in and of itself. It is accountable to the rank and file and must be at all times under the control of the membership. Its policies and actions must always be open to criticism, discussion, and rectification by the rank and file within properly established forms and limits, and the leading bodies themselves subject to formal recall or alteration.

The leadership is responsible for carrying out the line of the organisation as determined at national conferences. It is responsible for directing the work of the party, decides all questions of policy in accord with the decisions of the national conference, appoints various committees as required, including the political committee, and in general constitutes between national conventions the functioning central authority of the party.

The membership of the party has the right to demand and expect the greatest responsibility from the leadership precisely because of the position the leadership occupies in the movement. The selection of comrades to the positions of leadership means the conferring of an extraordinary responsibility.

The qualifications for leadership must be proved, not once, but continually. The leadership is under obligation to set the highest example of responsibility, devotion, sacrifice and complete identification with the party itself and its daily life and action. It must display the ability to defend its policies before the membership of the party, and to defend the line of the party and the party as a whole before the working class in general.

Sustained party activity, not broken or disrupted by abrupt and disorienting changes, presupposes a continuity of tradition and a systematic development of party policy but also the continuity of leadership. The continuity of leadership is an important sign of a serious and firmly-constituted party, or a party really engaged in productive work in the class struggle. Continuity of leadership, however, does not mean the automatic self-perpetuation of leadership.

Leaders must be primarily selected on their leadership qualifications and their commitment to the party.

The revolutionary party needs a professional leadership of cadres who are sustained by the movement and can thereby be selected entirely on their record of commitment and dedication to building the movement, without regard to their individual financial circumstances. It cannot be led by amateurs, no matter how gifted, who make themselves available to the movement from time to time. Comrades with independent means, who desire to donate their time and energy to the movement can do useful and constructive work. But they cannot be a substitute for a professional leadership, selected and financed by the movement as a whole.

The leadership must be a collective leadership. That is, it must be able to encompass individuals with different backgrounds, experiences and uneven levels of development. This will involve working out a sensible division of labour and being able to work together with the minimum of friction. A collective leadership is marked by a closeness of collaboration and gains its strength not from the perfection of its individual members but from its character as a team which brings out the best qualities in each individual.

The leadership of a bolshevik organisation is not a privileged elite, responsible for all the thinking, speaking, and writing of articles while rank and file do all the mechanical, routine work. At all times the leadership must set an example for the organisation. It should not ask anything from the rank and file which it is not prepared to do itself.

The Leninist party rejects the concept of a federated structure or regional or area power centres having their own leaders who periodically work out an organisational or operational relationship with the centre or other leaders. The revolutionary party must be a centralised party having not only a common programme but also a common strategy and tasks.

#### Rights and Responsibilities of Membership

Like leadership, membership itself in the revolutionary party implies certain obligations as well as rights. The basic minimum requirements are the payment of dues, public defense of the programme and regular activity through one of the base units. Party membership confers the fullest freedom of discussion, debate, and criticism inside the ranks of the party. This freedom is limited only by such decisions and provisions as are made by the party itself or by bodies to which it assigns this function. Membership in the party confers upon each member the right of being democratically represented at all policy-making assemblies of the party (from branch to national to international conferences) and the right of the final and decisive vote in determining the programme, policies, and leadership of the party.

From this follows the need of assuring the widest possible democracy in the ranks of the organisation. Democracy must exist not only in form but also in spirit and content. A democratic atmosphere where all views are considered on their merits, not on the basis of where they came from, who put them forward, or how eloquently they are presented, is just as important as the formal rules governing membership rights.

When there are major disputes which cannot be resolved at a leadership level, the responsibility of the leadership is to set the

conditions whereby the disputed issues are presented to the membership in as clear a way as possible. The movement is not a sounding board for individuals to elaborate some "new" or "interesting" idea which they might hold. Such a practice is ideal for a university debating society, but not permissible in a Leninist party of action.

Political differences when they occur must not be exaggerated. Neither must they be covered over or swept under the rug. They must be presented to the membership in an organised, disciplined and clear manner in order that the maximum clarity can be achieved.

When tendencies or factions exist within the organisation, they must be based on a principled political platform which is known to the entire membership. Cliques, cults and unprincipled combinations are alien to the traditions of revolutionary marxism. The existence of such formations will at best result in political confusion and the disorientation of members. At worst, they will destroy the party.

Concentration on private discussions in the pubs and cafes tends to give comrades involved a one-sided view and prejudices their thinking before they have heard the open-party debate. This tends to warp their capacity for objective political judgment. Attempts to make quick decisions and to line comrades up as a substitute for democratic discussion throughout the party is contrary to the principles of democratic centralism. Only after a democratic discussion can decisions be made and a leadership elected which will have real authority.

#### TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES

After the programme and the form of organisation, the most important question which we face in building the revolutionary party is to work out what our concrete tasks should be.

The objective situation for party building in Britain has never been more favourable than it is today. New and important sectors of the population are showing their dissatisfaction with the status quo. Workers are becoming more and more critical of the Tories and their traditional working class leaders. This finds its expression in increased and more militant action on the job and on the picket lines. Thousands of students from comprehensive schools, technical and training colleges and from the universities are struggling for their rights on a scale unprecedented in British history. Women, Blacks, immigrants, oppressed minorities, gays are developing a deeper socialist consciousness. This increase in consciousness and activity shows that the so-called "peripheral" struggles do not decline when the workers struggles sharpen. On the contrary, as the current upsurge in student militancy shows, these social struggles intensify when there is an increase in trade union militancy.

What then should our concrete tasks be so that we can make maximum impact and the greatest gains? These tasks are determined by our analysis of the political situation and stem from the international and national needs of the class struggle. At the same time the strength of our forces, size, and experiences have to be taken into account so that the tasks we set are realistic.

One of the main functions of our national conferences should be to assess our successes and failures with regard to the tasks we set ourselves at the previous conference and work out the tasks for the next period.

Even with a correct programme and correct organisational concepts, it is necessary to work out realistic tasks. If we fail to do this, the consequences for the party can be as serious as an erroneous political line or incorrect organisational concepts.

Wrongly determined tasks can result in a colossal waste of time and expenditure of energies and resources in fruitless activity. Consistent mistakes of this nature can result in a small organisation like ours being shattered. On the other hand, if we choose correctly what to do -- and do it -- we can win new forces to our ranks and extend our influence in the working class and other oppressed sectors.

#### Central Political Developments Since the May, 1972, National Conference:

##### Vietnam

The Vietnamese revolution suffered a severe setback when the Western imperialists, with the open collaboration and assistance of the Stalinist bureaucrats in both Moscow and Peking, succeeded in robbing the Vietnamese of a victory which was so close at hand. From being on the verge of toppling the Thieu regime in early 1972, the North Vietnamese leaders signed accords which, amongst other things, recognised the legitimacy of Thieu's sovereignty over much of South Vietnam. They also accepted other positions which they had rejected previously as totally unacceptable.

The bureaucrats of the two largest workers states agreed not only to accede to imperialist control of most of the world but actively aided the US in its efforts to disarm those forces currently struggling against US imperialist domination in Indochina and elsewhere.

While Nixon escalated the war by pounding South and North Vietnam -- including Hanoi -- with thousands of tons of bombs, Mao and Brezhnev vied with each other to see who could practice peaceful coexistence and class collaboration more effectively. The world Stalinist movement headed by Moscow and Peking, has, therefore, committed the most vicious betrayal in its long perfidious history. The terms of the ceasefire show that despite a number of concessions made by the American government -- the most important being an end to the bombing raids -- Washington's central objective of maintaining a neo-colonialist regime in Saigon has not been defeated.

Thieu's capitalist army and police remain intact. Imperialist investment such as it is still exists. The landlords still hold title to the peasant's land. No victory is possible on a programme of coalition with the forces of capitalist reaction in Saigon. "National Reconciliation and Concord" can be achieved only by destruction of the Saigon regime, not by uniting with it or any of its possible "neutralist" successors. The Vietnamese Revolution cannot be negotiated out of existence through summit meetings between the representatives of Stalinism and imperialism. But they can result in long setbacks, as the Vietnamese militants know well from the 1946 Accords that permitted the French to return to Indochina and the 1954 Geneva Agreement that partitioned Vietnam and permitted the establishment of the Diem dictatorship in the South.

Whether the present ceasefire results in the same drastic consequences for the Vietnamese remains to be seen.

The heroic resistance of the Vietnamese liberation forces and the international anti-war movement have dealt a heavy blow at the

American ruling class' attempts to police the world for capitalism. It has created deepening economic difficulties not only for US imperialism but also for the other capitalist powers who are obliged to carry a bigger share of the military, moral and especially the economic burden involved in trying to hold back the world revolution.

Clearly the Indochinese Revolution is not won, and the US interference in the area in the form of a military presence in Thailand and offshore, plus massive military assistance to the right-wing dictatorships in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, remain a central factor in the whole situation. We see the conflict as still civil war, one which could not continue without massive US military involvement.

The defence of the Vietnamese Revolution still remains an acid test for all those who consider themselves internationalists and revolutionists.

Our propaganda must be aimed primarily at the US government; to expose their aims to crush the Indochinese Revolution; and to expose and end the complicity of the British government.

To the vanguard forces we must also explain how, why, and in what way the Stalinists in Moscow and Peking have committed a betrayal of the revolution and that while the Hanoi leadership has every right to make the concessions they consider necessary, a Trotskyist leadership would not engage in such unprincipled actions as participating in secret negotiations with Washington.

While the perspective for mass demonstrations on the question of Vietnam is not realistic right now, we should be prepared for a change in the situation. We should carry out propaganda and agitation thereby laying the groundwork for mass demonstrations as soon as there is a change in the objective situation. We should propagandise and agitate for the immediate release of the political prisoners held in Thieu's jails but the primary thrust of our work must be directed against the US government and its British allies and should be first and foremost a campaign for the US to get its military personnel and equipment out of Indochina now. We should be on the alert to find opportunities to organise broad actions around these concepts and seek to win the Indochina Solidarity Conference to this perspective.

### Ireland

Despite the presence of almost 20,000 British troops in Ireland to try to maintain imperialist rule in the six counties, the resistance of the oppressed Catholic minority has not weakened. Attempts to smash the civil rights movement and the Republican vanguard have been unsuccessful despite the harassment, imprisonment, persecution, and torture which the British troops are committing against the Republican vanguard and large layers of the entire Catholic community.

The oppressed national minority continues to fight back in order to win its most basic elementary and democratic rights such as freedom from arbitrary arrest, free speech, assembly and press. At the heart of the struggle remains the fight of an oppressed nationality for self-determination. This basic democratic right, won by most European nations during the bourgeois revolutions, continues to be denied the Irish. Only a socialist revolution can today assure this right and it is this fact which gives a revolutionary dynamic to the struggle by the masses of the Irish people.

In their fight to free Ireland from British rule, the Catholic population in the six counties have become less and less susceptible to defeat and open to even the most revolutionary methods of struggle; mass non-cooperation with the government, mass demonstrations in defiance of the state, and armed self-defence.

Despite the explosive character of the Irish struggle, there has been a downturn in the mass movement over the past months. The two main factors contributing to this are:

1) the lack of an Irish leadership which understands the combined character of the nationalist and socialist revolution and which has the perspective of mobilising mass actions around anti-imperialist and democratic demands.

2) the absence of a mass campaign in Britain demanding from Westminster the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Only a campaign having a mass action perspective around this key demand can give an impetus to those fighting British direct rule in the North and those fighting the neo-colonialist government in the South.

The struggle in Ireland is directly linked to the struggle in Britain. The repressive laws against the Irish nationalist population are made and enacted by Westminster and are, therefore, a direct threat to the democratic and civil rights of the British working class. The struggle against these laws and the building of a mass solidarity campaign in defence of the struggle of the Irish people for self-determination is an integral part of defending and extending democratic rights in Britain.

The building of a mass campaign in solidarity with the Irish struggle for self-determination is the key task before us. It must be the central axis of our work in the coming period.

The biggest contribution British revolutionaries can make to achieving the defeat of British imperialism in Ireland is a political one. We must build a mass movement capable of stopping British imperialism from operating with a free hand militarily and politically. A movement with this perspective can begin to undermine the morale of the British troops and give renewed vigour to the combativity of the Irish masses. Such a campaign must be ongoing, have a mass action perspective and make concrete demands on the British government. Our aim must be to build a movement which is able to mobilise forces of sufficient strength to have an impact on public opinion and sufficient power to force the government to change its policy -- or to bring it down.

The principled basis for all our activity as revolutionaries within the imperialist oppressor is unconditional support of the right of self-determination of the Irish people. It involves building a united front type mass action oriented coalition of all organisations and individuals prepared to work for the following demands: 1) Withdraw British Troops Now. 2) End Internment 3) Release All Political Prisoners. The key demand is Withdraw British Troops Now. This demand is the principled demand and of sufficient basis for a mass movement in defence of the Irish struggle. It concretises revolutionary defeatism into a demand that is understandable to British workers, one which they can act upon, and at the same time strikes directly at the ruling class policy.

The objective situation makes it possible for a mass campaign to be built with sufficient power to force the government to withdraw its troops from Ireland. Such a campaign would mean a gigantic step

forward for the Irish people in their struggle for self-determination and change the balance of forces in the class struggle in Britain.

Trotskyists should therefore seek to win the Anti-Internment League (AIL) to this perspective and to turn the AIL into a powerful united front, non-exclusive coalition for the Withdrawal of British Troops Now.

We must make every effort to convince the united front coalition of its responsibility to propagandise and agitate amongst the British troops on the right of the Irish people to self-determination and draw them toward the mass movement of solidarity. We must also do this work in our own name. This is the application of a revolutionary socialist policy towards the British troops in Ireland.

Failure to do these things will mean that the campaign in solidarity with the Irish struggle will be diverted into the dead ends of reformism or ultra-leftism.

We should present our full analysis of the Irish revolution in our own paper. This is a necessary principled component of our responsibility to the Irish revolutionaries and the British working class.

#### The Tory Offensive

The deepening crisis of British capitalism compels the Tories to step up their attack on the living standards of the working class. Faced with increased economic competition from the US, Japan and Germany, the Tories are seeking a solution to their problems through exploiting the protected markets of Europe (through the European Economic Community). This means an acceleration in the rationalisation of a number of British industries resulting in the least productive factories being closed down, an increase in the number of domestic and international mergers, an increase in speedups on the factory floor. The ruling class know that its solution can only succeed if it can discipline the workers to increase productivity without a corresponding increase in wages. Towards this end, ruling class policy has been to try to create a permanent army of unemployed, cut into the living standards, social services, and democratic rights won through decades of working class struggle. At the same time as inflation soars, the government is trying to impose a limit on wage increases that is unacceptable to the majority of the workers.

Through the Industrial Relations Act, the Tories hope to put the unions in a legal straightjacket thereby disciplining the workers into accepting wage increases low enough to be acceptable to the government. The ruling class also seek through the Industrial Relations Act to curb rank and file militancy, prevent solidarity actions in strikes, and to draw the union bureaucrats into further class collaboration. This policy is pursued by the Tories with the full knowledge that a confrontation with labour is inevitable. Faced with this Tory offensive, the workers have not remained passive, lacking the confidence to organise and fight back. On the contrary, they have launched massive defensive struggles often in a most militant and dynamic way.

The series of strikes and factory occupations that started with the Upper Clydeside (UCS) work-in and highlighted by the miners' victory now involves the more traditionally-conservative hospital workers, civil servants and teachers. It indicated the growing militancy and aggressive mood of the masses.



The workers of Briant Colour Printing in burning a court injunction issued against them and seizing and utilising the company's equipment and material to produce free publicity for other workers on strike shows the growing contempt that is starting to develop within layers of the working class for the concept of private property and Tory "justice." The factory occupations also show concretely that the bosses are not necessary for industry to operate. At the same time these occupations make it possible for our concepts of workers control to be explained and more easily understood.

The increase over the past year in the number of strikes, protests, demonstrations and work-ins have often been carried out by workers who have had no previous experience in the class struggle. Increasing numbers of young women have been involved and are influenced by the growing womens liberation movement.

The call by the General Council of the TUC to stage a 24-hour national strike can involve 10-million workers or more. This call is a result of the pressure put on the TUC leadership by the thousands of workers who are taking action -- both official and unofficial -- in order to keep their wage packets in line with the rising cost of living, to improve their living conditions and general welfare.

The majority of the labour bureaucrats are quite conscious that unless they take some action against the government their positions as leaders are put in jeopardy. They are forced to look for ways and means to provide a safety valve for the mounting militant pressure of the rank and file to be released. At the same time as we explain the limitations of the labour bureaucracy we must also give full support to the TUC appeal for a one-day strike. Demands must be made on the TUC leadership to carry out TUC policy and actually organise this strike. In this process we must advance and win support for demands which continue to deepen and take the struggle forward.

#### For a Left-wing in the Unions Committed to Anti-capitalist Struggles.

The Transitional Programme outlines some key demands which are pertinent in the struggles today to win jobs for all and to protect the wage packet against inflation and rising prices. These demands include the sliding scale of hours and the sliding scale of wages. We advocate the latter demand as a compliment to and not as a substitute for demands for periodic wage increases. These two demands must be at the centre of our propaganda and agitation in the labour movement. We should promote these demands in our newspaper and at our public meetings and our comrades in the trade unions should be actively promoting them. No ceiling on wage increases -- make the capitalist class not the working class pay for inflation.

In the face of threatened factory closures we must aim to win the labour and trade union movement to demand nationalisation under workers control. At the same time we should call for a crash programme of public works to guarantee jobs for all.

To defeat the Industrial Relations Act and strategy which the ruling class must try to implement in this epoch -- that of integrating the trade unions into the state apparatus, we must champion the slogans: Hands Off the Trade Unions, Repeal the IR Act; For the Independence of the Trade Unions.

It is in the process of directly fighting the ruling class for demands such as these that workers will come into conflict with their bureaucratic misleaders and begin to build a new and revolutionary leadership in the labour movement. Thus the fight for rank and file democracy is inseparable from the fight for a class struggle line.

We must explain the need for the trade unions to support the progressive struggles which are taking place as part of the deepening radicalisation. These struggles are helping to set the example of independent mass extra-parliamentary action against all forms of capitalist oppression -- full support to the campaign to get the British troops out of Ireland; to the student struggles; to the actions of the womens and Black liberation movements; against US aggression and British complicity in Indochina; against British imperialist policy in South Africa. This is the kind of approach we must adopt and develop in order to start gaining an implantation in the factories which will enable us to recruit and train working class militants as Trotskyist cadres.

The radicalisation within the labour movement is just beginning and is not as yet on a very high political basis. While there is an increasingly healthy contempt for the labour bureaucrats -- especially by the younger workers who see the Labour Party and trade union leaders as more and more part of the state apparatus responsible for their exploitation and oppression -- there are as yet few forces within the trade unions who see the need for and are equipped to build a class struggle left-wing within the unions. This is the first and next step in the transformation of the unions into revolutionary instruments of struggle by and for the working class.

### Labour Party

Without a clear understanding of the dynamics of the relationships between the trade unions, the working class, and the Labour Party, a Leninist orientation able to win the leadership of the proletariat, is impossible. We must clearly understand that the loyalty of the working class to the Labour Party represents both the strengths and gains as well as the limitations of the working class movement. The loyalty of the working class to the Labour Party represents a gain in working class consciousness, a recognition of the necessity of the workers having their own party independent of the capitalist parties. Working class loyalty to the Labour Party indicates that the workers understand that their problems cannot be solved solely at the factory or local level. At the same time, loyalty to the Labour Party is an indication that the working class has not come to the realisation that policies of class collaboration cannot answer their pressing problems. The working class will only break with policies of class collaboration and their class-collaborationist leaderships in the process of struggle for the realisation of demands which the capitalist class and its state -- regardless of government -- will not grant.

It is within this framework that our policy in the next election has to be determined. When the electoral choice is limited between the parties of capital and labour, revolutionaries have no choice but to clearly identify with Labour. Given the choice between Labour and Tory, we are for the defeat of the Tories and for a Labour victory. This means that our support for the Labour Party is unconditional but not uncritical; i.e., our call for a Labour victory is not dependent upon the leadership of the Labour Party or its programme. We call for Labour to power despite the Wilsons and Callaghans, and in spite

of the Labour Party's programme and actions. We call for Labour to power because under a Labour government the opportunities for building the Leninist party are more favourable. At the same time, we explain that the present programme of the Labour Party is bankrupt and if not changed can only lead to further attacks on the working class. To the Labour Party programme we counterpose our programme -- a revolutionary programme of class struggle.

At the same time, to struggle against the Labour Party bureaucracy we call for:

- a) the Labour government to carry out Labour Party conference decisions.
- b) the recall of any MP who fails to carry out these policies.
- c) an end to all bans and proscriptions -- freedom for organised political groupings.

We see the election period -- when there is a heightened political interest -- as an excellent opportunity to get the maximum publicity for our programme and organisational concepts. We should exploit this favourable opportunity by putting forward at least one candidate in a selective, safe, Tory constituency. This will enable us to speak to hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of people who have never yet heard of us and to make many new contacts and members.

We reject the concept that in running our own candidates we sow illusions in parliamentarianism. This is a sectarian and infantile concept. We reject the idea that we are too small and are without the resources to put forward our own candidate. Such a viewpoint is conservative. It reflects a lack of confidence in the membership's ability to meet such a challenge.

It is impossible to transform the Labour Party into a revolutionary instrument. The policy outlined here is part of the strategy necessary to win the allegiance of the workers in order to construct a mass Leninist party. It is a key component of the Leninist strategy of party building.

The problem of the Labour Party has confounded the British communist movement since its formation. Despite the fact that Lenin explained this problem half a century ago in Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder, the British Trotskyist movement has never surmounted the twin errors of ultra-left abstention on one side and opportunist adaptation to Labour reformism on the other.

While there are, at this time, no general openings for meaningful revolutionary work in constituency Labour Parties, it should be the norm for comrades working in industry to be a delegate from his or her trade union branch to the appropriate constituency Labour Party.

#### Tory Offensive Against the Students

The Tory offensive includes a basic attack on the students, many of whom over the past decades have been among the first to identify with the struggles of the oppressed and exploited. The Tory offensive involves:

- 1) an encroachment on the autonomy of students unions.

- 2) the deflation of grants (through inflation) making students at least 20% worse off than what their predecessors were in 1962.
- 3) a more severe parental means test.
- 4) grants being obtainable only at the discretion of the Local Education Authority for all those students not studying degree levels or for A level intake courses.

These attacks are not only attempts to hold back the students' resistance to the restructuring of higher education, but results from the class conscious recognition of the political role which can be played and has been played by the students in the struggle against capitalism.

In face of the severity of the Tory attacks the National Union of Students (NUS) mobilised close to 60,000 students on 21 February and called a national student strike for 14 March -- the first time such an action has been planned in this country. This is a reflection of the increased tempo of the class struggle.

The key conjunctural tasks before the radicalised students is to continue to extend the fight against the Tory offensive. At the same time the sympathy of the students for striking workers and to the Irish struggle shows that we must be alert to link up any major eruption in the class struggle with the student movement.

The NUS has become the main arena for the discussion of contending ideas and political programme for advancing student struggles and relating them to struggles in other sectors of society. We should organise a militant left-wing caucus within the NUS, projecting a programme to mobilise the students in independent mass actions to win their demands. At the same time it must organise to draw support from and extend support to other sectors of the population engaged in struggle.

A few comrades should be members of the Labour Party Young Socialists in order to assess its development and to determine whether there are fruitful openings for advancing our fundamental ideas and recruiting new forces to the Trotskyist movement.

#### For the Red University

We should explain and seek to implement the red university strategy. This means organising and mobilising large numbers of students to occupy the universities and utilise their resources to build mass actions in support of student demands and linking up students' struggles with broader manifestations of the class struggle; e.g., anti-imperialist struggles, actions in support of striking workers, etc. The correctness of and potential for this strategy is seen by: the LSE occupation in 1968 when students used the resources of the London School of Economics (LSE) to service the Vietnam demonstration; the LSE occupation in 1972 to organise demonstrations around the issue of student autonomy; and the example of the Colchester students in putting the facilities of their university at the disposal of the striking miners last year.

#### Build a Trotskyist Youth Organisation

To take full advantage of the opportunities created by the new upsurge in student struggle which has brought many new forces into action during the last period, a Trotskyist youth organisation must be built. Its main task would be to put forward demands and develop

campaigns which would deepen and broaden the youth radicalisation. Its main concentration in the next period would be towards the students. Such an organisation would be in political solidarity with the Fourth International and its British section while being organisationally independent. It would be active in struggles around specific student issues and seek to link these struggles with broader social questions through the strategy of the red university; i.e., to turn the universities into ideological and organisational centres for anti-capitalist struggles. A Trotskyist youth organisation would be in the forefront of building a mass campaign in solidarity with the Irish struggle for self-determination. It would mobilise womens liberation activists to help build a massive abortion action campaign and help to build other actions around issues related to womens oppression; e.g. family allowance campaign, anti-discrimination campaign. It would help to build and lead campaigns around anti-imperialist struggles such as Vietnam and Rhodesia and on issues related to Black liberation.

Such a youth organisation would provide radicalising youth with a basic Marxist education. It would discuss the problems confronting youth and work out what to do about them. In this way youth will be educated in our political ideas and organisational concepts, and trained how to intervene in and give leadership in all class struggle campaigns. This is the way many young cadres essential to the building of the Trotskyist party will be recruited to the section.

The deepening of the student radicalisation has coincided with major industrial struggles and many students see their struggles as part of the same fight as that being waged by striking railwaymen, hospital workers -- and directed against the same enemy -- the ruling class and its Tory government. The high rate of unemployment which more and more affects graduates drives this point home in a new way for students.

### Womens Liberation

The awareness among women of the nature and extent of their oppression as women continues to grow. More and more women have become receptive to the ideas and initiatives of women liberationists, and more and more women are seriously searching for explanations for the roots and causes of their oppression and how to eliminate it. The attendance of 1,700 women at the National Womens Liberation Conference in London is an indication of this. This phenomenon is not limited to Britain but has appeared in countries around the world.

In Britain the rising interest in womens liberation has been reflected in the new attention the mass media pays to the problems of women and even modest initiatives to struggle; the growing pressure on parliament as it debates the anti-discrimination bills before it; the family allowance campaign which has developed in response to government proposals to take family allowances away from the control of mothers through a system of tax credits to the father; the attention paid to the struggles of women and their special roles in Ireland and in industry -- the night cleaners campaign and Fakenham -- and the effect of these struggles on the consciousness of women throughout

Britain; the reaction of the ruling class to every advance made by women and the attempt to push back any victory that threatens to undermine sexist oppression such as the right to abortion and contraception.

The heart of the oppression of women lies in their special role as domestic slaves within the patriarchal family institution of class society. That is why the abortion-contraception enforced-motherhood question has evoked such a broad and enthusiastic response from women in a whole series of countries as womens liberation ferment has begun to spread. It is why the forces of reaction have also concentrated on trying to turn back even the meagre gains that have been made in this domain. A clear indication of this is the increased growth and activity of the anti-abortion forces. It is around this struggle for the right of women to choose that thousands of women -- French, German, Swiss, American, Canadian, Australian and others -- have been drawn into actions in support of demands which would fundamentally alter the lives of millions of women. In the USA the struggle around this issue -- the right to choose -- has been won. In Belgium, a 10,000-strong womens demonstration as well as the pressure from the international womens movement secured the release of Dr. Peers, a Belgian, imprisoned for having performed 300 abortions last year.

The right of a woman to decide for herself if and when to have a child is a fundamental precondition for her liberation. As long as she is denied this right she does not have control over the most basic factor determining her life. Science has made it possible for women to have this control. The denial of safe, efficient birth control and abortion are, therefore, among the most brutal aspects of womens oppression today, especially for working class women who are most often the victims of the abortion racketeers. This is becoming clear to increasing numbers of women who are beginning to demand the necessary changes.

It is around a campaign on this same basic issue that the greatest potential exists for building a mass action womens liberation movement in Britain.

Trotskyists are duty bound to support all struggles of the oppressed for their liberation. This means that we support the demands of the womens liberation movement. We must be active in the womens movement to learn from it and give it revolutionary leadership and help in developing a programme of democratic and transitional demands which will bring millions of women into struggle for their liberation.

The initial components of a transitional programme for womens liberation have emerged around several key demands including:

- 1) Free, safe abortion on demand without forced sterilisation and free, safe contraception for every woman.
- 2) 24-hour child care facilities.
- 3) Equal pay for equal work.
- 4) Equal job and educational opportunities.

The struggle for womens liberation has a revolutionary dynamic because of the nature of womens oppression and the potential for mobilising masses of women in struggle against the ruling class and its government.

Despite the tremendous potential that exists today for building an independent, mass-action-oriented womens movement, little progress in this direction has been made in the past year. This is due primarily to the absence of a revolutionary socialist leadership that understands both the oppression of women as women and the inter-relationship of the struggle for womens liberation with the fight for socialism.

While it is possible and necessary to bring women into struggle around all the demands which have already emerged in the womens liberation movement, the contraception-abortion issue has the greatest potential for a mass campaign around the demand for a woman's right to choose. We should see the National Womens Abortion and Contraception Campaign (WACC) as the key campaign of the womens liberation movement and actively involve ourselves in it.

This does not mean we would work exclusively in this campaign. We would actively support particular struggles or actions which women organise to fight their exploitation and oppression. The campaign for the Anti-Discrimination Bill and the family allowance campaign are two areas in which we should allocate some forces.

We consider that the journal, Socialist Woman, and Socialist Woman Groups to be sectarian. Where these groups still exist, they should be dissolved and their members oriented towards participating in and helping to build a mass action abortion and contraception campaign. Women members of the IMG would work in the womens liberation movement as a Trotskyist fraction, putting forward a Marxist analysis of womens oppression, and trying to win the best women activists to the British section of the Fourth International. We would publish our full analysis on womens liberation under our own name in our newspaper.

#### Oppression of National Minorities

Over the past two decades the policy of the ruling class has been to bring tens of thousands of non-white immigrants to work in the low-paid service industries. This has resulted in the growth of Black nationalist consciousness, particularly under the leadership of West Indians, and is a new and permanent factor in the current radicalisation. Events over the past year have confirmed this.

The reaction of large numbers in the Black community who demonstrated against the imperialist deal with the white racist regime of Rhodesia, police harrassment, slum housing, all express the growing sense of dignity, defiance and national consciousness within the Black communities as a whole.

Racist harrassment and persecution against the non-white population will increase as the ruling class looks for scapegoats to create divisions within the working class, to divert attention from the real causes of unemployment and inflation and the deterioration of the social services. This will increase the national consciousness of Blacks as Blacks as well as their consciousness as workers.

Tory policy to gradually arm the police represents an immediate danger to the Black and immigrant communities. If the police and other reactionary forces are successful in terrorising non-white communities, they will be emboldened to do likewise to any non-conformist, dissident grouping within society, regardless of colour or race.

The IMG must solidarise itself with the anti-racialist and Black nationalist struggles taking place. Through our paper, meetings, etc., we must explain the oppression of Blacks as Blacks, the character of their struggle as an independent form of the class struggle, the explosive character this gives to their struggles as workers, and the vanguard roles their struggles play in the fight against reaction.

An important educational task we have is to make available to as many black militants as possible the Marxist analysis of Black nationalism, made by the SWP. The writings of Leon Trotsky, George Breitman and Malcolm X especially would help fill an important vacuum in the understanding that exists on the British left. They would help lay the groundwork for the basic analysis we must make of the complicated racial-national class struggles of the immigrant and British born Black population.

We must defend the right of the oppressed Blacks to organise along whatever lines they think necessary just as we must give full support to their struggles for emancipation and liberation, however limited these struggles might be.

Where possible we must involve ourselves in and help build defence organisations for victimised Blacks (for example, Davis, Soledad, the Mangrove trial) and find out more about the existing defence committees and militant organisations of the Black community.

A number of comrades should be active members of the Anti-Apartheid movement to assess what possibilities exist for meaningful revolutionary work in this arena.

In addition we must begin to intervene in the campaigns against the racist governments of Rhodesia and South Africa and the complicity of the British ruling class in maintaining them. In the process we will learn from the experiences of the nationalist struggles and win valuable Black militants to Trotskyism.

Westminster's nationalist chauvinist policy of restricting the use of the Welsh language has resulted in a rise in opposition led by militant Welsh nationalist youth. This is a further indication of the incapacity of capitalism in its decline to satisfy the growing demands of every oppressed sector and layer of the population; as new reservoirs of potentially anti-capitalist forces are brought forward by these progressive struggles.

#### Defence Work

As the class struggle intensifies the numbers of militants victimised by the ruling class will increase. It is very important that the boss, the army, the university administration and the government learn that they cannot victimise militants with impunity. It is necessary for us to build defence campaigns and committees to carry out this responsibility.

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The complete default of Stalinism and Social Democracy has left it to the Trotskyists to continue the rich tradition of the Bolsheviks and the Third International in defence of class war victims. A serious study of the historic lessons of defence activity and their systematic application to the defence cases of today is an essential part of leadership in the class struggle.



Many theoretical and practical lessons have been learned from previous experiences. Among the most important are the following. It is crippling and self-defeating for defence activity to be conducted along sectarian lines or in an exclusive manner. Appeals for support should be based on general civil liberties grounds -- not on the agreement with the specific views (real or alleged) of the defendant. The issues at stake affect the rights of others and we must get support from those willing to help regardless of their views on other subjects. Defence committees should be prepared to work with and collaborate with other groups which have similar purposes in defending legal and human rights.

It is essential to the homogeneity and self-confidence of every revolutionary organisation that its cadres know they will be defended if victimised while carrying out party tasks. It is an indication to the working class of the seriousness of such a party.

We have the responsibility to defend along with Trotskyists around the world the comrades who have been victimised by the reactionary oligarchies in Latin America.

The reactionary refusal, because of his political ideas, of a university post in Berlin for Ernest Mandel and his subsequent ban from entering Germany is an attack on the entire academic community and working class movement of Europe. The Fourth International has a special responsibility in fighting for the broadest support in answer to the growing encroachment by the European bourgeoisie on Ernest Mandel's elementary democratic rights. In Britain especially, there are excellent opportunities to mobilise extensive support in the academic and student milieus, in the British left and in some sectors of the labour movement. British Trotskyists must be in the forefront in campaigning to rally this support in defence of Mandel's democratic rights.

#### Weekly Paper and Intercontinental Press

A weekly paper, the essential political organiser of any serious Marxist organisation, is now possible given our resources and size. It must explain and promote the political line and organisational tasks as outlined in this resolution and the basic Tendency documents.

At the same time, we must write for and increase the circulation of Intercontinental Press -- the English language weekly journal which reflects the viewpoint of the Fourth International.

This will mean the views of the Fourth International will be more widely known and help our membership and periphery to gain a better understanding of world politics, thereby cutting across the insular concepts prevalent in the British left.

#### Summary

Our central responsibility in the coming period is the development of a mass campaign in defence of the Irish people to self-determination.

We must restructure a framework to carry out mobilisations in defence of the Vietnamese revolution.

Given the objective openings and the size of our forces, major efforts must be made in our student work and in the development of a mass action abortion-contraception campaign as the central focus

of our work in the womens liberation movement.

We have few forces in the labour movement but the receptivity to our ideas is increasing and the opportunity to attract a small but important number of militants to us is the greatest it has ever been in the history of the IMG. We should take advantage of every opening we have in the labour movement to put forward our fundamental political programme around which a class struggle left-wing will be built.

These campaign priorities can be carried out at the current stage of the IMG's development only if we abolish the cell system as it has been developed and reorganise on the basis of large branch-type units which can educate and develop politically rounded cadres capable of leading this work.

It is only by remaining firm to Trotskyism, by applying the method of the transitional programme, developing a democratic centralist structure and carrying out the tasks outlined that we will be able to narrow the gap from what we are today -- a small nuclei of the revolutionary party -- to what we must become -- a mass party of revolutionary action.