

Bob Pennington

**FOR A  
REVOLUTIONARY  
PARTY**

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# FAILURE OF THE LABOUR LEFT

IN THE late 1950s, when the famous economist, J.K. Galbraith wrote his book **The Affluent Society**, and when in 1959, Harold MacMillan, the Tory leader, skated through the General Election on the slogan: 'You have never had it so good', capitalism seemed assured of a boundless and unlimited future. Even by the 1964 Election, the Labour Party leaders were arguing how to deal with pollution, when every family had two cars, and where to get the extra power, when every family had two coloured TV sets.

These idyllic dreams have turned into nightmares. The dole queues get longer, purchasing power steadily falls behind inflation, the welfare state is being ripped apart and the ugly menace of racism stalks the streets. In the most informed, and influential circles of capitalism no one seriously believes that the crisis is some minor hiccup on the road back to the post-war eldorado. What is more, the capitalist politicians and their advisors, are as bankrupt at finding solutions to the crisis as the system which they serve.

Shortly after Dennis Healey became Chancellor of the Exchequer, he called together seven of Britain's best known economists to get their advice on how to deal with inflation. Within minutes they were bitterly squabbling with each other. The highlight of the session came when one of these 'learned' gentlemen said he did not know 'whether the Chancellor should take £1000 million spending power out of the economy or pump £1000 million back in.' (**Observer** 22 Sept. 1974).

The inability to deal with the prairie fire of inflation is not confined to Britain. When the heads of the major capitalist countries met in Bonn in July 1978 to discuss the world economy, a journalist in the **Financial Times** cuttingly described it as a 'summit of ignoramuses'. By the end of the month the epithets of the **Financial Times** were being justified, when the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development reported that the world is heading for a 'growth recession' and 'higher unemployment'.

The hopes of the Bonn summit for a return to stability have no more chance of success than the prediction made at the London summit meeting in 1977 of 'an acceleration in world growth', which was immediately followed by a world slowdown! As Laurence Krause, a leading member of the influential Brookings Institute says: 'Pessimism concerning economic prospects pervades Europe'.

## STAGNATING

The truth is that capitalist Britain is a stagnating part of a declining capitalist world economy. Between taking office in 1974, up to the autumn of 1978, the Labour government introduced 10 budgets or economic packages. Not one of them improved the situation and most of them made it worse. Its income policies caused a drop in real wages of 7½ per cent from the high point of 1974. In four years unemployment doubled. In the same few years it made cuts in social expenditure of £8,000 million. According to Montague Loebel, prices will climb by 11 per cent in the first half of 1979 and that is the period of the projected 5 per cent pay norm.

The figures shown by Dennis Healey to the House of Commons Expenditure Committee showed that the Treasury expects an increase in unemployment of 200,000 by March 1979. The less optimistic **Financial Times** gloomily headlined its 31 December issue: 'Finding jobs will be a big problem for the next 25 years.' The **Economist** — the journal of informed capitalist opinion — forecasts between five and seven million unemployed by the 1990s.

The capitalist crisis is not just limited to falling living standards, unemployment and cuts in social welfare. The crisis travels like a virus through the whole blood stream of capitalist society. The shortage of jobs, homes, schools and hospitals creates despair and confusion. It is on this despair and confusion that the fascists and racists of the National Front thrive, using black people as a scapegoat just as their predecessors used Jewish people in Nazi Germany.

The need to peg down wages and shackle the trade unions to policies of cuts and unemployment leads to attacks on basic democratic rights. The rights of trade unions to free collective bargaining have been taken away by three rounds of incomes policy. The right of trade union membership — which people assumed had been won by the Employment Protection Act — was filched by the House of Lords decision on Grunwicks. Picketing rights have come under constant attacks, the most notorious case being the frame-up of the Shrewsbury building workers. The police attacked the Grunwick picket lines with incredible savagery earning the praise of the National Front, the Tories and the Labour government.

The Labour government openly reneged on its promise to repeal even those sections of the Official Secrets Act which most openly attacked free speech. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir David McNee, has openly called for the right to imprison people without trial and for the legalisation of what he euphemistically calls 'necessary force'. If granted, this would give the British police greater power than any other police force in West Europe.

The limited rights won by women over the last few years are now the subject of attack. The still far too restrictive Abortion Act of 1967 has been challenged by the Benyon and White bills. Government actions have already restricted abortion rights in certain categories and the run down of the NHS has deprived many more women of the right in practice. Only 50 per cent of the abortions performed can be done through the health service. The other 50 per cent have to be done privately and have to be paid for.

## **NO EQUALITY**

The much lauded Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts have not brought women equality. Since the introduction of the Equal Pay Act the gap between the earnings of women workers and male workers has increased. In 1974-75 women manual workers in the NHS got 88.6 per cent of the average male wage. By the end of 1978 this figure had dropped to 83.5 per cent. All told, women's wages are still only 60 per cent of those earned by men. Despite this growing gap the 'impartial' tribunals of the Equal Pay Act have rejected 67 per cent of the cases brought before them. Of 290 cases brought under the Sex Discrimination Act a miserable 44 have been acted on. The right of women to work got a slap in the face when the Labour Government reduced the number of nursery places available shortly after taking office.

In international affairs the record is equally sordid. Both Labour and Tory Governments, have steadfastly maintained all trade and diplomatic links with the racist regime in South Africa, and Labour has adamantly refused to give political and material support to the forces really fighting for liberation in Zimbabwe ('Rhodesia'). In fact the Labour leaders sabotaged the struggles of the liberation fighters, as revealed by the scandal of the oil companies and their sanction busting. This was done with the knowledge of the then Prime Minister Harold Wilson, and leading members of his Cabinet such as James Callaghan and Dennis Healey.

The Amnesty International Report confirms that both the Tory and Labour governments have allowed the use of widescale and routine torture against Republican prisoners in Ireland.

As the economic base of capitalism erodes, the politics of 'consent' and 'persuasion' more and more become a costly hinderance to the ruling class. The need for harder and tougher measures became more pressing. The Institute of Economic Affairs, a body which carries considerable weight in right-wing Tory circles, blamed the failure of previous incomes policies on the fact that they were '...not enforced by increasingly authoritarian controls and sanctions.'

Former Tory Cabinet Minister, Geoffrey Rippon, responding to

this type of advice, said that a Conservative government 'must provide for an adequate level of army reserves, for the strengthening of the Territorials, strengthen the police and create a Citizens Voluntary Reserve for home defence and duties in aid of civil power.' Brigadier Frank Kitson, the ex-head of infantry training in the British Army, in his book **Low Intensity Operations** calls for specialist individuals and units within the army to enable essential services to be maintained in the event of civilians being unable or unwilling to maintain them.

Even as far back as 1970 the former Tory Prime Minister, Edward Heath, was telling the United Nations: 'In the 1970s civil war, not war between nations, will be the main danger we face.'

Of course we do not stand on the brink of civil war in Britain right now. Nor will democracy be abolished within the next few months. What is certain is that things will get worse. The forecasts of two economists, Cairncross and Macrae, in their widely read book, **The Second Great Crash** — that the choice is either 'uncontrollable inflation' and, or, 'unfathomable slump...' — do not go unheeded.

The more far-sighted capitalist politicians can see the writing on the wall. They realise that if capitalism is to continue it has to break the resistance of the workers' movement, impose wage cuts, dismantle whole sections of the welfare state and make a thoroughgoing attack on democratic rights. If it fails to do this then its rate of profit will continue to decline because as Sir Keith Joseph says: 'it is bleeding to death from loss of profits'.

The ideas being put forward now by the more outspoken members of the ruling class and their 'experts' like Kitson are the realities of the class struggle tomorrow.

The ruling class are under no illusions about the seriousness of the crisis. They constantly talk about how to deal with the situation and are making plans for the big class battles that they see looming ahead. Like all previous Labour administrations, the Callaghan government has willingly complied with the needs of the capitalists and has made its first priority the protection of British capitalism. To do this it has imposed massive unemployment, cut real wages, slashed social services, attacked democratic rights, maintained racist immigration controls and plans even more vicious legislation against black and Asian people. It has pursued its bloody war in Ireland and allied itself with the imperialist powers against the peoples of the third-world fighting for their liberation.

These sell-outs of the Labour leaders did not, of course, come as a surprise to the majority of militants, who were well aware of the records of people like Wilson, Callaghan and Healey. What has surprised many militants however, has been the total and ignominious collapse of the reformist Labour left and their failure to

seriously challenge the right-wing leaders.

The left did not disguise the fact Labour would face a severe economic crisis when it took office. At the 1973 Party Conference Tony Benn warned 'The crisis we inherit when we come to power will be the occasion for fundamental change and not the excuse for postponing it.' The left-dominated Labour Party Executive, in the 1974 **Labour's Programme for Britain** promised 'a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families.'

Left MPs and left trade union leaders like Jones and Scanlon all extolled the virtues of **Labour's Programme for Britain** and insisted on the need for radical change.

## THE TEST

The steadily worsening crisis of British capitalism soon put these brave words to the test.

Against a background of rocketing inflation and shrinking world markets the demands of big business and the City backed by the media for wage control and spending cuts took on an ever more insistent clamour. As the Wilson Cabinet began to discuss such a policy the Tribune group MPs apparently sounded the alarm bell.

In a policy statement that took up almost three pages of its 27 June 1975 issue they stated: 'Unfortunately there are signes that the government believes that, somehow, short-term capitalist remedies — large scale unemployment and cuts in living standards, including savage public expenditure cuts — are consistent with long-term socialist planning. They are not, and we will not support them.' On Incomes Policy they were equally outspoken saying: 'For our own part we would reject a return to statutory wage control **and would not support other similar and scarcely distinguishable schemes.**'

Meanwhile Dennis Healey, Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer was not impressed by their verbal protests. At the Cabinet Meeting which met to discuss the crisis he bluntly presented two 'alternatives'. He told the Cabinet they could either accept a voluntary incomes policy or he would introduce legislation.

**Tribune** cast hopeful eyes in the direction of the trade union left and wrote on 4 July 1975: 'All the evidence is that the leadership of the trade unions will not bend the knee.'

Perhaps **Tribune** had forgotten that in the February on 1974, Jack Jones had said in a TV interview: 'We need an incomes policy.' Maybe it had also forgotten that in April 1974 Hugh Scanlon had persuaded the AUEW national committee to call off the overtime ban which had been introduced to win the engineers' pay claim.

The **Financial Times** knew its left leaders better than **Tribune** when in its 29 April 1974 edition it commented: 'Mr Scanlon is more



closely identified with the social contract than was the case before.' At the September TUC in the same year Scanlon had persuaded Communist Party member Ken Gill from TASS to withdraw a resolution opposing the Social Contract.

These left leaders had not only bent the knee they were getting down on all fours! They gave ample proof of this when they played the leading role in ramming the £6 pay limit through inside the trade unions.



**Scanlon-speaking, with Jones in the chair, the 'left' architects of the Social Contract.**

By the 1975 Labour Party conference the left were visibly wilting. Tony Benn said '...the crucial question was what the movement and the government would do with the time that had been bought when the trade union movement accepted the £6 limit.' He then went on to pay tribute to the trade union movement...' for its restraint.' Michael Foot, hailed as the left's guarantee against betrayal in the Labour government, claimed that: 'For anyone to argue there will be no concession to a Labour government on these matters (incomes policy)... is providing a recipe, not merely for the destruction of this Labour government, but of any Labour government.'

The brave words about 'fundamental change' and not supporting cuts in public expenditure or pay controls, were nothing more than empty rhetoric. Ironically it was Hugh MacPherson, *Tribune's* parliamentary columnist who best summed up the whole sorry story when writing in its 11 July 1975 issue he said: 'Westminster politicians are not alarmed by the Labour left. They have watched Harold Wilson pick them off one by one, either by sacking, or resignation, or side movements — Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Norman

Buchan, Judith Hart, Michael Meacher — and faced no concerted action in return.

'Other left-wingers... such as Stanley Orme, Joan Lestor and Bob Hughes find themselves in jobs which keep them quiet but are comparatively uninfluential... no matter what ritual noises may be made when Westminster politicians are interviewed, the professional view of politicians at the moment is that the Tribune group is a collection of paper tigers.'

The failure to stand out against the interests of the ruling class over Incomes Policy and public spending cuts was a foretaste of what was to come. With the exception of the firefighters strike, until the autumn of 1978, the struggles against wage freeze had been restricted to relatively small groups of workers. Throughout this entire period, the Labour left and its allies in the trade union leadership either went along with Government policy or remained impotently on the sidelines. They restricted their opposition to calls on the Government to change course. The lessons of the miner's strikes of 1972 and '74, and the defeat of the Tories Industrial Relations Act in the summer of 1972 were ignored, or looked upon as 'exceptional measures' only to be used against a Tory Government. By late 1978 millions of working people had had enough of wage freezes and the seething discontent amongst rank-and-file trade unionists began to break free from the shackles that the trade union bureaucracy had imposed on its membership on behalf of the Government. The Fords strike drove a wedge right through the 5 per cent norm and encouraged other workers to take the path of direct action. This was followed by the lorry drivers dispute and the revolt of over 1¼ million workers in the lowly paid public sector. The union bureaucracy did everything they could to straddle this conflict. With one eye fixed on their membership they put themselves forward as the champions of a better pay deal.

As the strikes gained momentum, however, and the more militant workers began to take things into their their own hands through widespread secondary picketing and withdrawal of emergency services — or by deciding what was an emergency — their fear at losing control over the rank and file grew. They refused to call an all-out stoppage and in sections like the health service they did nothing to bring forward the nurses or technical staffs pay claims, thereby leaving the ancillary workers to fight alone. The TUC meanwhile scurried around Downing Street, hoping to patch up a new deal which would make wage restraint more palatable to the workforce. The left Labour MPs made sympathetic noises but kept in the background. They did nothing on a nationally coordinated scale to win support for the fight against wage restraint — despite the fact that the 1978 Labour Party Conference had overwhelmingly kicked out the 5 per cent norm. With a General Election looming on the

horizon, the left MPs were terrified about embarrassing the Labour Government and frightened to take independent action in support of the striking workers in case they upset the trade union leaders.

## INCAPABLE

The reformist left showed it was incapable of challenging the right-wing Labour leaders. It dare not mobilise the mass action that is needed to defeat pay norms, closures and cuts in the public services, because to do so would bring it into conflict with the decisions of parliament and involve a head-on fight with the law.

This is why at the height of the public sector dispute the 'left' NUPE General Secretary, Alan Fisher and Communist Party member Ken Gill, did not vote against the Concordat between the TUC and the Government, which is nothing more than wage restraint wrapped up in different clothes.

The Concordat however contains more than proposals on wage restraint. There is a suggestion that firm 'voluntary' limits should be placed on strike action and a proposal that union officials, and not the workers on strike, will have the right to decide where pickets can be placed. The trade union bureaucrats see the latter proposal as a means of both keeping their own members under control and as a safeguard against a collision between the unions and the capitalist law.

The lefts' commitment to Parliament and their acceptance of capitalist law will always drive them back into policies of class collaboration. They dare not take the fight into the unions against the

The lefts' commitment to parliament and their acceptance of capitalist law will always drive them back into policies of class collaboration. They dare not take the fight into the unions against the right wing leaders and they dare not launch a serious challenge to Callaghan and company. To do that means taking the struggle out of the corridors of Westminster and into the workplace and the streets. Because they see change being achieved through Parliament their 'alternative programme' is based on collaboration with capitalism. This is why they call for measures like import controls, which is nothing more than a means of protecting the more vulnerable sections of British capitalism from overseas competition. It is also why they wind up looking for a 'new' and 'more fair' means of wage control.

In the past, people disillusioned with the Labour left have looked to the Communist Party to provide an alternative. Even though many people disagreed with the policies of the Soviet leaders, and were suspicious of the Communist Party's links with the Soviet Government, they could see that its members were often active in workers' struggles. Communist Party members played an active part

in the fight against Labour's strike-breaking **In Place of Strife** in 1969. They played a leading role in the fight against the Industrial Relations Act and in organising the strikes that got the Pentonville 5 out of jail.

Since the Labour government was elected, the Communist Party has played a very different role. It has failed to use its influence, particularly amongst industrial militants to organise any fight back. It has been reduced to doing nothing more than putting pressure on the reformist left — a policy which has been ineffective. However, the Communist Party has no alternative.

Its strategy for socialism in Britain — like that of the Labour left — is based on the supremacy of the parliamentary road, and on the idea that this will be achieved by building a broadly based alliance of the so-called progressive forces in society. The very cornerstone of this policy is the attempt to create an alliance between itself and the left reformists. To openly challenge the left reformists would blow such a strategy sky high.

The Communist Party has therefore refused to organise action and solidarity strikes in support of workers fighting government policy. To do so would lead to a showdown with the 'left' trade union leaders. Thus, when Scanlon called for an end to the Leyland toolmakers' strike in Spring 1977, the Communist Party obediently fell into line and urged the men to return to work.

Desperately struggling to swim in the broadstream of the 'progressive forces', it refuses to call for the complete withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland. Trying hard not to alienate the Labour left, it even calls for 'socialist immigration controls', thereby strengthening the hand of those people who claim black and Asian people are responsible for job shortages and cuts in the welfare state.

The CPs demand for import controls — as with its erstwhile allies in **Tribune** — is nothing more than a plea for the protection of British capitalism.

No wonder that the Communist Party is losing members and the circulation of its daily paper, the **Morning Star**, is dwindling.

Even though the crisis is still in its early stages — far worse is yet to come — the pitiful inadequacies of the traditional leaderships of the labour movement are already being ruthlessly exposed. The left reformists, and the Communist Party, offer the dead-end of the parliamentary road. Both are overawed by the power of the ruling class. Their programmes are based on the theme of class collaboration, rather than on the independent struggles of the working class and its allies. Their failure to fight now is a sure sign of their inevitable capitulation in the even bigger class confrontations that must inevitably come.

# A UNITED DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

The present situation therefore throws a heavy burden on the organisations of the far-left. They are confronted with an enormous responsibility and a tremendous opportunity to build a serious, viable revolutionary movement. If they fail to meet this test, the fight for the socialist revolution will be put back for decades and the working class will be forced to pay the full price of the capitalist crisis.

However, revolutionary socialists are today in a far more favourable position than they have ever been since the victory of the Stalinists in the Comintern — which ensured the degeneration of the British Communist Party and resulted in the near-total isolation of the revolutionary marxists. In 1953 it is doubtful if there were more than 200 people in Britain who were members of organised far-left groups. Today, there are some 8,000 people who are members of one or another of the far-left organisations.

More important than numbers is that these organisations are playing a growing role in influencing the struggles of the working class and its allies.

In the fight against racism it is the far-left that has been to the fore. The Anti-Nazi League — in which the Socialist Workers Party has played the decisive role — has won support far beyond revolutionary socialists and has united working class militants and youth in a broad campaign against the fascists.

The revolutionary left has also played an important role in the struggle of women against their oppression. In the women's liberation movement (which is not of course controlled by the far-left, and nor should it be so) revolutionary marxists have gained a wide audience for their ideas.

Inside the National Union of Students, the number of delegates to their conference supporting the far-left, is always high than that for the Conservatives and comes second only to the Labour-Communist Party alliance of the Broad Left. In local struggles against cuts in education, closures of hospitals, industrial disputes etc., it has more and more over the last few years played a leading role.

Without doubt it has been the revolutionary socialists who have done most in the British labour movement to campaign for Irish self-determination and for the withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland. Another indication of the growing support for the ideas of

the far left has been the votes its candidates have got recently in union elections.

In the April 1977 elections for the T&GWU General Secretary's position, Tommy Riley of the SWP and Alan Thornett of the Workers Socialist League got 27,500 and 11,500 votes respectively. In the November 1977 elections for the AUEW Presidency, Alan Wilkins of the Workers Revolutionary Party polled 12,000 votes and Ian Morris of the SWP got 10,000. At the June 1978 Conference of the POEU, Dave Ward, a **Socialist Challenge** supporter received 43,000 votes in the elections for the union executive.

In unions like the NUT and CPSA, far-left candidates have been elected to the union executives — although a dubious legal decision deprived the CPSA far-left of its democratic gains. In the 1978 Council elections, Socialist Unity polled more votes than the Communist Party in every ward except two where both groups stood. The growth, size and influence of the far-left arises out of the international crisis of capitalism and has been given added impetus by the victory of the Cuban revolution, the successful liberation struggles in Vietnam and Africa, the May General Strike of 1968 in France and the overthrow of the Shah's regime in Iran. The earlier events were followed by an upsurge of student struggles in Britain then by an explosion of trade union struggles and the rise of the autonomous women's movement. At the same time the revolutionary struggle flared across the African continent and the fascist regimes in Portugal and Spain crumbled.

The bankruptcy of the Labour Government, accompanied by the paralysis of the reformist left and the Communist Party, has also made many militants look towards the far-left for solutions and a way forward. Of course these forces are still tiny in relation to the Labour Party. There is no prospect today, or in the near future, of revolutionaries appearing to the masses as the alternative to Labour.

What does exist — providing revolutionaries seize the opportunity — is the chance to build a serious organisation in the working class which is both much larger than any of the existing organisations, and has the support not just of tens of thousands of people, but of hundreds of thousands.

### **CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE**

This has to be done as a vital step on the way towards the constructing of a revolutionary party than can break the hold of reformism over the mass of the working class. If it is not done, then no matter how big the crisis, no matter how much the reformists betray, the chance to win the working class to revolutionary ideas will have been wasted. A revolutionary movement in Britain armed with correct policies and organised democratically, could in the next few years be the credible alternative to the Communist Party for

workers who are rejecting the policies of the Labour leadership.

Despite its growth in influence and size, the revolutionary left still remains split and its failure to seriously fight for a united organisation is an obstacle to recruiting many militants who agree with its ideas in general. Furthermore the past practices of some of the far-left organisations, such as their sectarian, if not downright hostile, approach to the autonomous women's movement, and their opposition to autonomous black movements, has made lots of oppressed people very wary of the ideas of revolutionary marxism.

Certain far-left groups have also made a practice of expelling people in their ranks who have disagreed with the line of the majority of the organisation. These undemocratic practices have tended to tar all the revolutionary left with the same brush and have made militants suspicious of the revolutionary left as a whole.

The fight to build a serious revolutionary movement is above all else a fight to develop a programme that can meet the needs and interests of the working class and its allies. Such a programme can never be developed unless the party is unwavering in its opposition to capitalism and stands for the conquest of power by the working class, and is also based on the fullest internal democracy.

A serious revolutionary party can not be like one of the sects writ large. The idea that it can obtain complete unanimity on tactics, or that it will share some monolithic view of theory and history, is pure fantasy. It will be a party of debate and controversy, because it will constantly have to face new problems and assimilate new experiences.

There is not tucked away in the headquarters of some far-left group a recipe for the successful overthrow of British capitalism. Nor is there some genius, labouring away in a public library who is going to come along and provide us with all the answers. Even the greatest of the revolutionary leaders like Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg were wrong on many questions. Their virtue is that they were wrong on fewer things than other people, and that they were always willing to correct and learn from their mistakes.

The Bolsheviks had continual differences in their ranks and would have had even more if Trotsky had done the right thing and joined them before 1917. At the same time the Bolsheviks openly debated these differences. At the height of a civil war, when the new Soviet Government was faced with the life or death question of whether or not to sign a peace treaty with Germany, the Bolsheviks engaged in an open debate on this crucial matter.

Every single one of Lenin's major works and polemics is either a book or a pamphlet. None of them are internal bulletins! In the early days of the Communist International its journals were crammed with polemics and discussions on the major events of the time.

Trotsky's pamphlet, **The New Course**, which was the centre of a fierce debate on the way forward for the Soviet economy, at a time of desperate crisis for the young Soviet Republic, was serialised in the daily papers of the Russian Communist Party.

Even as late as 1927, when Stalinism was beginning to throttle the democratic life out of the Communist International, the **Platform of the Left Opposition** — Stalin's most implacable communist opponents — was officially printed. The bizarre idea, which holds sway on the British far-left, that revolutionaries should confine their discussions and debates strictly inside the revolutionary party, conflicts with all the previous history of authentically revolutionary organisations. How would it be possible to organise an internal discussion in a party of 20,000 members, let alone one of some hundreds of thousands?

Neither does a serious revolutionary party see the debates on the great issues of the time as being solely for the education of its own members. It should aim to involve its sympathisers and supporters in these debates and raise the level of their political awareness.

## DEMOCRACY

Internal democracy is therefore not some luxury allowed by the leadership for a couple of months before the Party Conference. It is an absolute necessity if the party is to develop a programme and work out the strategies to fight for that programme.

The right of tendencies to circulate their ideas and to maintain those ideas even if they are in a minority at the Conference is essential. These tendencies must also be given representation in the leadership of the organisation, not just on its committees, but also the leaders of these tendencies should be brought into the day-to-day work of the party and therefore work as full-time party members.

Democracy demands that the majority decisions of the Conference are the ones that are implemented. But unity in action is not unity of thought, and the best guarantee that a minority will work to test out the decisions of the majority in practice, is the guarantee that they will have the opportunity, if experience is proving them correct, to develop further their ideas and present them to the party as a whole.

Democracy therefore not only serves the purpose of helping the party to reach more correct conclusions but it also acts as a cement to unify the party.

A democratically organised united revolutionary party would also act as a powerful antidote against the epidemic of splits and expulsions that have previously wracked the British far-left. Its internal democracy would ensure that revolutionaries who differ on many of the tactical questions, such as standing candidates in elections, whether, or how, to work inside the Labour Party, how



best to build 'A Troops out of Ireland' campaign, how to build a movement of solidarity with the peoples of Zimbabwe fighting for their liberation, what slogans to raise in a particular strike etc., would have the fullest rights to raise these issues.

As long as they were guaranteed the right to fight for their positions, and were still able to make a contribution to the overall work of the party, serious revolutionaries would be very reluctant to split away to join one or other of the sects that would then be left littering the political sidelines.

# WHAT POLITICS?

A decisive task that revolutionaries face today is that of building oppositions inside the trade unions. The trade union bureaucrats have been the most willing servants of the plans of the employers and the Labour government. Denied the aid of the union leaders, Labour's plans for cuts in living standards could never have been carried through. Without winning millions of workers in the trade unions all talk of socialist revolution is pure fantasy.

There are 11½ million trade unionists in Britain and any major struggle that can change the course of political events — like the miners' strikes of 1972 and '74 — involves many thousands of workers taking action. To win whole sections of the trade unions from the politics of class collaboration means winning the support of millions. It is therefore absurd and idiotic to think that even hundreds of thousands of workers will follow organisations comprising a few thousand people committed to revolutionary socialism.

There are in the trade unions some thousands of militants who whilst still having illusions in reformism, nevertheless are prepared to make a serious fight on many issues. Furthermore, under the pressure of the membership, even reformist leaders are sometimes forced to take certain actions in the interest of the working class. The experiences of the big class struggles confirms this and shows that future class battles will make it happen again.

Revolutionaries must therefore fight for policies that can unite in action all those — ranging from marxists to reformists — who are prepared to resist anti-working class policies. With this tactic of the united front, in the early 1920s, the British Communist Party, then an organisation of only 5,000 members, was able to build a powerful opposition called the Minority Movement which had the support of organisations representing a quarter of all trade union members. The class struggle is not yet as advanced as it was then, and revolutionaries today still lack the kind of important trade union leaders that the Communist Party had at that time.

What is important is that the fight for the united front is the way ahead inside the mass organisations of the working class. All the really successful movements of the past few years have shown that. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament built its enormous demonstrations because of its broad based united front character.

The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign gained widespread support because it drew into activity trade unionists, students and other militants against the war in Vietnam. The Industrial Relations Act and **In Place of Strife** were defeated because a united movement was built. Today the success of the Anti-Nazi League in the fight against racism rests on the same foundations.

## **STRIKE TOGETHER**

Even though revolutionaries will carry their own slogans and distribute their own propaganda, they must always operate on the maxim that they fight for the whole movement to strike together.

Unfortunately the comrades of the SWP have not fought consistently for the united front. In practice they have operated the tactic of 'the united front from below'. The SWP tactic is based on the idea that the mass of the working class can be won directly away from the reformist leaders to 'independent' organisations like the Rank-and-File Groups. The SWP blithely ignores the inconvenient fact that for every worker who supports the SWP there are some hundreds of thousands who still support reformism.

If the mass of workers are prepared to by-pass the Labour Party and the Communist Party, then it would not be necessary to build united-front organisations — or rank-and-file groups either! Their rank-and-file groups therefore simply become the SWP members plus some individual independent workers. Of course the trade union groups of the party have to be one of the forces working inside the united front, but they have to understand the need to build independent working class action. They should conduct their own campaigns inside the united front bodies, when they want to win militants to support certain policies which revolutionaries consider are the best way forward in the struggle.

Revolutionaries will seek to recruit worker militants from their activity in the united front because they want to increase the influence of marxist ideas inside the trade unions and draw new, and richer, experiences from that field into the political life of the party.

But at all times, marxists should fight for the organisations of the united front to be organisationally independent of the party. Their funds must be under the control of the workers involved. Their leaders must be elected by the workers and accountable to them. Their journals and publications must be under the workers' control and they must be open to all members of the union who support their aims.

Inside the united front, members of the revolutionary party must work and collaborate with other revolutionaries and militants, who are members of the union and who are prepared to build the united front and they must defend their rights to participate fully in the activities of the united front. If this is not done then these

organisations will become nothing more than fronts for one party or another, which is what has happened with some of the Rank-and-File bodies which deliberately excluded members of other far-left organisations. This can only lead to the discrediting of the united front organisation and to eventual bureaucratisation or collapse.

Neither the struggle for socialism, nor the tactic of the united front, can be confined to simply economic demands. The fight against the oppression of women, of freely-defined sexuality, of youth, of racial minorities and in support of the world-wide anti-imperialist movement, demands the unequivocal support of revolutionaries and the building of the widest possible support for the struggles of the oppressed groups.

To defeat the ruling class the working class has to lead the struggles of all the oppressed groups in society. The socialist revolution is as Lenin said, 'a festival of the oppressed.'

In order that movements like Women's Liberation develop to their full capacity and attract vast numbers of women they must remain autonomous and can not be an adjunct of the party. If this happens, women who join them on the basis of agreeing on the need for a common struggle for their liberation would immediately leave. For every woman in the WLM, who is a member of a revolutionary organisation there are thousands more who do not accept revolutionary politics.

The task of revolutionaries is to build such movements, because they are an essential step on the road to the liberation of humanity. Revolutionaries should encourage the anti-capitalist dynamic that is inherent in the struggle for women's liberation and attempt to develop the influence of marxist ideas amongst women activists.

Some groups on the far-left have denounced the WLM and the autonomous movement of racial minorities, gay people, and others, as diversions from the alleged real struggle. In fact the reverse is true. Marx's dictum 'that no nation can ever be free whilst it oppresses another' applies with equal truth to the fact that the working class can never achieve its freedom if it participates in the oppression of women and minority groups.

The strategy of the united front comes out of the need to bring into united action the greatest possible number of people from the workers' movement in a common, independent-class struggle movement against the capitalists. In the united front, as in all the organisations of the working class and the oppressed groups, revolutionaries must put forward policies which bridge the gap between the daily struggle and the programme of socialist revolution.

If this is not done then there are only two alternatives. Either the struggle is confined to acceptance of the reforms that capitalism can grant, or is reduced to nothing more than making propaganda about



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the virtues of socialism.

The reformists divide their programme into two tightly sealed compartments. When in government, or leading the trade unions, they start from the idea that workers should not demand more than the capitalist economy and state can afford. This is why Michael Foot told the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool on 30 September 1975, that they had to swallow wage restraint because: 'We face an economic crisis of unparalleled ferocity...' On Bank Holidays and anniversaries they swear their undying faith in socialism.

Celebrating *Tribune's* 40th anniversary Foot wrote 'that socialism means nothing if it does not mean shaking capitalist society to its very foundations.' Apparently on 30 September 1975 the exceptional crisis of British capitalism meant delaying the need to shake it to its foundations! Like all reformists, Mr Foot forgets that socialism is supposed to be about dealing with exceptional circumstances.

The sectarians passively await the working class reaching an understanding of the virtues of socialism and become irritated that the masses have not understood their explanations of the decline in the rate of profit. Unlike the reformists, who patiently await the permission of the ruling class for their own abolition, revolutionaries are not in business to reform capitalism.

## POWER

Revolutionaries begin from the need to develop a political programme that can aid the working class to take the power and destroy the capitalist state. In every struggle, be it around economic demands, women's rights, against racism and imperialism, or for democratic rights, the party has to fight for the adoption by the mass organisations of transitional demands which not only provide the most effective means of winning the immediate struggle, but also help the movement to go forward in an anti-capitalist direction.

These demands must be directed against capitalist power and they must also be directed against the restrictions, both political and organisational, that the reformist leaders will always try to impose on the mass struggle. In contrast to the trade union leaders who urge workers to put their faith in negotiations between themselves and the employers, or the state, revolutionaries should call for an end to all secret negotiations, for democratically elected strike committees directly accountable to all the workforce, and for a complete break with the interests of the bosses.

The winning of such demands means that the workers can control their own struggles. This demonstrates the superiority of workers' democracy and shows people that they are able to take charge of their own affairs. The self-organisation of the mass struggle is an essential pre-requisite for the victory of the socialist revolution and is the school for the future soviets or workers councils — call them what you may — which the workers have to build to replace capitalist rule with their own forms of democratic power.

The increasing use of the factory occupation and more recently, the preparedness of health workers to occupy their hospitals, does not mean that these workers are right now straining at the leash to make the revolution. It does show however, that in order to keep their jobs, or to maintain the health service, thousands of workers are prepared to take on the sacred cow of private property and are willing to defy the right of the state to decide what medical care people should have.

The extension of such struggles is essential if the overthrow of capitalism is to become a serious possibility. The reformists of course recoil in horror from such actions. The sectarians are insulted that the masses have not adopted their programme and prefer not to recognise them. Revolutionary marxists welcome these spontaneous struggles of the masses and work to develop their anti-capitalist dynamic. Against the threat of redundancies they call for work-sharing with no loss of pay and for the nationalisation — without compensation, under workers control — of all firms that say they can no longer afford to run their factories. Closures of hospitals and schools must be opposed, not

only by occupations and solidarity strikes, but the demand must be raised for extra funds to finance these services which must be increased every time prices rise.

The public sector strike showed the need for transitional politics in a vivid way. The Government's arguments for cash limits, and its insistence that no money was available for higher wages unless services and jobs were cut, could not be answered by the left leaders and confused large sections of the workers. These arguments had to be answered by demands for the freezing of all interest payments to the speculators; for the abolition of military expenditure and for the nationalisation, under the control of workers' committees, of the main sources of finance like the banks and insurance companies.

No serious fight can be taken up against racist attacks on black and Asian people that does not pose the issue of self defence. When the fascist and racist thugs roam the streets, physically attacking black people — even murdering them — it is utopian to expect the state and its police to be responsible for their protection. The reformists hold up their hands in horror wailing about violence, particularly the violence of those black people who have the audacity to defend themselves, and urge them to have faith in the racist police force which is trained to see its first duty as the defence of the present system. The revolutionary movement must therefore give unflinching support to the black community whenever it organises to defend itself against racist attacks, and raise the slogan of 'black self-defence' supported by the labour movement which is the best guarantee against physical intimidation, and the surest way of undermining people's confidence in the repressive forces of the capitalist state.

Transitional politics are not some clever trick designed to lure the working class, like a donkey following a carrot on a stick. Marxists do not see transitional demands as goals which might appear reasonable to the masses but are never ever going to be achieved, and do not expect that one day after fighting for these demands the workers will say: 'Christ, you cannot get them. I suppose now I had better overthrow the system.' Revolutionaries fight for transitional politics because they understand that the masses need a solution to the problems that they face now. At the same time they have to fight to win acceptance for policies which challenge the right of the ruling class to decide how society is organised and for a programme that changes the relationship of forces in favour of the working class.

Every inroad made by the anti-capitalist movement into the rights of the ruling class to decide things weakens their ability to rule and heightens the confidence of the masses. Of course, if the workers movement wins even in certain sectors of industry, its demand for inflation-proofed wages, or in other sectors establishes workers

control, it would place intolerable burdens on the ruling class and sharpen the class contradictions in society. Such victories would inevitably lead to a big showdown, but it would be a showdown under circumstances that would be more favourable to the masses and would provide them with better conditions for taking power.

### **BREAK WITH REFORMISM**

By taking up the political issues that confront the working class and its allies in the economic and social struggles, transitional politics makes it possible to avoid the errors of simply relying on muscle and super militancy. Transitional politics stem from the recognition 'that economic development is not an automatic process. The issue is not restricted solely to the productive foundations of society. Upon these foundations there live and work human beings.' (*The Economic Crisis and the Tasks of the Communist International*: L. Trotsky).

Great struggles over wages, against racism, around women's liberation, on their own do not automatically lead to the socialist revolution. The success of the revolution is dependent on the revolutionary party winning acceptance for its transitional programme among the masses, thus taking them beyond their present consciousness and their immediate concerns, towards a break with their reformist leaders and into open conflict with the capitalist class and its state.

The great majority of working people will never be won to the socialist revolution unless they are convinced that a socialist society will be more democratic and more free than society is today. The experience of Stalinism has left a deep impression on people and the workers are not interested in creating another Eastern Europe. The capitalists have been able to use the crimes of Stalinism to discredit socialism, and the failure of the Communist parties and even at times Socialist parties, to condemn and act against these crimes has strengthened their hand.

Until 1956, every single Communist Party denied the fact that the Stalinist regime in the USSR was imprisoning and murdering people on framed-up charges. Even now they still refer to these crimes in the mildest possible terms, by calling them 'mistakes' and 'errors'. A former secretary of the British Communist Party, John Gollan, could write that Stalin's crimes 'did not and could not change the socialist and democratic basis of Soviet society'. This, despite the fact that the Stalinists murdered several million people, deported entire nations and shot almost every single member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party that had led the revolution in 1917.



Nor have the leaders of the Labour Party got clean hands on these issues. Richard Crossman, a member of the Labour Cabinet in 1968, revealed in his diaries, that the Labour Government knew days beforehand that the Russians were going to send the tanks into Czechoslovakia to crush the Dubcek government. The Labour Ministers kept silent and never warned the Czechs.

Although the capitalist politicians of the West make hypocritical protests about the lack of democracy in the USSR — mainly as a diversion to cover up their own crimes — they have no interest in the victory of socialist democracy in Eastern Europe. A genuinely democratic socialist society in these countries would give a tremendous boost to the struggle of the socialist forces throughout the capitalist world. The fight for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe is a threat to both the Soviet bureaucracy and the Western capitalists. Both of them actively want to suppress it. The revolutionary party must defend at all times the democratic rights of the masses in the capitalist countries and without equivocation actively campaign for the democratic rights of the peoples of the USSR and Eastern Europe. Only the capitalists and the bureaucrats have an interest in suppressing democracy. Neither of them dare permit the working class and its allies, the right to decide their own destinies. If they do, then their power and their privileges would come to an end.

It will be impossible to build a socialist society unless that society is organised in the most democratic manner. The way towards the classless society lies through realising all the potentialities that human beings possess and are capable of reaching. This means that it will be necessary, and desirable to have the maximum open debate and controversy. The fight for new ideas and new innovations, and the fight to eradicate the deformities that centuries of class oppression and exploitation has imposed on humanity will inevitably mean people will form tendencies, factions and parties.

The crippling legacies of sexism and racism will not disappear overnight. It is obvious that there will be a need for a sustained period, after the socialist revolution, for autonomous women's movements black movements to have complete and free access to all the media and be provided with all the facilities they need to combat their oppression. Equally this must apply to sexual minorities and to the young as well as the aged.

Nor will workers simply discard reformist ideas — particularly in countries like Britain where social democracy has dominated the labour movement for so long. The victorious socialist revolution will not usher in a new dawn of monolithic thought, whereupon reformism will fly out of peoples' heads the moment the socialist republic is declared. Social democracy will not be defeated by a purge, but only by democratic discussion and the example in practice

that soviet democracy is far superior to capitalism and its reformist hangers on. As revolutionaries we stand for the freedom of all political parties in a socialist republic, even those that favour a restoration of capitalism. The only parties that we are in favour of banning are those that resort to terrorism and violence against the workers state and minorities in that state.

# WHY AN INTERNATIONAL

The British labour movement has had a bad record on internationalism. Labour Governments have been directly responsible for wars against the liberation movements in Malaya, Kenya, Aden and Ireland. The Labour administration of 1964-1970 refused to condemn the American intervention in Vietnam. Callaghan and his Foreign Minister David Owen hung on to the coat tails of the Shah right to the bitter end and only called off the Queen's visit in early 1979 when it became clear that the Shah's bloody regime could no longer guarantee her safety.

Owen as Foreign Minister has worked with the imperialist powers to try and get the fraudulent 'internal settlement' — which would leave real control of Zimbabwe still in the hands of the white minority — accepted. The Labour leaders have consistently and without hesitation allied themselves with imperialism against every liberation struggle. The left reformists' record is little better. They may at times have protested about the 'excesses' of imperialism and some individual left trade union leaders and MPs have on occasions allied themselves with campaigns like Troops out of Ireland and The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign etc. But left reformism has never built inside the British labour movement a consistent, organised force that can be brought into action against imperialism.

The failure to respond to the tasks of the international class struggle has had disastrous results inside the working class. Because the workers movement has not fought against the presence of British troops in Ireland and not given its support to the Irish struggle for self determination, it has allowed the ruling class to create in the Six Counties, the most reactionary political system in Western Europe. The reactionaries in the North, with their links to the National Front, and the extreme right wing of the Tory Party, have forged a sword that points at the very heart of the British working class.

Support for NATO means membership of an alliance that would allow the United States and the other imperialist powers to directly intervene in Britain in the event of a struggle for socialism.

The failure of the British working class to take up its international responsibilities has weakened the struggle for socialism. Today such an attitude is even more dangerous and anachronistic. In the modern world, every major economic, social and political event, has

increasingly **international** causes and effects. Any big development in the Middle East, the struggles in Africa or the suppression of democratic rights in the Soviet Union has a direct effect on Britain and the British labour movement. The use by the Tories of the threat of 'the red menace', Labour's extolling of 'workers participation' in West Germany and the Communist Party's claim that Euro-communism shows the way, are all arguments drawn from international developments.

The ruling class understand the significance of international politics. Its diplomats jet endlessly from one country to another to put forward Anglo-American proposals to resolve disputes. The business men mark their shares, either up or down, in line with the struggle in the Middle East, television programmes analyse Euro-Communism, the crisis in South Africa and focus on all the major international events. Even the reformists have been internationalising their politics with the left social democrats seeking inspiration from their counterparts in Italy and France.

### **INSULAR**

Compared to the ruling class and its allies, the British revolutionary left looks positively insular. What Marx said about the advanced countries showing the more backward countries their future applies equally to politics. The international class struggles in Iran, Chile, Portugal, France, Spain, Ireland and on the continent of Africa not only demand solidarity actions from the British working class but they also mirror future struggles and problems that the British labour movement will confront. The rise of the women's movement began in the United States. The crisis of the Communist Party first started outside Britain. The first big sign that the West European working class was starting to take the offensive again, came in France in May 1968 and was echoed in Portugal and Spain five years later. The revolutionary movement has everything to gain by learning from and drawing on the experiences of the international class struggle. If it fails to do that it will be taken by surprise and defeated by the capitalist class.

Any serious revolutionary party has two tasks concerning internationalism. Firstly it must always be in the forefront of the fight to build international solidarity with the struggles of the liberation forces and the working class of other countries. Secondly, it has the responsibility to study and analyse the international class struggle.

Only by studying international political trends can it be hoped to understand what is happening in British politics. The overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile and the experience of the Popular Front Government in Spain in 1936-39 are the most vivid examples of the fallacy of the parliamentary road. The overthrow of the Shah and

the defeat of his highly trained and superbly equipped army by mass action shows the lessons for the world movement. Unless these international experiences are learned from, the British revolutionary left goes into battle with one hand tied behind its back.

Marxists do, or should, take political conclusions seriously. The conclusion about the international character of the class struggle raises the matter of an international revolutionary party. Neither the avid reading of the 'informed' world press, nor the idea of keeping in general contact with revolutionaries in other countries, meets the needs of internationalism. To make the socialist revolution in any country, means drawing on the experiences and knowledge of a revolutionary International.

Of course reformists — and sadly enough, even some people on the British revolutionary left — will recoil in horror at such a suggestion. They ask what right have these foreigners to tell us what to do? These 'little Englanders' ignore the fact that in its revolutionary period before Stalinist degeneration, the Third International played a tremendous role in helping the newly formed Communist parties. In Britain, Lenin's pamphlet, **Left Wing Communism — An Infantile Disorder**, helped to save the British Communist Party from immediately taking the road to the sectarian ghetto.

It was the great debates and discussions in the Comintern on the matter of the united front — a strategy much resisted by many of the British party's leaders — which enabled the British Communist Party to do its best work in the mass movement and led to the building of the National Minority Movement. Unfortunately, there was no healthy world revolutionary party that could bring its influence to bear on the German Communist Party in the days leading to Hitler's seizure of power. Nor was there one that could change the disastrous course taken by the Spanish Communist Party in 1936. Then there was only the Stalinist apparatus which guaranteed two massive defeats, thereby setting back the struggle for socialism by many years.

To begin the construction of a world party of revolution, is a step towards the taking of power in a single country. This helps to ensure that when a revolutionary situation arises in a particular country the revolutionaries there can draw on the experience, political knowledge and the material support of their comrades in the International.

## **IMPORTANT LESSONS**

Some comrades agree on the need for an International but say that we should not launch one until a revolutionary party has led a **successful** struggle for power in a single country. That ignores one of the most important lessons coming out of the degeneration of the Comintern.

After the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks correctly called for the formation of a revolutionary International. This call was responded to by the best and most class conscious militants throughout the world and resulted in the formation of Communist Parties in nearly every country, who then affiliated to the Third International. The members of the newly formed Communist Parties came from social democracy, anarchism, syndicalism and small revolutionary sects. Simply joining the Third International did not make them into revolutionary marxists, that could only be done through a process of experience and democratic debate. Before that process was completed, the Stalinists had seized control of the Russian Communist Party and took over the mantle of prestige that the leadership of such a party held in the world Communist movement. The lack of a trained revolutionary leadership in the other parties helped to guarantee Stalin's victory inside the Comintern and was one of the direct causes of the appalling international defeats inflicted on the working class in country after country over the next 20 years.

To postpone the building of a revolutionary International is therefore not only mistaken, but is in our opinion dangerous and flies in the face of all the experiences of the class struggle. The Fourth International, which was founded in 1938 by the supporters of Trotsky's Left Opposition, started out from these political needs. Other organisations which had left the Communist Party, or broken with social democracy, in many cases with far more supporters than the Trotskyists, refused to build an International or agreed to simply have an international bureau for the 'exchange of ideas' so each party would be free to go its own way. These groups no longer exist. They have either succumbed to the pressures of their own ruling class or disappeared into oblivion. The Fourth International is the only international revolutionary movement to have survived and today has more members, more sections and greater political experience than ever before.

That is not to say that it has yet achieved the credibility and base inside the workers movement that is needed. Nor does it mean that the Fourth International can claim the record of being consistently correct. It has made many mistakes — that is inevitable in a small organisation fighting against the powerful forces of both capitalism and Stalinism — and it still has to win to its ranks many hundreds of thousands of people who can broaden its experience and ensure that it becomes a real force in the world struggle for socialism.

However, the Fourth International is the only viable organisation on a world scale from which a genuine world party can be constructed.

This is why the IMG is affiliated to the Fourth International and why we would argue inside a unified revolutionary movement for

affiliation to the Fourth International.

If a united revolutionary party is formed in Britain the IMG would not make it a condition that before it joins, the new party must agree to join the Fourth International. We would want the right through democratic discussion and debate at agreed times, to argue for affiliation. We would hope that in a series of organised discussions to convince a majority of the party members on the correctness of that course.

In Iran it was imperative that the forces supporting revolutionary marxism had to group together into one common organisation in order to play any role in the turbulent events of the class struggle now taking place there. Not only did the Fourth International call for this, but actually sent comrades to Iran to help bring that fusion together.

## IMG

In this pamphlet I have attempted to show that the British and international working class are going into a period of an explosive showdown. It is our contention that reformism, in both its varieties, right and left, is utterly bankrupt and is incapable of offering a realistic way out for the workers movement. I hope that I have demonstrated to the reader that there now exists both a burning need, as well as a real opportunity to build a serious united revolutionary party. In discussing the policies such a party must base its activities around I have very deliberately concentrated on the main strategical issues. This is why I have concentrated on the united front, transitional politics, socialist democracy and internationalism. Which transitional demands, which slogans, and what particular form the united front takes at a given moment in time are important tactical questions and will be issues of debate and discussion inside the party — hence the emphasis on the need for internal democracy.

These are the policies of the IMG and they are the policies which the IMG would put forward inside a united revolutionary party. If you are in general agreement with our policies and accept the need to build a united revolutionary party then you should consider joining the IMG. Fill in the form on the back page of the pamphlet and we will make sure that you are put in touch with the nearest IMG branch.

2. Examples of this are organisations like the Independent Labour Party which having broken from the Labour Party had a brief flirtation with 'internationalism' but in order to keep together a divergent membership of pacifists, reformists and centrists shed its revolutionary wing. From being an organisation of some thousands with its own MPs it has been reduced to an insignificant rump.

The Spanish POUM founded by former leaders of the Spanish Communist Party, the Brandler and Bordiga organisations in Germany and Italy led by one-time leaders of the Communist Party had considerable support and far more members than the Trotskyists. Today, these organisations are non-existent.

## FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Not since the early twenties has the revolutionary left had such a chance to build a viable revolutionary party. Nor has it had to face such complex problems and such big responsibilities.

On a world scale the revolution is on the upsurge, as Iran and Zimbabwe shows. Like the rest of the world capitalist economies British capitalism staggers from one crisis to another. The 'left' MPs and their counterparts in the trade unions are in headlong retreat before the offensive of the ruling class and its media.

This pamphlet argues that the far-left just cannot go on acting in the same old routinist way. 'Business as usual' just will not do. Things are changing. This is why the pamphlet calls for a united democratic revolutionary party. It is also why it comes out for the strategy of building mass united actions against capitalism and puts forward the need both for transitional politics and revolutionary internationalism. The author explains that socialist democracy is not an additional luxury, either inside the revolutionary party, or in a workers' state. He insists that without socialist democracy the party will never work out a strategy for the working class and its allies taking power, nor will it be possible for humanity to create a socialist society.

## AUTHOR

Bob Pennington, the author of this pamphlet, is a member of the IMG Political Committee. He is National Organiser of Socialist Unity and author of *Revolutionary Socialism — Why and How* and also of *The Socialist Challenge to Immigration Controls*.