

BULLETIN

NUMBER 6. AUGUST '74



(How the ruling class sees Benn... from the "Business World").

The Cassidy Affair
The United Front: Comintern
OCRPI Resolution: Spring '73

The political situation in France
Benn, WRP and the working class

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EDITORIALWho are the Liquidationists?

The panic measures now being taken to stave off the imminent financial collapse of the WRP come as no surprise to the Bulletin. Since January this year, we have carefully charted the WRP's deepening crisis, and attempted a provisional analysis of why the party has been unable to capitalise on the rich opportunities presented by the current upsurge in working class militancy not only in Britain, but internationally.

The root cause of the WRP's many-sided problems, the most pressing now being the desperate need for huge sums of money, is its false orientation in relation to the traditional basic organisations of the working class, its desertion of the Transitional Programme. Bulletin has already discussed at some length the question of entry into the Labour Party. How far the WRP leadership has revised Trotsky on this tactical issue is indicated by C. Slaughter's attack on the suppressed internal document submitted for circulation under the ten-day rule, 'Why a Transitional Programme', where he lists as one of the sins of the Bulletin group its support for entry work in the Labour Party! Slaughter does not qualify this condemnation. For him entry work is the hall-mark of the liquidationist. We suggest that he also addresses his accusations to those on the WRP Central Committee such as Healy, Torrance, Banda and Gale, who also 'liquidated' themselves into the Labour Party over considerable periods of their political careers. Slaughter's double entry system of political book-keeping just shows how low the Healy leadership is prepared to stoop in order to confuse members over the real issues in dispute between the Bulletin and the WRP. This method has the same aim as the slanderous innuendo made at the recent WRP special conference that the Bulletin group might be working with the Special Branch and the CIA. These tactics, culled from the arsenal of Stalinism will avail Healy nothing.

And for as long as WRP members allow themselves, by such methods, to be walled-off from the real struggles and problems of the working class, both of which can only find their mass expression through and in the basic organisations of the working class, including the Labour Party and especially its left wing headed by Benn; for as long as Slaughter, Banda, Jeffries and Healy are allowed to revise the basic propositions of Leninism and tear up the Transitional Programme, the crisis in the WRP will grow worse. All the devotion, sacrifice and party loyalty in the world will not be sufficient to prevent the WRP from breaking up unless a fight is begun at every level of the party on these questions. The financial crisis in the WRP is a crisis of leadership, of programme, of policies, of tactics, of strategy.

Healy of course will have none of this. He has already made up his mind who and what is wrong. Comrades will be told they are 'foot dragging', 'turning inwards', that they have not 'broken from idealism', have 'not made up their minds' and that they have not grasped the key role in party building played by 'Marxist philosophy'. Not for one moment will a self-critical eye be turned towards the WRP's own political perspectives, its sectarian, ultimatic approach to Labour Party workers, its childish game of name calling, which results in the entire trade union and Labour Party leadership, including the lefts, being denounced as 'corporatists'. And this at the very moment when these same 'corporatists' are beginning to have genuine fears that the real corporatists, the National Front and other more recently formed fascist and proto fascist groups, might be the harbingers of a mass counter-revolutionary movement of the not-so-distant future.

No, Healy and his dwindling band of supporters in the central leadership will not ask themselves why it is, of all the Left groups in Britain, the WRP alone is consistently boycotting and denouncing any moves by advanced workers to organise determined resistance to the rise of fascism in Britain. Need one repeat here the nauseous perversions of Marxism perpetrated by Royston Bull, who following

Slaughter (who wrote in part two of his attack that even in pre-Hitler Germany, the reformists, and not the Nazis, were the 'main weapon' of the bourgeoisie against the working class) evolved a justification for capitulation to the growth of racist and fascist currents amongst backward workers. He declared that it was completely wrong to demand that the trade unions fight racialism, for to raise such a demand would create illusions in the minds of workers that the trade unions could do anything for their members. Just the same criterion would also apply to demands for higher wages put through the trade union machinery. Capitulation to racism, abandonment of the trade unions to the bureaucracy, the creation of 'red unions', the refusal to fight on the partial, minimum demands of the class - all these are contained within Bull's article, which members should see as a warning signal. At the very top of the WRF leadership, there is a grouping which is determined to put the preservation of the apparatus before everything else. Hence the refusal to join and extend mobilisations against fascism, masked behind leftist attacks on the 'main enemy', the Trade Union and Labour Party corporatists. And since the apparatus must be preserved at all costs (for now the apparatus has become the vehicle of the revolution) the duty of members is to sustain the costs of running it, no matter what.

Branches can be smashed, whole regions devastated, promising cadres demoralised, trade union work and key contacts abandoned or neglected for long periods, the real struggle of the class ignored, and anti-fascist actions denounced as 'diversions', but the apparatus must be preserved. Everything is inverted. Instead of, as in Lenin's day, the apparatus serving the party, and the party, the class; the class exists only for the party, and the party, for the apparatus. The 'party builders' turn out to be the real liquidators, for the party does not exist outside of its cadres and its programme. Healy is destroying the former, and abandoning the latter. And this is hardly surprising, for both are an obstacle to the total domination of the apparatus. It is in this setting that the question of the 'regime' must be placed and understood. Any fight against the Healy leadership that proceeds on the basis of an unprincipled or blind fight against this or that abuse of power within the top leadership is not only doomed to failure, it will disorient those struggling to find a way out of the blind alley of the leadership's sectarian isolation from the working class.

The fight must be on programme, on policies, on tactics, on strategy. Leave to Healy the quest for the alchemist's stone, the 'philosophy' that turns a sect into a 'mass party' without fighting in the basic organisations of the class, and that wins the confidence of the class without being in the front rank for the defence of its most elementary demands and rights against the class enemy.

We know that profound disquiet about the present state of the movement, and the bankrupt policies of the current leadership, is growing, reaching up to the top-most levels of the party. That was inevitable. Trampling on the principles and traditions of Trotskyism was certain to produce opposition in a party that claims to be based on them. We also know that there is considerable and growing interest in, and to a degree, agreement with, the analysis of the WRF crisis put forward by the Bulletin. That too is no surprise, as we always felt confident that entirely independent of ourselves, many comrades were viewing the growing isolation of the party from the working class, and its increasing domination by petty-bourgeois radicals, with the same dismay.

Today it can be seen who are the real liquidators. What Healy takes to be 'the party', the apparatus, is crushing the real party, the cadres, the tradition, the programme. Let us make our position clear once again. We hold that entry work in the Labour Party is called for by the current situation in the Labour Party, and also the relative weakness of the Trotskyist vanguard, but in saying this, we do not propose to liquidate the party into the reformist-led movement. It must preserve its public face, it must campaign openly through its press for the building of a section of the Fourth International in Britain, and it must never

draw back from speaking the whole truth to the workers about reformist and Stalinist treachery. Entry work must be carried out without the least concession to liquidationism, as Trotsky recommended British and French Trotskyists to do in 1934.

In attacking the tactics of entry, Slaughter has evolved a theory of left liquidationism which has much empty rhetoric to offer about the 'independence' of the revolutionary party, but which because of its sectarian orientation, prepares the ground for isolation of the party from the class, and therefore, its eventual liquidation. What Trotsky says of the early opponents of entry is most instructive here:

'... they repeat the same general talk about "independence". For them the fundamental thing seems to be to remain independent of the working class, the masses, the changes in the state of affairs, of the whole reality. These comrades substitute a monologue for actual political work among the masses. Their politics follow the line of least resistance; it is politics of self-complacency disguised by formulas of imaginary intransigence'.

(Writings 1934, p.59)

Of these last, the Workers Press has in plenty - 'corporatism', 'Trojan Horses', 'smashing revisionism', 'build the party' ... we know them all. They screen in practice a capitulation to bureaucracy, and with the latest revision of Trotskyism carried out by Bull, a retreat before racism and fascism.

The type of sectarian that is now bidding to liquidate the WRP into petty-bourgeois radicalism and a top-heavy apparatus is not new to the Fourth International. Trotsky wrote against them nearly 39 years ago, when he declared that:

'each sectarian wants to have his own labour movement. By repetition of magic formulas (i.e. 'Marxist philosophy') he thinks to force an entire class to group itself around him. But instead of bewitching the proletariat, he always ends up by demoralising and dispersing his own sect.'

(Writings, 1935, p.25)

Of course, the WRP is not a sect. But everything else Trotsky says here can be applied to the present stage of decay of the Healy leadership. And more:

'The sectarian sees an enemy in everyone who attempts to explain to him that an active participation in the workers' movement demands a constant study of objective conditions, and not a haughty bulldozing from the sectarian rostrum. For analysis of reality the sectarian substitutes intrigue, gossip and hysteria.'

(Ibid, p.26)

Really there is nothing more that has to be said, for Trotsky in his time also had to deal with the impatient 'party builders' who took their subjective illusions and wishes for objective reality, and in the process, deluded many as to the magnitude and nature of the task that faced them in the struggle for the Fourth International:

'While it is necessary' (said Trotsky in answer to whether the British Trotskyists should launch an independent party)

'for the revolutionary party to maintain its independence at all times, a revolutionary group of a few hundred comrades is not a revolutionary party and can work most

effectively at present by opposition to the social patriots within the mass parties ... Any such sectarian, sterile and formalistic interpretation of Marxism (i.e. launching an independent party of a few hundred members) in the present situation would disgrace an intelligent child of ten'.

(Ibid, p.77)

The crisis in the WRP, the most acute British Trotskyism has ever faced, does not give us any pleasure. We sincerely hope that the comrades will, despite the criminal political irresponsibility of the leadership that created the situation, rally to the call to raise the necessary cash, and stave off the immediate dangers facing the party. That is their duty, one that transcends any political differences with the Healy leadership. But as we have said already, this alone will not save the WRP from liquidation. In fact, in a sense, the fight for cash, if carried out in a blind fashion, can bring that liquidation nearer. We appeal to all thinking serious comrades to return to the basic political questions of programme, from which stems the present crisis in the party. Back to the Transitional Programme, to Trotsky's writings on fascism, the third period and the united front, on entry and sectarianism. It is along this road that the WRP can be saved and built as a genuine Trotskyist organisation.

The day of reckoning with the Healy-Mitchell liquidators may not be far off. They have brought the party to the brink of disintegration, and they must be stopped before they push it over.

A CRUDE, LYING DIVERSION

Introduction

As the last issue of the Bulletin neared completion the Workers Press once again devoted two whole pages to an attack on the Bulletin Group. Its issue of 17th June ran a piece headed 'The May 8th Betrayal at CAV'. Once again an obscure WRP member John Cassidy hit the news. An open letter sent to the WP over my signature was published together with Cassidy's reply. The Cowley defeat had clearly left the WRP leadership bitter - after pursuing the IS line (i.e. accept MDW* and rely on mutuality agreements) for a number of years - the ATUA when under attack found that its manipulation and sectionalist opportunism left them little support among the Cowley rank and file. Consequently they could give no lead to workers under attack. Instead of mass meetings educating the membership about the importance of such agreements sections fought in isolation. Having no real base the ATUA leadership, in the 5/55 TGWU Branch Committee, were forced to cringe to the management and right wing by claiming that Alan Thornett's section was a model department - 'TRANSPARENT DEPARTMENT IS A SECTION IN WHICH STRIKE ACTION IS EXTREMELY RARE. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF DAYS LOST THROUGH STRIKES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT AMOUNTS TO CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN ONE DAY PER YEAR FOR THE ENTIRE PERIOD ETC. THORNETT HAS BEEN A STEWARD'. (TGWU 5/55 Cowley Branch Statement April 1974).

The WRP leadership badly needed a diversion and the CAV article was the result.

Double-Cross on Fryer

The Cowley ATUA, no doubt on Healy's orders, appealed to Jack (the 'fully fledged Corporatist') Jones, Gen. Sec. T&GWU, walked smack into the right wing's trap - co-operated with an inquiry, and as a result Thornett was restored as a shop steward (B. Leyland had experienced little bother with him in his own section), but at what cost. The T&GWU Regional Committee split the giant 5/55 Branch at Cowley - the WRP and ATUA double-crossed Fryer and split the left vote - Parsons an ex-SLL member (and incidentally a founder of the ATUA), became Senior Steward, Fryer and Thornett were out as was Tim O'Sullivan WRP member who had held the Senior Steward's position on the night shift.

For years Fryer and Thornett had worked together as a team. Thornett had never stood for Senior Stewards position, now the vote was split. Having learned nothing from the Cowley affair, the WRP-ATUA proceed from one disaster to another. They seem to want to leap over the traditional organisations and methods developed by the class and make a dangerous fetish of official instructions, as if trade unionists are all racing greyhounds straining to dash away on the signal. Vanessa Redgrave is just the latest of WRP flops! The General and Municipal Workers Union have often given extremely clear instructions to their members - forbidding them to 'get involved in any manner at all' with disputes; I have plenty of correspondence to this effect - CAV JSSC has ignored it - we have never ignored a strike call. On the contrary our record is second to none - how many plants worked during the first few months of this year using generators purchased in order to defeat the effects of the Miners strike? How many lost considerable sums by blacking the generators as did CAV's? WP paid little attention to that issue. Certainly, it didn't rate more than a couple of inches. When only the AUEW has called for action in the past, - the committee has persisted in a joint, united effort and the WP has

* Measured Day Work

published many a report on such actions. Their vindictive and slanderous approach now is only damaging their own credibility. Cassidy once again has stuck his silly neck out. The WP sellers, as inconsistent as ever, turn up when they feel like it - but the Stalinists are happy to continue their fortnightly factory gate lunch hour meetings - the WRP have given up, or so it would seem. Certainly Cassidy is conspicuous by his absence.

A Complete Nonentity

Cassidy so far had made little headway in the CAV plant - after a series of adventures in the drill section he contracted dermatitis and was transferred to the Unit 5 stores - he has no base - no support at all among CAV workers. He failed to get himself nominated as a shop steward, is unable to sell a single copy of WP in the entire plant. He is a complete nonentity. However such material is at times useful - it can be disposed of after it has performed its sordid role.

It is necessary to deal with all the points raised by Cassidy in the order he presents them. Thus I urge the reader to have patience with the length of this document.

'Contrary to Hillier the news of the EC decision was known at about 3.00 p.m. on Tuesday May 7th at the CAV factory ... Hillier phoned me personally at 3.00 p.m. on Tuesday to inform me of the AUEW E.C.'s decision. An emergency meeting of day and night shift stewards should have been arranged that evening to organise pickets and to stop the night shift on Tuesday night, Hillier did not suggest this'.

Now this is a revealing piece - like a sieve it is full of holes! What I said was that 'on the morning of 8th May, all AUEW militants and class conscious workers knew via the Press, Radio and TV, that the AUEW had instructed its members to cease work'. This certainly wasn't the case on Tuesday 7th May, since Cassidy himself admits that I informed him at 3.00 p.m. by phone! Does one imagine that I would have simply passed this information on as an item of news? Of course not. I informed Cassidy that I was attempting to arrange a meeting, I also told him that I had been unable to locate the AUEW Convenor. You will note that Cassidy nowhere claims that he suggested the kind of meeting that, according to him, I should have organised. On hindsight all kinds of ideas enter his head - perhaps for example he should as an AUEW militant have ceased work forthwith - certainly he carried on working that day - I suppose by his own standards he was scabbing. I prefer to be more lenient than the WP and concede that he was willing to assist in preparing the AUEW shop stewards to win support from the membership.

WRP Honours List?

Cassidy then bestows upon me a title to which I do not lay claim. According to him I am AUEW Senior Steward - wrong again, the AUEW Senior Steward is Convenor John Paxman. Curiously enough he is left out of Cassidy's letter, (more on this matter later). However I am the Secretary of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, as such I am elected by members of all Unions in the Confederation of Ship-building and Engineering Unions - again it is the Chairman's responsibility to convene meetings. Cassidy is of course ignorant of such trifling details - in fact he doesn't even know the Chairman's name! However I did organise the Shop Stewards for a meeting at 9.00 a.m. the following day. Try contacting some fifty-odd shop stewards, some who aren't near a telephone, in an hour - it isn't easy - the WRP no doubt use walkie-talkie apparatus!

How To Fight For Policies

Cassidy correctly states that the AUEW's decision had to be fought for - the issue between us is how this is best done; to get maximum support, to reach as many workers as possible - or to win over the class conscious minority and leave the rest - this indeed was the issue at stake. Let us examine in detail Cassidy's proposals, some of which he made at the time, others on hindsight.

- 1) He continued working after I rang him at 3.00 p.m. on 7th May. I was busy contacting the 56 day-shift stewards.
- 2) He claims (on hindsight) that a meeting of day-shift and night-shift shop stewards should have been arranged that evening to organise pickets to stop the night-shift on Tuesday night. Now this really is a gem. Apparently the day-shift, after having worked all day itself, and without its shop stewards having met, would hang about from 4.30 p.m. till 8.00 p.m. (when the night-shift commence work), form a picket, presumably composed of day-shift AUEW members who wouldn't have a clue which TU the night-shift men belonged to - one can imagine the scene. The night-shift shop stewards would have had something to say about such a tactic. Nothing could be more divisive. Nonetheless as it is now Cassidy's view, it is rather a shame that he didn't mention it at the time or volunteer to join such a picket. Cassidy's ignorance is appalling.
- 3) Cassidy suggests that when I claim that an unauthorised picket, e.g. one not set up by the JSS Committee, would number a dozen or so attempting to man 20-odd gates - that this is a 'rotten red herring'. He wanted an effective picket - so did I, that's why it had to develop, not from spontaneity at 7.00 a.m. outside the gates based on a few stewards and others, but out of the organisation set up and elected by the workers themselves - the JSSC!

I recall vividly Cassidy having a heated discussion with a Tool Room AUEW shop steward (Ero. Stairdman), who believed as I did that the picket had to be properly organised.

- 4) According to Cassidy, I 'hide behind backwardness and conservatism of some workers'. I am also 'an opportunist'. My, my, such harshness - no doubt my accuser will come forward with some evidence. It is not opportunism to call for an unofficial picket line which would antagonise many non-AUEW workers and thus diminish chances of developing an 'all-out' joint union policy! It is opportunism to fight for united action!

It would be interesting to inquire of Cassidy (the expert on the subject of opportunism) his views on this statement by Alan Thornett ex-Chairman of the Cowley JSSC, ex-deputy Senior Steward (TGWU) B. Leyland. 'In many cases we were prepared to recommend an increase of effort. In the trim shop for example we offered the Company a 50 per cent increase on the Maxi track'. I call it cringing class collaboration, not surprisingly the company, sensing a soft touch, wasn't satisfied, 'but this was rejected by the Company who demanded 125 per cent.' See WP June 3rd 1974, p.11, Thornett's statement in 'Branch News' of the T&GWU 5/55 Branch.

Scorn

Cassidy talks about Hillier's 'scorn for workers who went home'. I cannot find any evidence for this charge - however I pour scorn on people such as Cassidy who 'clock in' in the morning, walk out later, turn up at lunch time, spend lunch time in a pub and then seek out

the Secretary of the JSSC in order to persuade him to organise an election inside the plant! As for opportunism what can one say about someone who approaches the AUEW Convener but doesn't offer one single word of criticism about the 'BETRAYAL AT CAV'. Cassidy had no reason to have a shop stewards election on that day, but see how he wriggles on the stick like a snake ... 'Let me say, first of all, what was in dispute was not my conduct (I am not a steward) but that of the Senior Steward and others'. 'I AM NOT A STEWARD' SAYS CASSIDY THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST!

Different Rules for WRP Members?

Cassidy says 'Hillier cannot have his cake and eat it'. Apparently he can. Just study the Cassidy rule-book. You mustn't concern yourself with the prosecuting counsel, his credibility is of no concern to this court - it is the accused that must be examined - what objectivity! what Marxism! You must ignore the fact that Cassidy worked on Tuesday 7th May after I rang him at 3.00 p.m., that he 'clocked in' next morning, that he re-entered the plant at 1.15 p.m., that he didn't see fit to tell the Convener his views on the 'betrayal', that he didn't receive the support of a single man at the election which he called for! All this must be ignored - it didn't happen according to Cassidy! Cassidy insists that there was a minority of workers who went home in disgust. Will he please explain his conduct in relation to these men, namely where were they when Cassidy was urging shop stewards including myself to form an unofficial picket on the morning of 8th May? When the stewards outside No. 8 gate refused to comply why didn't this group show themselves? Who are they Mr. Cassidy? Not one man has protested to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee about the shameful 'betrayal' at CAV's, not one shop steward has raised the issue at the committee meetings - I have received no correspondence on the matter from any CAV worker - even Cassidy hasn't seen fit to write in to the JSS Committee although he knows that under standing orders all correspondence has to be read out (by me) and is open for discussion. The men he refers to are silent and unknown - certainly Cassidy doesn't name them, neither does he explain his inability to organise a protest to the AUEW Convener.

Lies

Cassidy doesn't stop at twisting facts - he resorts to downright lies - he claims that a resolution condemning myself and IS member Roger Cox (like Cassidy not a shop steward) was seconded and voted for by me - I supported an inquiry by District Office - I would not support a pack of lies! Cassidy also lies when he claims that my 'group' belongs to the OCI, I have no group and I am not a member of the OCI. I suppose since before the split the OCI was a section of the IV International, Cassidy is an ex-member of the OCI!

Who elects the Executive?

Workers who are members of a TU elect their departmental shop steward, not individual members of the WRP! My members for good or ill have elected me - there are annual elections in the department. Members of the Shop Stewards Committee elect the Executive Committee at the AGM in February - Cassidy says I should resign, others apparently don't support his view - does he support the wishes of the majority or not? Incidentally which AUEW shop steward would he nominate as Secretary?

It is of interest to note that Cassidy claims correctly that 'nearby factories, like Powerjacks, who looked to CAV for a lead'. Why do they do this - could it be that CAV has always given a lead in Acton? (at

least in the last decade). That the leadership has traditionally sought and obtained joint action of all the unions? That time and time again WP has reported these joint actions? The WRP Convenor at Powerjacks isn't using CAV as an excuse for some failure at Powerjacks by any chance is he? What happened on May 8th at Powerjacks Mr. Cassidy?

Hoist On Their Own Petard

Cassidy talks about Hillier being on the hook - but it is he and his Clapham colleagues that are hoisted on their own petard - they cannot explain how they can accuse me of strike-breaking yet are unwilling to go the whole hog and make the same accusation against the AUEW Convenor, the AUEW shop stewards and AUEW rank and file - according to WP logic a firm lead from me would have brought everyone of these members into line - talk about opportunism. Cassidy attacks IS member Roger Cox in the Chiswick 5 AUEW branch, calls him a scab ... but his name doesn't appear in WP. What's the explanation for this? We are aware that Cassidy, being a WRP member, can enter an engineering plant during a National AUEW Strike - but now apparently this concession applies equally to State Caps. Perhaps Cox will receive an apology at the next branch meeting.

Suppression of Facts

But by far the most dishonest feature of this latest attack is the suppression of facts - the total omission of the introduction to my letter - the deliberate evasion in relation to evidence sent to the WP.

- 1) Evidence of Cassidy's presence inside the CAV plant on May 8th, signed by his fellow workers and shop steward.
- 2) Evidence of his presence within the Machines factory signed by workers.
- 3) A letter sent by an AUEW shop steward to WF condemning Cassidy as dishonest - confirming the election evidence.*
- 4) Letter from the Senior T&GWU steward outlining my activities on May 8th.
- 5) Letter from the AUEW Convenor John Pazman.
- 6) Letter from London (North) District office 'appreciating effort'.

None of this was mentioned - this is of course a Stalinist method quite alien to the Trotskyist tradition.

The so-called WRP claims that I am responsible for holding back the working class - silly adventures and 'principled scabbing' I suppose develop class consciousness - this crass opportunist doesn't know the first thing about the National Engineering Agreement - he admitted so in the Union branch. How can anyone aspire to leadership before he has learned his ABC? Who held back Cassidy's members from voting for him as shop steward? As for the Goad affair I would like Mr. Cassidy to develop his theme somewhat - perhaps he would also like to discuss Tele-Control or the SLL fiasco at CAV Fazakerley? Messrs. Healy and Banda tucked away in Clapham, don't send a raw boy to do a man's job. Come down to CAV's one lunch-time and we CAV AUEW Stewards will debate your vile accusations. Until then try using your valuable space on attacks on the Employing class.

* Fro. Arthur Mason - a leading AUEW militant at CAV's; twice led strikes in the Engine Test and Laboratory sections - in 1972 after a 3½-week strike members achieved an increase of £7.41! Reports published in WP. Is this a 'right-wing friend'?

NE. The AUEW steward Ted Stairdman referred to on page 7, led the Tool Room occupation last Autumn - another 'right-wing friend'?

P. S. Cassidy has now sent a letter to the London (Forth) District Committee of the AUEW complaining that the entire AUEW leadership in CAV's are scabs - should be interesting to hear the reply to this load of codswallop!

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THE UNITED FRONT
Documents and Resolutions of the Communist International

Introduction

Both in its Constitution and on the membership card of the WRP it is clearly stated that the party bases itself on the work and decisions of the first four Congresses of the Communist International and the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. The Bulletin has already, in earlier issues, focused on the WRP's retreat from the Transitional Programme, which has now been replaced by the maximum programme of social democracy ('socialist policies' i.e. the 'nationalisation of the basic industries, the banks and the land under workers' control without compensation'). If, as the WRP claims, the working class (and not only its vanguard) has already come to an understanding of the need for such policies, then, of course, the Transitional Programme is outdated. There is no need of a bridge from today's consciousness and struggles to see the need for the socialist revolution, since the working class has already made this leap spontaneously. A classic instance of this false estimation of the level of working class consciousness is to be found in the London Area WRP Weekly Political Letter No. 4, dated 28th June 1974. It declares that the only people who are 'afraid of an immediate election' are 'the Tories and the reformists, who don't want to unleash the demands of the working class for socialist policies'. Now this is of course nonsense. If the workers are demanding 'socialist policies' (which elsewhere in the same Political Letter are enumerated as 'genuine policies of nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control') then this is difficult to reconcile with the continued support workers give to the reformists in elections and in the Trade Unions. Surely if the mass of the working class has broken from reformism, (which it must have done if it is demanding the expropriation of the bourgeoisie lock, stock and barrel without any compensation!), then this should be reflected in the growth of large centrist developments in the mass organisations of the class, not to speak of a rapid influx of workers into the ranks of the WRP. Of course, this is not happening, and the WRP leaders know it. There is a trend towards the left among certain advanced groups of workers (Clay Cross, Engineers applying a black on Chile etc) and amongst previously more passive layers (i.e. nurses) but this is not yet a trend that has reached the dimensions where we could say that the whole class is moving to a break with its existing leaderships. Hence the need for the Transitional Programme, and hence also, the need for the tactic of the united front. For if the vast majority of the organised workers at their present level of development choose to fight through their traditional organisations (trade union, Labour Party, Shop Stewards Committee etc.) then the vanguard must take this fact into account in all its work. On no account must it present to the working class the ultimatum: 'Join us, or be betrayed by your leaders'. This is the method of the WRP today, as can be seen from a reading of the Workers Press. The WRP must return to the method of Lenin and Trotsky, as codified in the first four Congresses of the Comintern. It must say to the workers still loyal to their reformist-led organisations: 'You do not accept that only the WRP can lead your struggles to victory. Nevertheless, we will fight with you for the limited goals set by your movement, even though they do not challenge the rule of capitalism. More than this, we will propose to you and your leaders that our joint resources be devoted to the struggle for even the most modest demands, provided only that all parties to the agreement maintain their full political and organisational independence, and the right to criticise each other whenever they think fit'. Does such a pledge involve the surrender of the WRP's political independence, its liquidation into the swamp of reformism, its capitulation to the minimum programme of social democracy? If the WRP

leaders think that it does (and this is the general tenor of their attacks on the Bulletin group) then they are parting company from Leninism and Trotskyism, as a careful reading of the documents presented below will demonstrate. If participation in a joint struggle or campaign with reformists (or for that matter Stalinists) be opportunism, then Lenin and Trotsky were opportunists. And such indeed was the charge levelled at them both at various times.

Bordiga of the Italian CP accused Lenin and the Comintern leaders of capitulating to reformism and centrism when they introduced the tactics enumerated in the following documents. He held that even in the face of the onslaught of Mussolini, a united front on the minimum demand of joint defence of workers' democracy was a betrayal of communism. Ten years later, we find a far more degenerate version of this same line being forced on all the parties of the Comintern, namely Stalin's policy of renouncing united fronts with the reformist-led organisations on the grounds that they had turned 'special fascist' (Workers Press prefers to call reformists 'corporatists'). Trotsky, who argued consistently for the united front of all workers' organisations against fascism, was thus denounced as an apologist for reformism (familiar words!) because he insisted that the workers close their ranks in defence of minimum democratic rights without which the workers' movement could not function.

Having said this, we must also emphasise that the united front has been perverted from the right as well as from the ultra left. In the late summer of 1923 the German CP (KPD) leadership, faced with a revolutionary situation, failed to break their united front with the left social democrats in Saxony and Thuringia (where communists had entered coalition governments with the SPD) and prepare for a struggle for power. The centrist leadership of Brandler interpreted mechanically and one-sidedly the united front directives of the Comintern, and elevated them from a tactic into a permanent strategy. Hesitating to break from their bloc with the left reformists (a bloc which had been tactically correct in the period leading up to the emergence of the revolutionary situation) the KPD leaders functioned as the left flank of social democracy, and not as the communist general staff of the proletariat. A magnificent revolutionary opportunity was allowed to slip by, a blunder which casts its shadow across the German and world working class to this day. Brandler violated the first principles of communist politics - the independence of the party, and the subordination of tactics to strategy. By an irony of history, the 'Saxon mistake' of October 1923 later served to feed its mirror opposite - leftism, the total rejection of the united front, and the fight for the partial demands of the working class. In 1924 (under Zinoviev) and again in 1928-1934 (under Stalin) anyone who came out for the united front was accused of wishing to repeat the Brandler mistake of 1923. Thus the united front has a history of its own which is both rich and full of lessons for WRP militants today. This introduction by no means pretends to have exhausted the subject - Trotsky alone wrote entire books on the question which alas, are spurned by the WRP leadership today. Nevertheless, it is high time a discussion on this long-neglected problem was opened in the ranks of the WRP, and it is to this end that the publication of the following documents is directed.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIRECTIVES ON THE UNITED FRONT
OF THE WORKERS AND ON THE ATTITUDE TO WORKERS
BELONGING TO THE SECOND, TWO-AND-A-HALF, AND
AMSTERDAM INTERNATIONALS, AND TO THOSE WHO SUPPORT
ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST ORGANIZATIONS,

ADOPTED BY THE ECCI

18 December 1921

1. The international labour movement is passing at present through a peculiar transition stage, which presents both the Communist International as a whole and its individual sections with new and important tactical problems.

The chief characteristics of this stage are: The world economic crisis is growing more acute. Unemployment is increasing. In practically every country international capital has gone over to a systematic offensive against the workers, as shown primarily in the fairly open efforts of the capitalists to reduce wages and to lower the workers' entire standard of life. The bankruptcy of the Versailles peace has become ever more apparent to the broadest strata of the workers. The inevitability of a new imperialist war, or even of several such wars, is clear, unless the international proletariat overthrows bourgeois rule ...

The 'democratic' and reformist illusions which, after the end of the imperialist slaughter, were reborn among the workers (the better-off workers on the one hand, and the most backward and politically inexperienced on the other) are fading before they reached full bloom. The 'labours' of the Washington conference will shake these illusions even more. If, six months ago, it was possible to speak with some justification of a general swing to the right among the working masses in Europe and America, there is no doubt that today, on the contrary, the beginning of a swing to the left can be observed.

2. On the other hand, under the influence of the mounting capitalist attack there has awakened among the workers a spontaneous striving toward unity which literally cannot be restrained, and which goes hand in hand with a gradual growth in the confidence placed by the broad working masses in the communists ...

3. Communist parties can and should now gather the fruits of the struggle which they waged earlier on when conditions were most unfavourable because of the indifference of the masses. But while the workers are coming to feel greater and greater confidence in the uncompromising and militant elements of the working class, in the communists, they are as a whole moved by an unprecedented urge towards unity. Those strata of the workers now awakening to active life but with little political experience are dreaming of the unification of all workers' parties and even of all workers' organisations in general, hoping by this means to increase their power of resisting the capitalists ... Considerable sections belonging to the old social-democratic parties also are no longer content with the campaign of the social-democrats and centrists against the communist vanguard, and are beginning to demand an understanding with the communists. But at the same time they have not yet lost their belief in the reformists and considerable masses still support the parties of the Second and the Amsterdam Internationals. These working masses do not formulate their plans and aspirations clearly enough, but by and large the new mood can be attributed to the desire to establish the united front and to attempt to bring about joint action by the parties and unions of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals with the communists against the capitalist attack. To that extent this mood is progressive. In essentials the belief in reformism has been undermined. In the general

situation in which the labour movement now finds itself any serious mass action, even if it proceeds only from partial demands, inevitably brings to the forefront more general and fundamental questions of the revolution. The communist vanguard can only gain if new sections of workers are convinced by their own experience of the illusory character of reformism and compromise.

4. In the early stage of germination of a conscious and organised protest against the treachery of the leaders of the Second International these latter had the entire apparatus of the workers' organisations in their hands. They ruthlessly used the principle of unity and proletarian discipline to stifle the revolutionary proletarian protest and to eliminate any resistance to their placing the entire power of the workers' organisations at the service of national imperialism. In these circumstances the revolutionary wing was forced to win at any cost freedom of agitation and propaganda, i.e. freedom to explain to the working masses the unexampled historical treachery committed and still being committed by the parties created by the working masses themselves.

5. Having secured organisational freedom to influence the working masses by their propaganda, the communist parties of all countries are now trying to achieve the broadest and most complete unity possible on practical action. The Amsterdamers and the heroes of the Second International preach this unity in words, but in their actions work against it. Having failed to suppress organisationally the voice of the proletariat and of revolutionary agitation, the reformist compromisers of Amsterdam are now seeking a way out of the deadlock for which they themselves are responsible by initiating splits, by disorganising and sabotaging the struggle of the working masses. It is at present one of the most important tasks of the communist party to expose publicly these new forms of an old treachery.

6. Profound internal processes are however forcing the diplomats and leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-half, and Amsterdam Internationals to push the question of unity into the foreground. But while, for those sections of the working class with little experience who are only beginning to awaken to class-conscious life, the slogan of the united front expresses a most genuine and sincere desire to mobilise the forces of the oppressed classes against the capitalist onslaught, the leaders and diplomats of these Internationals advance that slogan only in a new attempt to deceive the workers and to entice them by new means on to the old road of class collaboration. The approaching danger of a new imperialist war (Washington), the growth of armaments, the new imperialist secret treaties concluded behind closed doors - all this will not induce the leaders of the three Internationals to beat the alarm in order to bring about the international unification of the working class not only in words, but also in fact; on the contrary, it will provoke inevitable friction and division within the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, roughly of the same kind as that apparent in the camp of the international bourgeoisie. This phenomenon is inevitable because the solidarity of the reformist 'socialists' with the bourgeoisie of their 'own' countries is the cornerstone of reformism ...

7. Confronted by this situation, the ECCI is of the opinion that the slogan of the third world congress of the Communist International 'To The Masses', and the interests of the communist movement generally, require the communist parties and the Communist International as a whole to support the slogan of the united front of the workers and to take the initiative in this matter. The tactics of each communist party must of course be worked out concretely in relation to the conditions in each country.

8. In Germany the communist party at its last national conference supported the slogan of a workers' united front and declared its readiness to support a workers' government which was willing to take up with some seriousness the struggle against the power of the capitalists. The ECCI considers this decision completely right and is convinced that the KPD, while maintaining in full its independent political attitude, is in a position to permeate broad sections of the workers and strengthen the influence of communism on the masses. In Germany more than anywhere else the broad masses will be daily more convinced how right the communist vanguard were when at the most difficult time they did not want to lay down their arms and steadily emphasised the worthlessness of the reformist actions proposed, since the crisis could be resolved only by the proletarian revolution. By pursuing those tactics the party will in time also rally round itself the revolutionary elements among the anarchists and syndicalists who now stand aside from the mass struggle.

9. In France the communist party has a majority among the politically organised workers. Hence the united front question has a different bearing there from what it has in other countries. But even there it is necessary that the entire responsibility for the split in the united workers' camp should fall on our opponents. The revolutionary section of the French syndicalists are rightly fighting against a split in the French unions, that is, fighting for the unity of the working class in the economic struggle against the bourgeoisie. But the workers' struggle does not stop in the factories. Unity is necessary also in the face of growing reaction, of imperialist policies, etc. The policy of the reformists and centrists, on the other hand, led to the split in the party and now also threatens the unity of the trade union movement, which shows that Jouhaux just like Longuet objectively serves the cause of the bourgeoisie. The slogan of the united front of the proletariat in the economic and the political struggle against the bourgeoisie remains the best means of counteracting these splitting plans.

Even though the reformist CGT, led by Jourhaux, Merrheim and Co., betrays the interests of the French working class, French communists and the revolutionary elements among the French working class in general must, before every mass strike, every revolutionary demonstration, or any other revolutionary mass action, propose to the reformists support for such action, and if they refuse to support the revolutionary struggle of the workers they must be exposed. This will be the easiest way of winning the non-party working masses. In no circumstances, of course, must the Communist Party of France allow its independence to be restricted, e.g. by supporting the 'left bloc' during election campaigns, or behave tolerantly towards those vacillating communists who still bemoan the break with the social-patriots.

10. In England the reformist Labour Party has rejected communist party affiliation although other workers' organisations are accepted. Under the influence of the growing desire among the workers for the united front, the London workers' organisations recently passed a resolution in favour of the affiliation of the CPGB to the Labour Party.

England is of course in this respect an exception because as a result of peculiar circumstances the English Labour Party is a kind of general workers' association for the entire country. It is the task of the English communists to begin a vigorous campaign for their acceptance by the Labour Party. The recent treachery of the union leaders during the miners' strike, the systematic capitalist pressure on wages, etc. have stirred up a deep ferment among the English proletariat, who are becoming more revolutionary. English communists should make every effort, using the slogan of the revolutionary united front against the capitalists, to penetrate at all costs deep into the working masses.

11. In Italy the young communist party is beginning to conduct its agitation according to the slogan of the proletarian united front against the capitalist offensive, although it is most irreconcilably opposed to the reformist Italian Socialist Party and the social-traitor labour confederation, which recently put the finishing touch to their open treachery to the proletarian revolution. The ECCI considers this agitation by the Italian communists completely correct and insists only that it shall be intensified. The ECCI is convinced that with sufficient foresight the CP of Italy can give an example to the entire International of militant Marxism which mercilessly exposes at every step the half-heartedness and the treachery of the reformists and centrists who clothed themselves in the mantle of communism, and at the same time conduct an untiring and ever-mounting campaign among every broader masses for the united front of the workers against the bourgeoisie.

The party must of course do its utmost to draw all the revolutionary elements among the anarchists and syndicalists into the common struggle ...

16. In a number of other countries the position differs according to different local circumstances.. Having made the general line clear, the ECCI is sure that the individual communist parties will know how to apply that line in accordance with the conditions prevailing in each country.

17. The principal conditions which are equally categorical for communist parties in all countries are, in the view of the ECCI ... the absolute independence of every communist party which enters into an agreement with the parties of the Second and the Two-and-a-half Internationals, its complete freedom to put forward its own views and to criticise the opponents of communism. While accepting a basis for action, communists must retain the unconditional right and the possibility of expressing their opinion of the policy of all working-class organisations without exception, not only before and after action has been taken but also, if necessary, during its course. In no circumstances can these rights be surrendered. While supporting the slogan of the greatest possible unity of all workers' organisations in every practical action against the capitalist front, communists may in no circumstances desist from putting forward their views, which are the only consistent expression of the defence of working-class interests as a whole.

18. The ECCI considers it useful to remind all brother parties of the experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks, that party which up to now is the only one that has succeeded in winning victory over the bourgeoisie and taking power into its hands. During the fifteen years (1903-1917) which elapsed between the birth of bolshevism and its triumph over the bourgeoisie, it did not cease to wage a tireless struggle against reformism or, what is the same thing menshevism. But at the same time the Bolsheviks often came to an understanding with the mensheviks during those fifteen years. The formal break with the mensheviks took place in the spring of 1905, but at the end of 1905, influenced by the stormy developments in the workers' movement, the Bolsheviks formed a common front with the mensheviks ... and these unifications and semi-unifications happened not only in accordance with changes in the fractional struggle, but also under the direct pressure of the working masses who were awakening to active political life and demanded the opportunity of testing by their own experience whether the menshevik path really deviated in fundamentals from the road of revolution ... The Russian Bolsheviks did not reply to the desire of the workers for unity with a renunciation of the united front. On the contrary. As a counterweight to the diplomatic game of the menshevik leaders the Russian Bolsheviks put forward the slogan of 'unity from below', that is, unity of the working masses in the practical struggle for the revolutionary demands of the workers against the capitalists. Events

showed that this was the only correct answer. And as a result of those tactics, which changed according to time, place, and circumstance, a large number of the best menshevik workers were won for communism.

19. While the Communist International puts forward the slogan of the workers' united front and permits agreements between the various sections of the International and parties and unions of the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals, it can itself obviously not reject similar understandings at the international level. The ECCI made a proposal to the Amsterdam International in connection with relief action for the Russian famine. It repeated this proposal in connection with the white terror and the persecution of workers in Spain and Yugoslavia. The ECCI is now making a further proposal to the Amsterdam, Second, and Two-and-a-half Internationals, in connection with the opening of the Washington conference which has shown that the international working class is threatened by a new imperialist slaughter. Up to now the leaders of these Internationals have shown by their conduct that in fact they ignore their unity slogan when it comes to practical action. In all such cases it will be the task of the Communist International as a whole and of all its sections separately to explain to the broad working masses the hypocrisy of these leaders who prefer unity with the bourgeoisie to unity with the revolutionary workers, and who, for example, by remaining in the International Labour Office of the League of Nations, form part of the Washington imperialist conference instead of organizing the struggle against imperialist Washington. But though the leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-half, and Amsterdam Internationals reject one or another practical proposal put forward by the Communist International, that will not persuade us to give up the united front tactic, which has deep roots in the masses and which we must systematically and steadily develop. Whenever the offer of a joint struggle is rejected by our opponents the masses must be informed of this and thus learn who are the real destroyers of the workers' united front. Whenever an offer is accepted by our opponents every effort must be made gradually to intensify the struggle and to develop it to its highest power. In either case it is essential to capture the attention of the broad working masses, to interest them in all stages of the struggle for the revolutionary united front.

20. In putting forward the present plan, the ECCI directs the attention of all brother parties to the dangers which it may in certain circumstances entail. Not all communist parties are sufficiently strong and firm, not all have broken completely with the centrist and semi-centrist ideology. Some may overstep the mark, there may be tendencies which would amount in fact to the dissolution of communist parties and groups into the united but formless bloc. To carry out the new tactics successfully for the communist cause it is necessary for the communist parties who put them into operation to be strong and firmly welded together, and for their leaders to possess great theoretical clarity.

21. Within the Communist International itself, there are two tendencies among the groups which may with more or less reason be classed as right or even semi-centrist. One has not really broken with the ideology and methods of the Second International, has not emancipated itself completely from reverence for its former numerical strength, and, half-consciously or unconsciously, is looking for a path of intellectual understanding with the Second International and consequently with bourgeois society. Other elements, who are opposed to formal radicalism, to the mistakes of the so-called 'left', are anxious to give the tactics of the young communist party greater flexibility and manoeuvrability, in order to ensure for it the possibility of more rapid penetration among the masses.

The rapid development of the communist parties has occasionally thrust both apparently into the same camp, to some extent into the same group. The use of the methods noted above, which are designed to provide a prop for communist agitation in the united mass actions of the proletariat, as the best way of exposing the really reformist tendencies within the communist parties and if rightly used will contribute in a high degree to their internal revolutionary consolidation, both by educating the impatient and sectarian elements through experience, as well as by ridding the parties of reformist ballast.

22. The united front of the workers means the united front of all workers who want to fight against capitalism, which includes those who still follow the anarchists, syndicalists, etc. In many countries such workers can help in the revolutionary struggle. From the first days of its existence the Communist International has taken a friendly line to these workers, who are gradually overcoming their prejudices and drawing nearer to communism. Communists must pay even greater attention to them now, when the united front of the workers against the capitalists is becoming a reality.

23. In order to give definite form to future work on the lines laid down, the ECCI resolves to convene a meeting of the Executive in the near future at which the parties will be represented by double the usual number of members.

24. The ECCI will follow carefully every practical step taken in the field under discussion, and asks every party to inform the Executive of every attempt and every success, giving full factual details.

FOR THE UNITED PROLETARIAN FRONT

Proletarians of all countries!

The Executive Committees of the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions have at three meetings examined the world situation and the situation of the international proletariat, and have come to the conclusion that this situation demands the concentration of all the forces of the international proletariat, the establishment of a united front of all parties supported by the proletariat; regardless of the differences separating them so long as they are anxious to wage a common fight for the immediate and urgent needs of the proletariat. The ECCI is calling an enlarged meeting for 19 February ... At the same time it calls on the proletarians of all parties to do everything they can to see that their parties are also ready for joint action ...

Six million unemployed in America, two million in England, mounting unemployment in the neutral countries enriched by the war, because they cannot export. While in the ruined countries of central and eastern Europe, in Russia, in the Balkans, in Turkey, there is the greatest poverty. These countries need the products of the industrial countries to set their economy going and to enable them to supply the industrial world with food and raw materials. And, wedged between east and west, there is Germany, working without pause, sending out into the world vast quantities of goods at prices with which the other countries cannot compete. There is practically no unemployment there, but the German workers are worse off than the unemployed in England. Against their will they have become wage reducers for the workers in other countries ... Victorious capital is trying to lay the burden of reconstruction costs on to one country, and the result is that Germany itself is bound to break down under the burden and become a heap of ruins. And where the bourgeoisie do set about reconstruction, it becomes the object of speculation and exploitation which will give rise to new conflicts.

Three years of civil war and three years of armed intervention by the Allies have laid waste Soviet Russia, Europe's granary, despite its heroic resistance. The drought this summer, which threatens 25 million with death by starvation, makes the question of Russian reconstruction one of life and death for millions of Russian workers and peasants. And it is becoming clear even to the stupid bourgeois that without recognition of the invincible Soviet Government, without the economic reconstruction of Russia, neither the world economic crisis nor the great political tensions can be even temporarily overcome. ... But the world bourgeoisie leave the hungry millions of the Russian people without help, for they expect hunger to make them more docile. In return for recognition, the Soviet Government is to surrender Russia to a syndicate run by international finance, which would operate in Russia as it has operated in Turkey and China ...

It is not only the attitude of world capital to Germany and Russia which represents a source of great new upheavals. The Washington conference, which tried to solve the problems of the Far East, did not solve them. The great Chinese people, 400 million strong, has remained an object of bargaining and of continued rivalry. Aware of their inability to renounce the plundering of China or to partition it, the Allied Powers concluded the four-power treaty, which proves only one thing, that they feel how great the danger of war is, and therefore try to restrain each other from independent action by the frail bonds of a treaty. They did not dare to reduce land armaments even on paper, and all the talk about naval disarmament ended with a limitation on super-dreadnoughts while submarine and aircraft armaments increase...

Incapable of uniting for reconstruction, incapable of ensuring bread and peace, the capitalists of all countries are uniting for attack on the working class... The proletariat which during the war, by its labour in the factories and its docility, enabled capital to beat the world into ruins, is now, in peace time, to work harder so that the hyenas of the battlefield may on those ruins live a life of luxury and pleasure...

All the promises of the Second, the Two-and-a-half, and the Amsterdam Internationals have turned to dust. They have all shown themselves incapable of leading you in the struggle even for democracy and reforms, because they are condemned to impotence by their coalition with the bourgeoisie and, whether they want to or not, only help to strengthen the rule of the bourgeoisie...

We know how strong are the chains of the past, the influence of the capitalist school, press, and church. We know how great is the reluctance of large proletarian masses to take power in their own hands and forge their own destiny. We know how great is their fear of the defeats which the communist minorities suffered in the struggles which they waged to save the masses from the fate of slaves. We know how the capitalist press of the entire world seeks to rob you of your courage by pointing to the wounds which the isolated Russian proletariat received in its duel with the entire capitalist world. And therefore we say to you: All right, you do not yet dare to take up the fight for the new, the struggle for power, for the dictatorship, with arms in hand; you are not ready to launch the great offensive on the citadels of world reaction. But at least rally to the fight for bare life, for bread, for peace. Rally for these, struggle in one fighting front, rally as the proletarian class against the class of exploiters. Tear down the barriers erected between you and come into the ranks, whether communist or social-democrat, anarchist or syndicalist, to fight for the needs of the hour.

The Communist International has always demanded that the workers who

stand for the proletarian dictatorship and for soviets should form their own independent parties. It does not withdraw a single word of what it said to justify the formation of independent communist parties; it is sure that each day that passes will convince growing numbers how right it was to act as it did. But regardless of everything that separates us, it says: Proletarians of all countries! Close the ranks for the struggle for what unites you, for what you all realise as your common goal.

No worker, whether communist or social-democrat or syndicalist, or even a member of the Christian or liberal trade unions, wants his wages further reduced. None wants to work longer hours, cold and hungry. And therefore all must unite in a common front against the employers' offensive... They all fear being thrown on the scrap heap, and therefore they must join in the fight against everything which increases unemployment. And unemployment will be perpetuated in all industrial countries if the German proletariat is compelled by the Entente and German capital to slave away, exerting pressure on wages throughout the world, so that German capitalists can throw German goods at bargain prices on to the world market and then pay the Versailles tribute. Unemployment will grow if the capitalist world tries to impose conditions of slavery and subjection on Soviet Russia... Therefore unite to fight for the cancellation of war debts and against the strangling of Germany for the recognition of Soviet Russia and its reconstruction on terms in accordance with the interests of the international proletariat...

The Communist International calls on communist workers, and on all honest workers throughout the world, to come together in their workshops and in their meetings into one family of the working people who stand by each other against capital... Only in this way will all the parties which rely on the proletariat and want the proletariat to follow them, be compelled to come together for the common defensive struggle against capital. Only then will they be compelled to sever their alliance with capitalist parties...

The proletarian giant cannot stretch his limbs, cannot rise to his full height, in the bourgeois chicken-coop. When you begin the fight you will see that you need the sword of dictatorship if you are to triumph. But we know that this dictatorship is possible only if the great majority of the proletariat reach it through their own experience, and that is why the Communist International and the communist parties, in patience and fraternity, wish to march together with all other proletarians, even if they fight on the basis of capitalist democracy...

Firmly convinced that the fighting proletariat will be compelled to take the communist road, we call to you: Proletarians of all countries, unite!

EXTRACTS FROM AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL AND THE VIENNA LABOUR UNION, TO THE TRADE UNIONS OF ALL COUNTRIES AND TO THE HAGUE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION AND CO-OPERATIVE CONGRESS

4 December 1922

THE SLOGAN OF THE FOURTH CONGRESS: UNITED FRONT!

The fourth congress of the Communist International, representing 62 parties in Europe, America, Asia, and Australia, most decisively confirmed what the enlarged ECCI had twice decided, that it is the duty of all communist parties to do their utmost to resist the world capitalist offensive against all working-class positions by a firm united front. In doing so the supreme organ of the communist parties approved the content and aim of our work in the past year, and issued as the slogan for future work: fight for the united front of the world

proletariat, fight for the unity of all proletarians in common defence regardless of their political affiliation and attitude.

In the spring the Communist International appealed to the Second International and the Vienna Labour Union to organise through a world workers' congress this joint struggle for the maintenance of the eight-hour day, against wage reductions, against the attack on the achievements of the trade unions, against new armaments, against the danger of a new war. At the Berlin conference of the delegates of the three executives the Comintern representatives put forward a reasoned statement of these proposals. They were rejected by the parties of the Second International...

SIX MONTHS OF CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE

Six months have passed since the failure of our proposal to establish the proletarian united front and organise the defensive struggle. During that time the bourgeois attack has gone forward uninterruptedly in all countries...

In Germany the coalition government of social-democracy and bourgeoisie has publicly proclaimed that the only way to stabilise the mark is to squeeze more surplus labour out of the underfed proletarian masses. It has openly proclaimed the abolition of the last vestiges of economic control, it has given the most ruthless speculators a free hand. The new government of Cuno is a government of the captains of industry, the precursor of the open dictatorship of the coal and steel barons. Its character is so frankly large-capitalist, so frankly directed against the most elementary interests of the working class, that the social-democrats had to refuse to enter it. From Bavaria extreme counter-revolution is preparing an armed onslaught on the last vestiges of the November revolution, on the republic. It has been encouraged in its designs by the victory of Italian fascism which, without the least resistance from the democratic bourgeoisie, proclaimed the dictatorship of the sword, turned parliament into a cipher, and whose object is to strengthen the rule of the bourgeoisie by forcing the working class into complete subjection to capital...

TOWARDS NEW WARS

But the capitalist offensive is directed not only at increasing the exploitation of the proletariat; the danger of a new imperialist world war has again come clearly into the picture. Until now not a single capitalist State has started to carry out the agreement on the reduction of naval armaments reached by the Washington conference. Not a single warship has been scrapped. The building of new warships has not been stopped.

The Russian Soviet Government's proposal at Genoa for disarmament, or at least the reduction of land armaments, was rejected by all the capitalist Powers. The League of Nations is powerless to do the least thing in this field, even if it wanted to. Its decisions must be unanimous, and require ratification by the governments which are opposed to disarmament.

Europe is bristling with weapons, even more than before the war. In September, during the eastern crisis, the world saw what this meant. Only the renunciation by the Turkish Government of its right to occupy its capital and to cross the Dardanelles, which give access to it - only this renunciation by the Turkish Government of its right to self-determination saved Europe from a new war...

The fourth congress of the Communist International asks the workers of the Second and the Vienna Internationals, the millions of workers

throughout the world organised in trade unions, their leaders and the Hague conference: Do you want to stand idly by and watch the eight-hour day, the prime condition for the advance of the working class, being abolished? The workers' standard of living in the oldest industrial countries depressed to the level of the Chinese coolie's living standards? The most elementary rights of the workers, through which after all you hoped to find by peaceful means emancipation from the capitalist yoke, annulled? The dictatorship of capitalism established? Will you stand idly by and watch how triumphant capitalism, freed from all restraints brings about a new war, in which you will once again shed your blood for the interests of capital?

The fourth Comintern congress calls on all its member parties, and all the trade unions in all countries which sympathise with it, to put these questions to all labour parties and to challenge them to a common struggle against the legal or factual abolition of the eight-hour day, against the reduction of wages, against the abrogation of the working class's freedom of movement, against new armaments, against the war danger; for the eight-hour day, for the workers' minimum wage, for complete freedom of organization for the working class, for disarmament, and for peace among the peoples.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE FOURTH COMINTERN CONGRESS

The fourth Comintern congress puts a plain question to the Second and the Vienna Internationals: Are they willing, now that their policy has still further worsened the position of the working class, to offer their hand to establish the common front of the international proletariat for the struggle for the basic rights and interests of the working class?

It asks the Amsterdam International whether it is willing to stop splitting the trade unions, stop excluding communists from the unions, willing to help in a united front to lead the proletariat in struggle.

The fourth Comintern congress asks the Hague conference of trade unions and co-operators, meeting at a time when in Lausanne the Entente capitalists, after the bankruptcy of Versailles, are forcing a new Versailles on the Turkish people and so preparing the ground for new wars, whether it is willing to act together with us in showing the bourgeoisie by the mobilisation of the working class that the international proletariat is no longer willing to be dragged unresisting to new battlefields.

As we said at the Berlin conference, the Communist International does not expect the parties of the Second International, the Vienna Labour Union, and the Amsterdam trade union leaders to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was and is our goal. But we ask them whether they want to fight against the dictatorship of capital, whether at least they want to use what remains of democracy to organise resistance to the triumph of that same capital which turned the world into a mass grave and is now digging new mass graves for our proletarian youth.

The Communist International has spoken. It has given its parties their fighting slogans... It is now the turn of the Second International, the Vienna Labour Union, the Amsterdam Trade Union International and its Hague congress to speak!

RESOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF THE ORGANISING
COMMITTEE FOR THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
SPRING 1973

The International Bureau of the Organising Committee, which met in a plenary session in Paris on April 20-23, 1973, adopted the following resolution:

1. The International Bureau confirms its agreement with the resolution adopted unanimously on April 8, 1966 by the 3rd international conference:

"The London conference restates that the programme and methods of building the 4th International and revolutionary parties in each country are included in the Transitional Programme. This programme remains the only one capable of furnishing the solutions to the problems posed by the historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.

"The conference states that the 4th International did not degenerate.

"The historical continuity of the 4th International, founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky, restructured in the years 1943-53, has been maintained since 1953 by the fight led by the Trotskyist organisations brought together in the International Committee.

"Therefore the international conference states that the continuity of the 4th International was preserved by the activity of the International Committee.

"The conference takes note that the leadership of the International since Leon Trotsky's death revealed itself powerless to accomplish the tasks necessary to build revolutionary parties and the International. In the difficult struggle for Trotskyism, cadres have been exterminated, victims of imperialist and Stalinist repression, others were worn out, leaderships and the leadership of the International⁽¹⁾ failed and went bankrupt. In no way can this failure be considered as the failure of the 4th International. These leaderships went bankrupt precisely in revising and forsaking Marxism, i.e. the method of dialectical materialism. This is why they were incapable of getting rooted in class struggle, and especially among the youth. They were therefore incapable of assimilating communist methods and principles of organization.

"The fundamental unity of the international class struggle, which stems from the international character of the joint crisis of imperialism and the bureaucracy, implies directly the necessity of building Trotskyist parties in each country, against the liquidationist conclusions implied by the revisionist division of the world into blocs and sectors. Our perspective stresses the urgency of building independent proletarian parties in the Eastern European countries, the USSR, China and the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

"This central task of the construction of independent revolutionary parties implies the fundamental struggle for the political independence of the working class from the Stalinist bureaucracy and the reformist leadership. This struggle also implies a determined fight against trade unionism and all forms of prostration before the attitude that a revolutionary party could emerge out of the spontaneity of the working class.

"The International Conference believes that the Trotskyist movement must, through the struggle to rebuild the 4th International, build a centralised leadership of the world party of the Socialist revolution, in a fight organically linked with the struggle in each country to

(1) Footnotes pp.35-36

build centralized revolutionary parties leading the revolutionary struggle of the masses. The building of these parties and of the International must be led on the basis of the experience and of the continuation of an unrelenting fight against revisionism.

"The work of the London conference shows the need for the International Committee to politically prepare, within 1½ years time, an international conference (2) with the objective of bringing together all the Trotskyist organisations fighting for the 4th International.

"In particular, the International Committee will struggle to bring into the ranks of the 4th International the militants and groups that today are fooled by the revisionists of the Unified Secretariat.

"Trotskyists, organised as sections of the 4th International, must fight for workers' revolutionary parties based on the Transitional Programme of the 4th International. The struggle for this programme and for the construction of the party forms the principal base for their work in the mass organisations of the working class, trade unions, and in the work that must be done vis a vis the working class youth, the reservoir of the live forces of the 4th International.

"All work of this sort is subordinated to the principal task of building the party. The building of the party implies the publication of a newspaper capable of constantly struggling for the totality of the programme of the party, so as to heighten the level of consciousness of the working class in all fields of the class struggle. This struggle for the independent party forms the only basis of defence of the positions of the working class and all tactical considerations are subordinated to it. In circumstances where the tactic of entrism in existing workers parties is necessary, this tactic is led in a way subordinate to the principal task of building an independent party.

"To accomplish this objective, the International Committee will organise the international discussion along the following lines:

a) building of revolutionary parties on the basis of the Programme, in the framework of the practical struggle to rebuild the 4th International.
 b) the world unity of the class struggle. c) the defence, by the methods of the proletarian revolution, of the conquests of the world proletariat in capitalist countries, the USSR, China and countries having escaped the control of imperialism.

"This discussion will be led on the basis of prior agreement on the unconditional defence of the USSR, China, and countries having escaped the control of imperialism.

"The International Committee is formed of the representatives of sections designated as such by these sections.

"At the present stage, the decisions of the International Committee can only be taken by the rule of unanimity. The International Committee does not present itself, at the present stage, as the 4th International's centralised leadership, which remains to be built."

2. The International Bureau recalls the results of the workings of the 2nd session of the pre-conference in July, 1972. This session established the responsibility of the SLL leadership which, since 1966, has consciously led a policy of systematic obstruction to the opening of the international discussion proposed by the unanimous resolution adopted by the 1966 conference (which included the SLL).

The International Bureau recalls that it was in order to avoid getting involved in an international discussion that the SLL leadership broke

with the IC. Seeing that their dilatory manoeuvres to obstruct the opening of the discussion at the 1st session of the pre-conference in 1970 had failed, the SLL leadership preferred to break with the IC rather than participate at the 2nd session of the pre-conference which had been decided upon unanimously, (including the SLL).

3. The International Bureau recalls that the resolution adopted by the international conference of 1966 establishing the continuity of the struggle of the 4th International was the result of hard political battles during the course of which Cliff Slaughter, one of the SLL leaders at first tried with Varga to impose upon the conference an unprincipled agreement (3) with the petty bourgeois groups, Spartacist (USA), and Voix Ouvriere (France). These organisations, especially Voix Ouvriere which had split in 1938, reject the continuity of the struggle led by the 4th International since its proclamation by Leon Trotsky.

The International Bureau also recalls that Varga, who in 1966 was still camouflaging the positions he was forced to reveal at the 2nd session of the pre-conference, refused to admit the continuity of the 4th International. In 1966 Varga already sought to destroy all struggles for rebuilding the 4th International, but he had to retreat and cover himself. In 1972, having had adopted all the international positions adopted by the OCI for 6 years, Varga used the situation created by the break of the SLL and decided that the moment had come to strike a blow for Stalinism (4) to the struggle of rebuilding the 4th International.

The resolution on the Varga faction, adopted by the present session of the International Bureau, foiled Varga's attempt.

4. Varga's capitulatory orientation proceeds from the theory of blocs ("the socialist world and the other world") which brings him to deny all of the historical importance of the struggle for the 4th International. Claiming to be of the 4th International, Varga was forced to write that Stalin, in liquidating the Left Opposition in the USSR, destroyed the 4th International. By this very fact, the 4th International was dead for Varga before even being proclaimed, because of the physical liquidation of the Left Opposition by Stalin. The fraudulent nature of his so-called Trotskyist convictions is thus revealed. Instead of the Trotskyist strategy of building revolutionary parties in each country as a national expression of the struggle for the International - which also goes for the East European countries - Varga counterposes building a single, centralised party for East Europe, (the "Stalinist world") as the supposed motor force of the rebuilding of the 4th International. But on the other hand he condemns it. (5) Such a centralised East European party exists: they are the party apparatuses set up by Moscow, subordinated to the Kremlin bureaucracy. In reality, Varga is an enemy of the 4th International.

5. In this resolution the International Bureau intends to point more clearly to the conditions and political methods of its struggle to rebuild the 4th International, as follows:

6. Because of the ambiguity (6) present when the IC was constituted in 1953, it was proclaimed to be the leading centre of the 4th International - although the OCI (PCI majority) opposed this. This ambiguity contained in seed form the SWP's going back to the US. The IC's being constituted as an international leadership meant that the SWP leaders refused to characterise Pabloism's destructiveness to the 4th International in repudiating the principles of the Transitional Programme. This refusal of the SWP leadership was coupled with a deliberate policy of putting forth the problems of the 4th International only within the framework of the specific national problems of the USA.

In refusing the SWP's unprincipled reunification in 1963, the SLL and OCI preserved the historical continuity of the 4th International. This refusal of the OCI and the SLL was motivated by a principled appreciation of the meaning of Fabloism as a liquidationist, revisionist tendency. But the SLL leaders have refused to accept the consequences of these common appreciations. Like the SWP leaders, the SLL leaders placed themselves within the narrow national framework of the class struggle and from 1966 to 1972 they blocked all political work for the rebuilding of the 4th International. The SLL leaders' point of view is this: the revolutionary crisis will break out first in England. The victory of the revolution in England will clear away the obstacles in the way of the 4th International, therefore all the international tasks must be subordinated to the building of the sole English Trotskyist party.

These 'national Trotskyist' conceptions contrary to the principles and methods of the Transitional Programme lead the SLL leaders to abandon all international tasks. They also lead them, in their ultimacist fashion, to taking the path of 'the proclamation of the Revolutionary Party' in England, thus liquidating all the gains of the 3rd and 4th Internationals as to the role and place of the work of the revolutionary vanguard in the Labour Party. From this come the erroneous positions of the SLL on a whole series of questions of principle and practice, such as the Workers United Front - notably concerning the struggle of the Irish people against British imperialism. The International Bureau notes that they substitute journalistic flourishes for this political struggle.

The International Bureau also notes that the leadership of the SLL has condemned the Popular Assembly of Bolivia, thus demonstrating its incomprehension of the significance of the Popular Assembly as a soviet-type organ. It notes that it preferred to break up the IC rather than participate in the international discussion on the problems of the revolution in Latin America.

8. The International Bureau considers that the crisis in the 4th International is an integral part of the crisis of the world working class movement. This crisis itself is an expression of the obstacles to the proletarian class struggle set up by Stalinism, social democracy centrism and the leftist and nationalist petty bourgeois organisations.

9. The International Bureau reaffirms its agreement with the various documents discussed by the IC characterising the world situation since the General Strike in France in 1968 and the rise of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia as the period of the imminence of the revolution. (7)

The International Bureau takes note that class antagonisms and the contradictions of the imperialist epoch, having arrived at a point of full maturity, are causing a never-ending chain of revolutionary situations: insurrectional strike of the Polish Baltic workers, revolutionary rise in the Middle East (culminating in the Irbid 'Soviet'), the Bolivian revolution, revolutionary rise in Chile, insurrectional strikes in Argentina, struggles of the Irish people for unity, class struggles in the English, Spanish and Italian proletariat, the fall of De Gaulle and the victory of the social-democracy in Germany - the list could go on much longer. All these attest to the reality of the period of imminence of the revolution when revolutionary situations multiply at a higher and higher rate expressing the joint crisis of imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy. (8) But the counter-revolutionary obstacles of Stalinism, reformism, centrism and 'new-leftism' which are internal to the workers movement, remain sufficient to hinder a positive outcome to the revolutionary actions i.e. the

conquest of power. But at the same time the crisis in the workers movement is developing and sharpening.

10. In its general outline, the International Bureau characterises the period of the imminence of the revolution, which is a monument in the era of wars and revolutions, as follows:

The period of the imminence of the revolution in no way whatsoever constitutes a qualitatively new period in the era of wars and revolutions. It is in no way whatsoever a question of a stage which goes beyond imperialism in some 'neo-capitalism' or 'monopolist state capitalism' as the petty bourgeois revisionists of all kinds pretend (Fabloists, social-democrats, Stalinists). In the period of the imminence of the revolution is concentrated the full development of all the contradictions and tendencies of imperialism, highest stage of capitalism. The content of this period arises from the fact that the conditions for the proletarian revolution have come to maturity in each country as a national expression of the mature objective conditions throughout the world.

We see the period of the imminence of the revolution as a particular juncture in imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, in relation to the following analysis:

The October 1917 Revolution translated in a material way the perspective of the positive solution to the crisis of human civilization. But the isolation of the October Revolution, motivated by social-democracy's betrayal (assisted by all the centrist and anarchist formations etc) brought about the degeneration of the first workers state. The regime of private property having been safeguarded, the processes of decomposition of the capitalist society at its imperialist stage continue to deepen. It was within this situation characterised by the decomposition of imperialism and by revolutionary defeats, that Stalinism was able to develop. (Stalinism definitively went over to the side of bourgeois order in 1933).

Schematically: from 1923 to 1945-52, in spite of several revolutionary situations, Stalinism was able to cloak itself in the prestige of the October revolution and the victory of the USSR in World War II and thus reinforce its control over the working class. The conservative Stalinist bureaucracy's line was to use the international class struggle to achieve its counter-revolutionary compromises with imperialism (the policy of pressuring)⁽⁹⁾. But the historical impasse of imperialism saps the very possibilities of the policy of pressuring: from 1947 (Marshall Plan) to 1952, all of Stalin's efforts to use the class struggle for putting pressure on imperialism through the intermediary of the CP's no longer came to fruition.

Pressure no longer was enough to keep back imperialism. It would be necessary to lead the class struggle to the point of revolutionary clashes against the bourgeoisie and the State. This the Stalinist bureaucracy neither wants nor can do since its interests are organically hostile to the revolution: it is a hypertrophied bourgeois organ which has confiscated for its own benefit the revolutionary social bases of the workers state.

World imperialism and particularly its ringleader, U.S. imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy, both perfectly conscious of what's immediately at stake, are attempting to unify their political forces against the revolution. But unlike in the past, when Stalinist politics culminated in the Yalta and Potsdam agreements (before and just at the end of the war, 1945), the situation of the Moscow bureaucracy is no longer one in which it can use the revolutionary pressure of the

masses to conduct its counter-revolutionary politics. The march forward of the political revolution in the countries having escaped from imperialist control, and the firm will of imperialism not to let the bureaucracy use the pressure of the international class struggle, are leading the counter-revolutionary Kremlin caste to accept US imperialism leadership of the counter-revolutionary struggle.

This is not an abstract schema but new tendencies developing in world politics. In the period when the Stalinist main line was political pressure aiming at achieving counter-revolutionary compromises, the victory of the Chinese revolution - after imperialism was expelled from Eastern Europe - came into contradiction with Stalin's policy and prepared for the changes in the relationship between the bureaucracy and the masses which were to be manifested for the first time in the East Berlin insurrection in June, 1953 and in the general strike of August 1953 in France.

In the same way, in this new context whose general outline we have just traced, it is beyond doubt that faced with revolutionary explosions which they cannot avoid, the Moscow bureaucracy and the CP's will seek to take the lead in order to bring about defeat.

The new situation, period of the imminence of the revolution, leads inevitably to new relationships between the bureaucratic apparatuses and the proletariat. It is a question of 'the regrouping of class consciousness around a new axis' which Trotsky anticipated in 1935 and which, begun since 1952, is becoming more and more clear. Of course, we are not trying here to figure out the rhythm or time limits - which would be impossible to forecast - nor to determine which country will be first. But we do know that new relationships between the bureaucratic apparatuses and the international proletariat are becoming more and more clearly a tendency in the process of revolutionary radicalisation of the masses.

From 1923 to 1945-52, the main tendency was toward the reinforcement of the bureaucracies' hold on the class. The new relationships developing bring about a movement in the opposite direction where the class struggle leads to the loosening of the Stalinist bureaucracy's hold on the class.

11. Especially in the USSR and Czechoslovakia, all the repressive bureaucratic measures are incapable of liquidating the oppositional movements. This expresses a situation where, on the basis of growing contradictions, the elements of the crisis are accumulating within the bureaucracy. This situation is used by the working class in becoming more firm in its movement of radicalisation.

The internal crisis of the Kremlin bureaucracy, along with the resistance of the masses, becomes a factor which deepens the crisis of the international Stalinist apparatus and its various parties. Husak is not able to rebuild the party of Moscow's bureaucracy which was destroyed at the clandestine 14th Congress of the CCP (10) (August 20, 1968). At the same time Tito's policy of reinforced adaptation encouraging imperialist penetration is bringing Yugoslavia to the brink of civil war.

The contradictions between the various Stalinist parties is deepening not only between the Russian and Chinese parties, but also between the Spanish CP and the Russian party etc. Numerous signs which point to the mounting crisis in the Stalinist parties liquidate to a greater extent any attempts at 'liberalisation' or any 'Togliatti-is' dreams about the possibilities of the auto-reform of the Stalinist CP's. The crisis of the Stalinist Kremlin apparatus has produced several currents and will bring out several more. These currents re

from leftward moving centrist ones to overtly bourgeois counter-revolutionary ones (Garaudy) with all the in-between ones: new leftists, Maoists, right centrists, social democrats etc.

In this resolution we will not proceed to a thorough analysis of the problems raised by the situation, but will establish guide-marks for the Organising Committee's work, inseparable from the struggle for building national revolutionary parties. In spite of blows struck against them by imperialism supported by the bureaucratic apparatuses, the world proletariat and the oppressed classes have suffered no decisive defeats in the sense of a defeat bringing about a change in the objective situation, whether it be in Vietnam, the Near East or Latin America.

In Latin America the revolutionary process which was leading toward soviet power in Bolivia (the Popular Assembly) was blocked, but was not destroyed by Banzer's counter-revolutionary coup d'Etat.

Even if imperialism and the Stalinist and reformist bureaucracies still succeed in containing the revolutionary movement in Europe, in no country do we see any reversals, quite the contrary. In France, England and Italy and Germany etc. it is along the perspective of a reinforced radicalisation that we must conduct our revolutionary work. We would obviously be proceeding according to an abstract schematism if we concluded from this perspective of reinforced radicalisation that the rise will be continuous. Historical process goes along in a movement of jerks, advances and setbacks, a movement which is all the more reinforced by the absence of revolutionary parties in the leadership and by the crisis of the 4th International. But the line of development is one of reinforced radicalisation on a world scale, which could only be turned back by the crushing and extermination of the proletariat. But even in Vietnam where the resistance of the masses evolves in conformity with the line of development of worldwide radicalisation, U.S. imperialism aided by the Russian and Chinese bureaucracies - although it has been able to strike the hardest blow - has not been able to carry to the end its orientation of sending Vietnam 'back to the Stone Age' (Westmoreland). The tremendous setback of the Paris Peace Agreements does not have the same international significance or the same content as the German debacle in 1933.

13. In relationship to these given elements, we have before us a picture of drives forward which are contained, momentary setbacks, and blows struck which are severe but not decisive, which give the movement a relatively slow character where all the antagonisms, all the contradictions are forever becoming greater along a line of multiplied revolutionary explosions.

It is in this situation that the internal contradictions of the workers movement have become expressed in the crisis of the 4th International on the basis of the international crisis of Stalinism and social-democracy.

14. The International Bureau states its agreement with the Transitional Programme, and with the position of the Founding conference of 1938 proclaiming the 4th International. In conformity with the Marxist method, there can be no question of fighting to build national revolutionary parties without assimilating the significance of the founding Conference's decision to adopt the Transitional Programme and at the same time to proclaim the 4th International.

15. The proclamation of the 4th International in 1938 and the struggle led for the 4th International from 1933 to 1938 come forth

from the same strategical line. Once the international Left Opposition, after the German defeat, was led to abandon the objective of reforming the Communist International (because the bureaucracy and its parties had definitively gone over to the side of bourgeois order), the struggle for the 4th International was undertaken in order to regroup all the revolutionary forces of the working class that recognised the necessity of creating an international.

All of Leon Trotsky's efforts went to assuring all the groups, currents, tendencies and organisations in the process of breaking away from social democracy and Stalinism the possibility of participating in the struggle for the creation of the International. For him, this could only be the 4th International, but he never presented it as an ultimatum. It was the leadership of the ILP (Independent Labour Party) and the SAP (German Socialist Workers Party) that supported the Popular Front. It was Sneevleet who supported the FOUM's deciding Nin's participation in the Catalan government as well as the London bureau and who took the initiative of breaking with the 4th International.

16. Proclaiming the 4th International in 1938, Leon Trotsky proclaimed it as a centre of leadership. But for Leon Trotsky, as for Lenin and himself in the first years of the Communist International the rules for the functioning of the international leadership centre (International Executive Committee, International Secretariat), while respecting the principles of democratic centralism, were adapted to the situation and the concrete tasks of building the International and its sections.

We know that in 1940 Leon Trotsky envisaged the possibility of the Cannon faction's being brought to accept minority status in the SWP during the discussion with the Schactman faction. Leon Trotsky at that time even envisaged the possibility of being in minority in the 4th International, without breaking away from it. There was in this position no abandoning of principles whatsoever. Democratic centralism is not a static principle. The principles of democratic centralism were not violated when the majority of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party including Lenin and Trotsky accepted that Bukarin and the 'left Communists' publish their faction paper at the time of Brest Litovsk.

17. The war and the death of Trotsky led to the dislocation of the International. In 1943, while working clandestinely, the European Trotskyists organisations reconstituted a European Committee. At the end of the war, in 1946, the IEC and the IS (11) were reconstituted and prepared the 2nd World Congress of 1948. We can get an idea of the method used at that time from this single fact: the item put to discussion at the 1946 Conference about the political balance sheet of the 4th International's activities since 1938 was done away with in a half hour.

So it was that instead of the content given to democratic centralism by Leon Trotsky opening wide the discussion, using flexibly its principles, an International Executive Committee was substituted which blocked discussions or opened them in relation to manoeuvres arising out of diplomacy rather than revolutionary politics. It arrogated to itself powers of leadership that the IEC and the IS and its bureau were not able to assume. These are the facts as they happened. Thus for the preparation of the 3rd World Congress, Pablo imposed upon Frank and Mandel an organisational structure which they accepted: after discussion in the bureau of the IS, all the members of the bureau were bound by discipline of the majority. The members of the bureau of the IS were only authorised to defend the majority position in the IS. They were forbidden to bring up possible divergencies. The members of the IS were similarly bound and only authorised to defend the positions adopted by the majority in the meetings of the IEC. And the

latter was submitted to the same discipline at the 3rd Congress of the International. Of course, Pablo had assured himself a majority in the IS bureau beforehand.

18. The link between Pablo's position revising the principles of the Programme (the war-revolution, the bloc theory) and these organisational methods is evident. It was essential to snuff out any discussion in order to lead the International to capitulate to Stalinism. It was because the majority of the PCI was fully conscious of this situation that it went to the extreme limits of concessions in order to preserve the 4th International as it was reconstituted in the years 1943-46. There could be no question however in the International of Trotsky of repudiating its positions and ideas, of capitulating as Pablo's majority demanded.

Even when excluded in July 1952 the French majority tried to exhaust all the possibilities of the former situation. It was only in 1953 when the Pabloist IS took the side of the Kremlin bureaucracy against the East Berlin insurrection that the PCI majority reached the conclusion that liquidator Pabloism had destroyed the 4th International, proclaimed in 1938 and reconstituted in 1943-46 as a world-centralised organisation based on the Transitional Programme. The SWP and the SLL at that point had to break with Pablo and, together with the OCI, formed the IC.

19. Thus, the IC was formed against Pabloism in 1953 on the basis of Cannon's open letter. In the preceding points we briefly summed up the development of its crisis. We must now take up the analysis of the present situation in order to draw out the political and practical perspectives for accomplishing the tasks of rebuilding the 4th International. The crisis of the Pabloist US has reached the breaking point where the already evident splits (Spain, Argentina, etc.)⁽¹²⁾ have created the basis for an international split. The Hansen faction which is trying to avoid a split on an international scale cannot limit the discussion to guerillaism.

However capital the differences might be on the question of guerillaism, the positions of Mandel, Krivine, Frank and Maitan adapting themselves to petty bourgeois nationalists in Latin America and the Middle East, come from a whole revisionist policy which was recently expressed in their support to the Vietnam Peace agreements in Paris and in the French Ligue's leadership's crossing over the Popular Front positions. But these themselves come from Mandel and Krivine's theories about the 'new vanguards' which, 'from the petty bourgeois periphery' will 'win the proletariat'.⁽¹³⁾ These revisionist theories flow from the Pabloist theory of sectors,⁽¹⁴⁾ contrary to the world unity of the class struggle, which is the substantial content of the imperialist epoch. According to Mandel, capitalism has been superceded by neo-capitalism which opens up to humanity a new era of development of productive forces within the framework of the national states and maintenance of private property. On all of these fundamental questions the Hansen faction is seeking to avoid discussion and conclusions.

20. The crisis of the world workers movement has brought out (e.g. the clandestine 14th Congress of the CCP) and will continue to bring out currents, factions and tendencies seeking more or less confusedly to express the revolutionary processes of the working class. This will happen to a greater and greater extent. These tendencies etc. are tending to break forth from the treacherous hold of the apparatuses - not only the political and trade union organisations controlled by the Kremlin, but also in the social democratic organisations.

The objective situation of social democracy within the bourgeois state is being modified. While certain layers of the social democratic

apparatus are headed toward corporatist Bonapartism (New Socialist Party in France created by the fusion with Mitterand's bourgeois wing and a corporatist bourgeois wing), others are seeking to come together to express the aspirations of the working class. In the recent congress of the SPD in Germany, for instance, an opposition grouped around Jusos was organised against the formally bourgeois positions adopted by the Willy Brandt leadership at the 1959 Bode-Godesberg Congress. This bears witness to the fact that the social democratic party has not been transformed into a bourgeois party. In affirming itself in the class struggle the revolutionary movement of the German working class will attempt at first to win back the SPD as a working class party. With a correct understanding of this situation, the German Trotskyists will clear the way to building the revolutionary party of the 4th International.

The political crime of the 'transformation' by decree of the SLL into a 'revolutionary party' could make of the SLL a sect with no future, abandoning the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky about the Labour Party. This crime resides in the fact that the SLL leadership, turning its back on the living process of mass radicalisation, are deceiving themselves and misleading the vanguard in Great Britain about the ways of building a true revolutionary party in England.

21. The field of activity vis a vis the big organisations, groupings, factions and tendencies which have broken or are breaking away from reformism and Stalinism will get larger and larger. It is indispensable to understand correctly the significance of this movement, as we have just done. It is equally indispensable to have a correct appreciation of the significance of the crisis of the US.

The US is and remains the centre of a revisionist faction which places itself as an obstacle to the 4th International. But the organisations which make up the US cannot be characterised solely by their belonging to it. To characterise organisations, as in everything else, Marxist criteria must be applied. The Stalinist and social-democratic organisations have 'definitively gone over to the side of bourgeois order'. We Marxists do not conclude from that that these parties have become bourgeois parties - nor did Lenin consider the social-democratic parties to have become so. He called them 'bourgeois workers parties'. The decisive Marxist criterion is the place these organisations and parties occupy in the class struggle. Organisations controlled by the 'worker lieutenants of the bourgeoisie' remain workers organisations in the historical sense even though they will never be organisations leading the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat.

The characterisation of the organisations belonging to the US has to be seen from this principled viewpoint. Each organisation must be examined individually.

The SWP's place in the class struggle is not comparable in every aspect to that of the Ligue 'Communiste'. We reject the Healy-Wohlforth characterisation of the SWP as having become a centrist organisation.

In the USA where there are no representative workers parties, the SWP has occupied the place of just about the only workers party in the class struggle. Let's be more precise: we do not consider the SWP as the leader of the American working class. That it has never been. The perspective of building the revolutionary party always implies a Labour Party built on the basis of the trade unions. But the insignificance both of social democracy and the CP (which nevertheless gained limited but important positions in the unions) has given the SWP the place it occupies in the American working class movement.

Has this place been modified by the strong political adaptation of a part of its leadership to petty bourgeois positions in the USA, its ambivalence concerning the Popular Front, its positions on the war in Vietnam and many other questions, principally its unprincipled re-unification with Pabloism in 1963.

The political battle taken up by the Hansen faction against the Mandel-Maitan-Krivine faction provides a decisive element in understanding the SWP. This political battle against guerillaism is a fight to preserve the SWP. Within the American political context its crossing over to positions of guerillaism would lead pure and simply to the liquidation of the SWP. It would mean its direct integration into the petty bourgeois formations that weigh on it. In spite of its partial and oscillating character, this political struggle is nevertheless linked to the fight for the independence of the American proletariat. The place of the Ligue 'Communiste' is not the same. Krivine's organisation which Mandel-Frank-Maitan lean upon, is the motor force of revisionism. The Krivine leadership's overt crossing over to Popular Frontist defence of French imperialism, its open support to the Paris Peace Agreements signed under the aegis of US imperialism, its direct support to all forms of degenerate petty bourgeois new leftism and many other manifestations attest to the deep petty-bourgeois corruption of the Ligue. The Ligue's place in the class struggle is one of an organisation which tries to build itself in direct opposition to the class independence of the proletariat, and consequently against the 4th International. We must add, however, that the reference to the 4th International leads many people, especially young ones, who want to struggle for the revolutionary party to consider the Ligue to be a Trotskyist organisation. This reference to the 4th International weighs heavily on Krivine but it is indispensable to him in order to subsist as a counter-revolutionary smokescreen. This fact, which does not change the characterisation of the Ligue, is not without importance in so much as it is at the roots of several crises (splits, faction fights) present in the Ligue's political life.

22. In this situation, what place must be taken by the OC, which re-affirms its struggle for the continuity of the 4th International in absolute respect of the Transitional Programme? The main objection we could raise is that we are too weak to take on the task of rebuilding the 4th International. We haven't got sufficient political bases to do this work. These objections cannot be supported because there can be no question of struggling to build revolutionary parties in each country outside of the struggle for the International. In fact, this would demonstrate a total lack of understanding of the historical materialist method, theory united to practice finding its expression in the constitution of the working class as a class through the work of organisation. The International, may we recall, is not the arithmetical sum of national sections. Each national section can only be the national expression of the 4th International, each one defining itself as the 4th International party in each given country.

That is why we must have no illusions. For a long time now the 4th International has been going through a period of confusion and splits. Of course, at this stage of our work in common, the OC cannot claim the role of leading centre. What is involved in our political struggle is setting the OC up as the independent axis for crystallising all the elements which will come out of the official organisations, including those in the U. Sec., which are seeking the road to the new revolutionary party, the 4th International. Of course, again, we have no illusions. This new crystallisation will be very slow and painful.

What we must perfectly understand is that it is not a question of a

prognosis about Pabloism or of a theoretical criticism, but of considerably important political events (capitulation to the petty bourgeoisie, support of the Nixon-GRP agreements, crossing over to Popular Front positions, etc.) which will penetrate deeper and deeper into the consciousness of Trotskyists and militants who wrongly see the '4th International' in the US. We must build all our work upon the inevitable consequences of these political events and not upon secondary considerations.

23. We must base our work perspective on the opening of the discussion with the best elements becoming conscious of the betrayal of Stalinism, social democracy, petty bourgeois nationalism and Pabloism. We must formulate perspectives of an open conference as follows: the Organising Committee for the rebuilding of the 4th International must struggle for an open conference -

a) The conditions for it exist. Through our activity we must develop them so that it will be possible to bring into discussion the necessity for the International. For the OCRFI this can only be the 4th International with its programme. These conditions exist in the international workers movement including within the US organisations and those claiming to be of the IC set up by the SLL. To all of these the OCRFI proposes opening a discussion on all of the points in question: Popular Front, attitude toward guerillaism, etc.

b) We state that the International can only be built on the basis of the Transitional Programme. But we do not make an ultimatum of this affirmation.

c) We declare that we are ready to collaborate with any organisation, group or faction which considers it necessary to struggle for the International and to discuss within this framework the problems raised therein and at the same time we state our profound agreement with the programme of the 4th International.

d) Our tactic of flexibility vis a vis all the currents which pronounce themselves for the International has the purpose of trying to dissociate the groups coming toward or likely to come toward the programme of the 4th International from reformism, Stalinism and all varieties of capitulation.

e) The International Bureau considers that there can be no question of carrying out the tasks of rebuilding the 4th International without practical participation in the political and practical problems which these tasks bring forth. To exchange programmatic discussion for the practical revolutionary struggle would of course be false. But to exchange the practical struggle for programmatic discussion would be no less false. It is necessary to combine the two.

24. On the basis of the preceding points, a commission of the International Bureau is made responsible for drawing up a letter calling for a conference open (15) to all groups, organisations, tendencies and factions willing to open the discussion on the International providing they recognize:

- a) The struggle for the class independence of the proletariat.
- b) The unconditional defence of the USSR, China and all the countries where imperialism has been expropriated.
- c) Independence from Stalinism.

It is decided that the discussion about this draft letter, submitted to all the organisations, groups and militants grouped in the OCRFI

will be the first item on the agenda at the next International Bureau meeting.

25. Relating to this resolution, the International Bureau considers that the organisations adhering to the OORFI can and must continually exchange information, articles, etc. and thus prepare the open conference by facilitating political work whenever possible. They must also make sure that the discussion is continued.

FOOTNOTES

1. 'Leadership and leadership of the International ...' This appears to refer to national leaderships, as well as the leadership of the International.

2. 'an international conference'. It is stressed in this connection, that the original decision to call an open conference (i.e. appealing openly on the basis of a certain platform) was taken by the 1966 Conference of the IC.

3. 'unprincipled agreement' etc. This refers to manoeuvres at the 1966 Conference, which was attended by the organisations outside the IC here mentioned, between Varga and the SLL against the OCI. Documentation of this exists and is available. A fusion of the OCI with Voix Ouvriere was proposed.

4. 'a blow for Stalinism'. This refers to the whole 'Varga affair' i.e. the history of the activities of Varga. Extensive documentation of his efforts to form blocs with the SLL exists, as well as accounts of his consistent opposition to the struggle to open the discussion for the reconstruction of the 4th International. This culminated in his fight 'for the maintenance of the IC' begun at the pre-conference, which would mean, in effect, the exclusion of everyone except himself, the Mexicans and the OCI from the fight to rebuild the 4th International. This involved a theoretical capitulation to Stalinism, which we have already referred to.

Evidence exists of Varga's collusion with Stalinist agents.

5. 'It' refers here to the 4th International. The implication is that if Varga attacks the whole foundation of the 4th International on the grounds that it had already been destroyed, and he calls for a centralised party for Eastern Europe, he can only be referring to the existing Stalinist apparatus, or some sort of equivalent to it.

6. This 'ambiguity' refers to the failure of the IC to recognise the significance of Pabloism, i.e. the destruction of the leading centre of Trotskyism. This meant, on the one hand, the recognition of the Pabloist leadership as somehow a Trotskyist leadership, and on the other, the setting up of an alternative to them, rather than the fight for the reconstruction of the FI. This ambiguity meant that the SWP could go back to the Pabloist leadership, because it had never been clearly characterised.

7. 'The period of the imminence of the revolution'. This refers to a specific point of the class struggle in the epoch of imperialism. It does not revise in any way the general characterisation of the epoch as the epoch of imperialism, but it states the stage of the class struggle, which has now, since 1968, matured to the point where revolution (or, if it fails, counter-revolution) is on the agenda directly. The rapid intensification of the crisis of imperialism and the revolutionary nature of the various struggles which have broken out

in recent years, testify to this.

8. 'the joint crisis of imperialism and the bureaucracy'. The bureaucracy, as the agent of imperialism in the workers movement is thus tied to the fate of imperialism, and tries ever harder to prop it up. Thus the crisis of the one becomes the crisis of the other, as the whole, united, working class strives to finish with imperialism and its agent

9. 'the policy of pressuring'. This policy of using the class struggle in Eastern Europe, China etc. to blackmail imperialism into granting concessions and thus strengthening Stalinism, while at the same time maintaining a stranglehold on the working class movement, led to the formation of deformed workers states after the war. These were concessions by imperialism to the working class, analagous to the concession in Britain of the Welfare state, but made in order to prevent a revolutionary conclusion to the struggle. They were not, as the Pabloists allege, 'gains' made by Stalinism. But even these concessions ceased with the recovery of imperialism from its weakened state after the war; since 1952 imperialism has not granted concessions, but held out for victory (as in Vietnam) so the policy of pressure is totally bankrupt. In 1953 the end of this possibility of both using and controlling the mass struggle was shown by upsurges against the bureaucracy as in East Germany in 1953.

10. The 14th Congress of the Czech CP restored to a large extent party democracy and repudiated Stalinism.

11. IEC and IS: International Executive Committee and International Secretariat. What follows is a description of the ultra-centralism imposed by Pablo on the leading bodies of the FI, preventing discussion at a time when discussion was vital.

12. In several countries, the former sections of the USFI have openly split, and have been working as entirely separate organisations for up to two years.

13. 'new vanguards' etc. This theory is fully explained in the 1963 Congress Documents of USFI. They assert that the party will be built not in the working class, but in other 'vanguard elements', notably students. In Ireland this theory is expressed in the citing of Republicans as 'radical elements', thus basing revolutionary strategy not on a class analysis, but on the subjective state of certain layers of the population.

14. 'theory of sectors'. This theory is propounded in the 1963 documents of the 'Reunification Congress'. According to this the world and the class struggle, is divided into three sectors. This not only denies the international nature of the class struggle, it opens the way for its subordination to various petty bourgeois and reformist leaderships in each sector.

15. 'Open Conference'. This perspective of an open conference is central to the perspective of the OC for the building of the 4th International. The work of preparing for the Open Conference through discussions among ourselves in order that we may have the maximum clarity and agreement, and through fighting for the Open Conference among other tendencies as described above, will be a top priority of each section of the OC in the next period.

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

'The Prehistory of Pabloism' by Gerard Bloch (OCI)

Now that the international discussion must be developed to take in all the problems of the reconstruction of the FI and, consequently, the construction of national revolutionary parties as sections of the FI; now that, consequently, however long it might take, this discussion necessarily takes in and analyses, at a higher historical level, all the problems faced by the Labour movement in the course of its history (for it is the nature of this movement and its history, as Marx stressed in a famous phrase of the 'Eighteenth Brumaire', that it continually raises the same problems, until their final solution by the world victory of the revolution), it may be useful to review the period of the International's life from the reconstitution of the European Secretariat (1943) to the eruption of Pabloite revisionism (September 1950) a period in which the germs of Pabloism began to develop whilst the policy developed by the International leadership remained formally correct and when not one of the members of the international Trotskyist movement, it must be stressed, was aware of the extreme weakness of the international leadership at that time and the latent peril resulting from the growing tendency to cover up the real weaknesses of the movement with abstractly correct affirmations of principle but which were more and more estranged from the reality of the section's intervention in the class struggle.

'Concrete'

We refer comrades for a more complete study of this period to the pamphlet 'Lessons of Our History', and we will limit ourselves here to a few brief indications on some of the political aspects which seem important to us.

If today we go through the resolutions of the European conference of February 1944, what is striking is that on the one hand the comrades who drew up the documents really did try to raise the problems of building the FI and its sections.

'The FI, whilst maintaining the most rigid ideological position in relation to these centrist tendencies (new tendencies that were anticipated to appear outside the traditional organisations), must recognise their progressive character and strive by all means to facilitate their definitive passage into its ranks. In particular it must guard against taking a professional sectarian and dogmatic attitude towards these tendencies, and show by its practical work, by serious and sincere self-criticism, by its healthy internal regime, that it has all the political guarantees of a proletarian tendency called by history to play the role of a centre of assimilation for all progressive revolutionary currents'

Whereas the drafters of the documents were on the other hand well aware of the fact that,

'In the limited space of time still remaining before the explosion and mushrooming of the gigantic revolutionary crisis which will sprout from the present imperialist crisis, the FI must accomplish a complete internal revolution in relation to its conceptions regarding political work in the mass movement and in party

organisation',

which led them to proclaim that,

'Each organisation of the FI must, as from now, draw up an adequate concrete plan and passionately and perseveringly guide all of the membership's daily activity towards the factories.'

But the drafters were absolutely unable, despite the superabundant use of the adjective 'concrete', to bring any sort of concrete reply to the problem posed - such as understanding that the principal movement of the masses would necessarily pass through the 'traditional' organisations. They resorted to voluntarism, i.e. objectivism according to the syllogism worthy of the supporters of the 'cultural revolution'; the epoch is revolutionary - to win we must have faith in the revolution, to bring the FI into the leadership of the masses we must believe that it is inevitable, we must have faith (and fundamentally that suffices).

'Untiring struggle'

'That means that in the first place a new conception of their activity must impregnate all the members of the FI and that an unlimited faith must animate them and convince them of the huge possibilities of work which are opening before them and which will fundamentally transform the physiognomy, rhythm and tasks of the present sections. The task of creating immediately the psychological climate and mentality appropriate to the character of the revolutionary epoch now opening up is of prime importance ... Twenty years of struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists must tomorrow lead to placing the FI at the head of the gigantic revolutionary uprising of the masses. But this process will in no way be automatic. It will be determined entirely, right up to the last moment, by our conscious and untiring struggle to be, at each step, equal to events and new tasks'

(Theses of the European Conference, February 1944, on the liquidation of the Second Imperialist War and the Revolutionary Upswing)

The Key

Let us quote another naive phrase which ends a discussion article of that period on 'The crisis of revolutionary leadership, the single cause of the defeats of the world revolution (FI Nos. 8/10. June/August 1944) - 'The key to the historical process is in our hands'. But of course we are tempted to say that the problem was that, at the time, not one Trotskyist had a clear idea about how to use this key, nor even where to find the lock. To pose the problem of building the party and the International was first of all to understand that the Trotskyist organisations at that time, notably the French, were not parties, but only organisations which, fought on the basis of the Programme for building such parties - and the same thing was true on a world scale. It meant also assimilating what Trotsky had written in 1935.

'The FI will not suffer in its ranks mechanical "monolithism" On the contrary one of its most important tasks is to regenerate on a new and higher historical plane 'the revolutionary democracy of the proletarian vanguard'. The Bolshevik-Leninists consider themselves as a faction of the International that is being built. They are completely ready to work hand in hand with other truly revolutionary factions. But they categorically

refuse to adapt their policy to the psychology of opportunist cliques and to renounce their own banner'

(Writings 35/6 p.48)

And at that time, we repeat, nobody understood it. Could it have been otherwise or was it the inescapable product of historical conditions? We will not go into this question which we consider to be quite artificial. To work out politics in the past conditional tense is a rather vain exercise. The fact is that several years passed before the Trotskyists, leaving behind them the old simplistic and implicit thesis 'We are the revolutionary leadership. History wishes it. We must simply persevere' could at length say 'We are not the revolutionary leadership but we do have the programme necessary to build it. We are the organisation which expresses and carries this programme. So it is through this organisation that the construction of the revolutionary party and International passes; so it remains to define the concrete terms, as a function of intervention in the class struggle on the basis of the programme, the transitional forms of organisation towards the party and the International'.

Collapse of traditional organisations

In 1944 that was the problem that Trotskyists could not even pose correctly. When they raised the question of 'workers' groups' which were to be such transitional forms of organisation towards the party (for more details see pp.37/38 'Lessons of our History'), they saw them as the embryo of soviets and they opposed the 'workers' front' to the 'united front' (Resolution of the strategy of the European Sections of the FI in workers' struggle - point 10), defined in a purely formal manner because the traditional organisations were seen going to collapse and give way to soviets.

'The workers' front expresses the necessity of uniting the labouring masses on a factory basis against the exploiters and imperialist oppression ... The weakening of the control of the old political and trade union organisations over the working class facilitates the way for the direct organisations of workers within autonomous organisms. The policy of the workers' front drives towards such organisation. It helps workers go beyond the confines of the traditional Stalinist or reformist organisations which in the past have played a considerable role in lulling and paralysing the working class and heading it away from revolutionary struggle. It also opens up the road to soviets ... When ever expedient members of the FI approach the parties claiming to represent the working class for the joint organization of workers into groups, factory committees or any other direct organisation of the workers. In particular they approach members and factory cells of the Communist Parties in order to show the members of these parties that the splitters of the working class are not the Bolsheviki-Leninists who want to unite it against its class enemy, but the Stalinists and reformist leaders who want to unite it to its class enemy and therefore do not hesitate to break the unity of its ranks and to oppose the workers of each country to those of other countries'.

United Front - a manoeuvre to 'expose'

The United Front is thus conceived not as the fundamental strategy for the mobilisation of the class as a class with its organisations but as a simple manoeuvre to expose the traditional leaderships, whose control of the masses is in any case, in the process of disintegration with

moreover a very clear leftist idea of the united front from below which can be explained only by the perspective of a 'weakening' of the traditional organisations.

We know how history treated these illusions. The mobilisation of the masses passed - and could not do otherwise - through the traditional organisations, in particular the trades unions, by means of which the working class constitutes itself as a class; and essentially, the Trotskyists remained outside them.

Let us now pass on to some four years later to the Second World Congress (1948) where these same positions are reaffirmed - with one important difference. What was naively attributed to inexperience, 'an act of faith' as the texts we have quoted themselves say, becomes a hierarchical ossification. History has not recognised the FI as the revolutionary leadership? So - history is wrong. It is not of course said in such terms but injunctions are issued and, firstly, the Communist International is mimicked; every May 1st a manifesto is solemnly addressed to the workers of the world. We repeat, formally correct, but with no concrete content which intrudes into no activity; corresponds to no line of intervention in the class struggle of this 'world leadership of the proletariat'.

'World Leadership'

Yes 'world'! Whereas Trotsky had in the statutes adopted in 1938 given a name corresponding to reality 'International Conference', the supreme instance of the FI, The Pablo-Germain-Frank FI could not even be happy with a 'world congress'. They went so far as to retrospectively revise the name of the 1928 Founding Conference in order to call the 'Second World Conference' some ten years later and which was to be 'the most representative held up to the present by the world Trotskyist movement' international assembly - a sacramental formula used religiously thereafter at each 'World Congress'.

Academicism

And if the general political analysis remained, as we say, formally correct it was to turn increasingly into academicism, symbolised by the intemporal title of the 'general political resolution'; 'The World Situation and the Tasks of the FI', where we read,

'In the countries of Western Europe, particularly in France and Italy where polarisation is most advanced and the reactionary threat most precise, our sections have the duty to insist on the necessity of the unity of action and united front of all the forces of the working class on the basis of a programme linking the economic and political demands of the masses to the slogans of workers control, militia and the workers' and peasants' government. They must tirelessly advocate the formation of united front committees in the factories, trades unions, workers' districts and villages which will become organs of preparation and leadership for the struggles of the whole working class and other exploited layers in defence against the economic and political offensive of the bourgeoisie and in preparation for a counter attack oriented towards a government of the united front taking power. They must constantly advocate an extension and co-ordination of the struggles, and denounce the traditional leaderships who oppose this.'

'Insist ... Denounce'

'Insist', 'tirelessly advocate', 'denounce': all that is clear remains on the literary plane - at best, propagandist. And the conclusions of this resolution reaffirms the dogma; 'Since the FI is the world party it must be the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. It is enough just to give proof of 'more resolution' and 'more firmness'.

'In a general way the principle task of the FI in the present period considered as a world party is to enrol with greater determination than in the past in the mass movements of the capitalist countries and the colonial countries, in order to bring forward the revolutionary socialist solutions now more necessary than ever ... In this sense the FI can and must affirm its role as the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat and with the benefit of its cadres, its experience and its growing influence, go towards the masses with more resolution, more firmness and more political clarity than ever.'

Ultimatum to history

This time we repeat objectivist voluntarism has stripped off all naivety to address a solemn ultimatum to history.

History of course rejected it; and so the fault will be the lack of sufficient 'resolution' and 'firmness' (if not 'political clarity'!) of the Trotskyists. The time was not so far off when the FI was to seek elsewhere for recognition as a revolutionary leadership, and a substitute for the task of building the world party of the revolution and its national sections, a task which proved too heavy for it - firstly the Yugoslav CP which split with Moscow, still without having to revise the Marxist programme; then from August/September 1950, at the beginning of the Korean war, throwing overboard the out-of-date programme, that promissory note that history had refused to honour in the person of Pablo-Germain-Frank.

POLITICAL BUREAU RESOLUTION APRIL 7 1974
ORGANISATION COMMUNISTE INTERNATIONALE

The death of Pompidou is a major political event. Though the person of Pompidou is only of secondary importance. But once again the necessary developments fulfill themselves through contingent events. We have to consider and analyse the profound causes that have made this event, in itself secondary, a major political event.

1. The Failure of Gaulliste Bonapartisme.

The 'No' in the 1968 Referendum was the death sentence of the Fifth Republic. The application of this death sentence was delayed for many years. The political regime set up by De Gaulle at least in its structure and its form, was maintained. The President of the Republic still holds the power in his hands. Although the parliament had not lost all its functions and importance, it remains deprived of the right to form governments and control them. The UDR, a 10th of December association of our times, remains the custodian of the State. It occupies almost all the positions and distributes all the privileges and spoils. The different factions fight for the different positions. The political system was maintained in place because the bourgeoisie had no other solution that it could impose in cold blood. This regime has survived thanks to the political leaderships of the working class organisations. In particular the French Communist Party did everything to buttress the Pompidou-Chaban and Pompidou-Messmer governments of the moribund 5th Republic. The political leaderships of the working class organisations did everything in their power to set up political road blocks before the working class to stop it from opening up its own political road. This policy was materialised as much in the class struggle of strikes and movements as in electoral campaigns. Though the unity for the 'No' had brought down De Gaulle, immediately after the Socialist party and the French Communist Party broke it up: they opposed each others candidates in the Presidential elections of 1969; in the second round the only candidates left against each other were Pompidou and Poher. The working class was once more eliminated from the political scene. In the April 1973 referendum on Europe the Socialist Party abstained; only the French Communist Party called to vote against. In the 1973 legislative elections Marchais and Mitterand were leading a dialogue with Pompidou; they guaranteed him the maintenance of the 5th Republic and even promised him that he would remain president if 'the left' became the new majority. More, Georges Marchais just on the very eve of Pompidou's death declared that the united left would respect the legal and constitutional delays to forward its candidacy on a basis of a majority vote; in other words that it would wait until the 1976 elections. Before the present elections, the only task was to impose on the Pompidou-Messmer government only immediately applicable measures for the present government. The struggle of the working class was subordinated to this policy.

This is how the decaying bonapartist regime although condemned to death survived even under the general framework of deepening social, economic and political crisis which however, still remained within certain limits. The political power of the FCP did not stop the political power of dying bonapartism from gathering pace. It did however stop the working class from advancing its own solutions and buttressed the present political system. This lasted for some time, but could not last forever.

2. The Causes of De Gaulle's Failure

The death sentence of De Gaulle bonapartism is also the death of bonapartism as a solution for the bourgeoisie; in other words, the destruction of the independence of the working class, integration of the trade unions into the bourgeois State, which would have amounted to a destruction of the labour movement, including its trade unions as well as its parties, the ending of democratic rights. The road of this failure is marked by the 1963 miners' strike, the ferments and movements that opened the road to the General Strike of 1968, and the unity of the unions and working class parties, that called jointly to vote 'No' in the referendum of April 1969. To domesticate and break the working class this was the categorical imperative for a policy whose aim was to attempt to restore the authority of the state, restructure French capitalism, so that it could face international competition under better conditions, and preserve the position of French imperialism internationally.

The causes of this failure must be recalled. De Gaulle represented a bonapartism of a specific type. In 1968 his personality imposed itself upon all the different factions of the bourgeoisie as the saviour of the State which was breaking down. He became the arbitrator of the different factions of the bourgeoisie, and also, a rampart against the proletariat. We underline once more that bonapartism is a regime of crisis. The political form of bourgeois domination, most akin to periods of stability is parliamentarianism. But De Gaulle was faced with unsurmountable contradictions.

As an incarnation of the state, he had to break up a part of the state apparatus, officers, high administrators, police forces. He had to force a whole wing of the bourgeoisie into line, in particular a whole wing directly linked with colonialism, to allow the general interests of capitalism, represented by the state to prevail. De Gaulle set himself up as an arbitrator above the bourgeois class and he had to rely on the working class organisations to attempt to break the resistance of wings of the bourgeois class and parts of the state apparatus. In the April 1961 putch General De Gaulle again leaned on the working class movement and a strike was called at the time the 'Strike of the General'. In March 1962, once more, he resorted to a referendum to have the Evian Agreements approved and carried out. For all this he needed the support of the leaders of the SF and FCF and the trade unions whose leaders had called to vote 'yes' at the referendum. Gaullist bonapartism had for its principal task to destroy the working class movement. During four years he had to leave it standing to make use of it, to tolerate its parties, to respect the principles of democratic liberties. 'Time in politics is one of the most precious primary materials' wrote Trotsky. With its frame of organisations untouched, the working class had sufficient time during this delay to overcome the political defeat of 1958, which had been inflicted without a fight. Already different movements followed by the mass protest of 12th February 1962 against the assassination by the police of demonstrators at the Charonne metro station, attested to this recovery. Also, as soon as the Algerian question had been solved, De Gaulle started his offensive against the working class, parliament, the political parties, democratic liberties and the working class.

In October, 1962, he decided to modify the constitution by referendum. From now on the President of the Republic, the head of the State, the head of the government, would have at his disposal enormous powers, would be elected by the direct vote of the nation, as the direct expression of the nation. The National Assembly voted in reply to this initiative a motion of no confidence, but De Gaulle disbanded

the Assembly and kept his government. In the referendum he got a little less than the majority of registered voters, but a large majority of actual voters, although the main parties were opposed to this. In the November elections the Union Nationale de la Republique, swamped the other parties. The political objectives that De Gaulle had achieved show their deep significance in the order for the requisition of the miners signed by Charles De Gaulle on the 1st March, 1963. De Gaulle wanted to break the miners' strike and deal a decisive blow to the labour movement and the proletariat. Integration, (that is the destruction) of the trade unions in the state, liquidation of parties, suppression of democratic rights would then have been a possible road to him. The reply of the miners, their victorious strike, defeated De Gaulle and mortally wounded bonapartism. De Gaulle nonetheless pursued this policy even after the May-June 1968 general strike. The April 1969 referendum was the last attempt to impose corporatism. Part of the bourgeoisie whose representatives were Giscard d'Estaing, Foher etc. abandoned De Gaulle. It had become conscious that it was impossible to break and domesticate the labour movement in the cold.

3. The attempt of Pompidou: an impossible synthesis

The bourgeoisie was incapable of finding an alternative political system. Giscard d'Estaing and a part of the political centre who had called to vote 'no' in the referendum supported Pompidou as a candidate and later on, entered the government brought together by the president on his being elected. The transition from De Gaulle to Pompidou was made possible by the leadership of the working class parties and the bureaucratic apparatuses of the trade unions. And this transition only delayed the problems related to the political system.

Chaban Delmas' project of a new society was only a pale copy of De Gaulle's participation!. The policy of 'progress contracts' in attempting to alter the independence of the trade unions could not attempt to subordinate and integrate them into the state apparatus and even less destroy them. It blocked the action of the working class. However the constant will to destroy the gains of the working class was manifest in many reforms (reform of the schooling system, social security, hospital care, etc...), all elaborated under De Gaulle as an expression of the constant needs of the French bourgeoisie. However the working class had the initiative in the class struggle. The important task of the bourgeoisie was to attempt to elaborate and establish a new political system to replace the moribund bonapartism. Pompidou attempted this by conciliation of degenerated bonapartism and a restored function of parliament. For this he had to break the UDR and re-introduce as main support and participant in government the Socialist Party.

The first attempt was the referendum on Europe. The SP, which traditionally claims to be 'for the construction of Europe', was to be associated to a new majority. Pompidou insisted on the difference between the presidential majority and the parliamentary majority. Later on of course, new elections were to sign the death of the UDR and to find also a new parliamentary majority. The adoption of this orientation for the SP leadership amounted to building the socialist party on a heterogeneous if not heteroclit basis, if not to break up the socialist party as such completely. This orientation did not prove to be feasible. All the more so because it implied the dislocation of the UDR; that the members of the association of the 10th December, give up voluntarily at least some of their positions within the state apparatus and privileges. Furthermore it had to reconcile irreconcilable elements. - Parliamentary democracy and the maintenance of the bonapartist heritage.

After this first defeat, while pursuing this dialogue with the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, Pompidou found it necessary to intervene personally in an all-out electoral campaign to obtain a parliamentary majority on his old basis. But this did not solve the political problems. A postponement was all that had been achieved. As soon as April, Pompidou again attempted to broaden his majority to the left, in an even more overt way, taking up elements of the common programme he proposed to reduce the presidential mandate to five years and to align himself thus on the duration of the parliamentary mandate. The intention behind this project was clear. It met the 'Common Programme' half way. To try to find a new parliamentary majority with the Socialist Party and thus lay the basis for a political system which would combine the characteristics of bonapartism and parliamentarianism. For the same reasons again this attempt failed. In October Pompidou had put off the project.

4. Acceleration of the Political Crisis

At this stage the political system had no other ambition than to last up to the end of the presidential mandate. The decadent bonapartism was to fall in 1969. By their declarations Marchais and Mitterand underlined the fact that they were contributing by every means in their power to make it last. Bonapartism was maintained as an old house which is starting to crumble is maintained, by the sheer weight of things acquired. The crisis was growing in depth and speed. Within the majority, the struggle was deepening between the traditional wing of Gaullism and the Giscard wing. Inside the UDR followers of Lebré, Chaban and others came up against the Pompidou clan. In these last months their disagreements became public. The third Messmer government put Marcellin aside from the Ministry of the Interior and replaced him by Chirac, who replaced the principal heads of the police named by Marcellin.

The sickness of Pompidou was already feeding the electoral battle for the succession: Chaban, Faure, Giscard d'Estaing were all preparing themselves. The death of Pompidou brutally accelerated all these processes. The only cement that holds them together is the holding on to power with the privileges and spoils that go with it. The bourgeoisie is no more capable today of defining a political alternative solution than it was in the past; it is divided, the battle is ferocious and will become even more so. The parliamentary majority has already exploded. Chaban on one side, Edgar Faure on the other, Giscard on a third, without mentioning Fouchet. The explosion of bonapartism, the implementation of a long deferred death sentence, is now in full swing and bringing into the swirl of the crisis all the organs of the State. The example of the Ministry of the Interior is significant; the movement of the Prefects has been brutally stopped, it is difficult to predict the outcome of the elections. The rottenness and corruption of the regime, that have already besmirched the regime, will soon come out in the open. The political situation in France has become a subject for concern in all the bourgeois governments and parasitic bureaucracies. The 5th Republic has no more breath; the moment of execution is nigh.

5. The French Political Crisis and the World Crisis

The French political crisis cannot be isolated from the crisis of the whole of the political, economical and social relations that is developing on a world scale and in particular in Europe. The political crisis in France has been an early forerunner of the accentuation of the contradictions that have led to the dislocation of the world markets. This has stemmed from the failure of the bonapartist regime of Gaullism, itself a regime of crisis. But it cannot be analysed

in its development independently from this, which we have called the beginning of a big turn. The French bourgeoisie is one of the melting pots of contradictions: economic war, the pressure of American imperialism, have a hard echo on the bourgeoisie. Inflation becomes uncontrollable, the floating franc while contributing towards and experiencing the dislocation of the world market, means that at the same time the French government is expecting capital to flee, this has already begun, and an unprecedented disequilibrium of trade and financial balances, and the government is attempting to keep the maximum amount of exchange reserves.

The objective movement of capitalist economy is headed towards crisis, to a dislocation of world markets, relationships, production and exchange; it is becoming uncontrollable and flooding the capitalist governments and forcing itself upon them. The crisis is threatening the workers' gains, purchasing power and right of employment. It threatens the petty bourgeoisie, and even important layers of capital; the breaking up of the Common Market has started, it has endangered economic exchanges, and at the same time the political relationships between the imperialist powers are becoming more strained.

c. The movement started by the working class

But the working class cannot accept this without fighting. Taking as starting point the class relationships established in May-June 1968, the working class has started to move, pushed by the necessities of the situation, and materialising the considerable political experiences gained in 1968 and after.

Yesterday, the political consciousness of the political problems to be solved and the knowledge of obstacles to overcome in order to solve them, held it back. Today, it has initiated a movement to lift the road blocks in the path of its own political solutions to problems. After the fight of the Lorraine miners, the bank clerks' strike is a new step on this road.

During the bank clerks' strike, bypassing the bureaucratic apparatus and the use of trade union organisations was combined. Without analysing this in detail, it is necessary to point to the main features and moments of this movement. It started on the limited demands of a department: its demands were satisfied. Then, under the pressure of the base, it spread to the Credit Lyonnais. Then to other banks. In the first days, a powerful tendency was manifested for the setting up of strike committees. Workers believed the trade unions were indispensable in the strike committees. They demanded that their organisations unite and fought all divisive attempts. Genuine strike committees were not set up everywhere because of the obstruction of trade union leaders and degenerate ultra lefts. The latter attempting to always set up their own 'strike committees' or their 'occupation committee'. But in the Société Générale, where our comrades managed to take the initiative at the opportune time, a genuine strike committee was set up, incorporating the representatives of the unions. Also at the Société Générale, at our initiative, a call for a Central Strike Committee was endorsed and sent out. The trade union apparatus stopped it from being set up.

The movement started by the strike and the victory of a single department's workers had opened the way and all the other departments of the Credit Lyonnais flowed into it. They imposed unity and engaged in general struggle. Only when the movement became quite strong did the call for the general strike at Credit Lyonnais, then in the whole banking sector, impose itself. The strikers forced from

their trade unions - except the CGT - a call for a strike of unlimited duration until the satisfaction of their demands was guaranteed.

The bank clerks' Strike endangered the mechanism of the whole capitalist system. If only from this point of view, it had a political dimension: strikers were up against the concentrated form of capital, the State, The Board of Directors of the bourgeoisie, the government. Furthermore many of the banks are nationalised. The government representatives manage them. Lastly, this strike was a moment in the present movement of the working class, which starting from limited struggles, established the requisites of unity, and forced it upon its leaders. This movement is thoroughly political, and is headed toward a showdown with the State, & the government

During the bank strike, the mass of strikers were constantly engaged in a political struggle with the apparatus involving the opening up of the breach (in the bourgeoisie and the road for workers), forcing unity upon the apparatuses and having the trade unions play their true functions, facing and defeating the government and bankers and win. The whole fight was summed up in the slogan 'Tous chez Giscard' (All at the Giscard Ministry), expressing this perspective to call upon the trade union leadership, demanding that the CGT call for a strike of unlimited duration, the centralisation of the movement, and the direct fight against the government. The bank workers failed to force the CGT to call a strike of unlimited duration, and failed to impose the centralisation by all the trade union leaderships of the strike and the demonstration at Giscard's ministry. But the striking bank workers did force a certain amount of unity on the trade union apparatus. The latter managed to contain the strike and limit the movement, but were unable to break it.

7. The death of Pompidou accelerates the process

Pompidou's death gives a powerful impulse to the present process. By accelerating the political crisis of the bourgeoisie, it precipitates the development of the economic and financial crisis. The bourgeoisie is not a disciplined class. Capital will flow out, speculation will accentuate, inflation will increase still more, pushing the working class and the exploited masses forward and accelerating the movement in which they are already engaged. The political crisis will open up new ways in which the masses will flow. The masses movement will aggravate the political crisis to transform it into a revolutionary crisis.

8. Starting from our analysis and perspectives

To answer the questions posed, we must start from our analysis and perspective as defined at the 7th and 8th Congresses, the resolution of February 1st 1974, the text proposed to the 19th Convention of the OCI.

The presidential elections are a component of the present class struggle characterised by the fundamental crisis of the political regime, the crisis of bourgeois social relationships and the masses who are starting to move because they refuse to be the victims of the crisis of capitalist society. The masses attempt to use the means available to force the united front on the working class organisations and resolve the problem of government.

Our intervention is guided by the struggle for the united front of working class organisations with the perspective of the workers' and peasants' government. Our central task is the construction of the revolutionary party in its different components. This before, during, and after the elections. We start from the following: we are sure that the masses in the framework of the presidential elections, accord-

ing to the specific conditions of this electoral campaign will, on electoral ground, attempt to follow up and reinforce the political movement they have started.

9. The 1965 and 1969 Elections

The framework of the presidential elections in 1974 is different from that of 1965 and 1969. Obviously, the question of the united front was also posed in 1965 and 1969. Two years after the 1963 miners' strike, the conditions of the general strike were maturing. But in 1965, the apparatuses stopped the working class from expressing itself and uniting behind the name of a representative of a workers' party. Let us recall the manoeuvre of the time.

The Socialist Party produced the candidacy of Mitterrand and the French Communist Party rallied to it. We must not be hypnotised by the name of a candidate, and evaluate the 1965 manoeuvre by a name: what matters is what Mitterrand represented in 1965. He was the representative of a small bourgeois organisation, the 'Convention of Republican Institutions' a remnant of the Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance, to which Fleven had belonged. To endorse Mitterrand amounted to eliminating from this arena of political struggle all political representation of the working class. The contest was between two representatives of bourgeois organisations.

We therefore could not call to vote Mitterrand. We should have, on the contrary, led a campaign before the elections for the Socialist Party and the French Communist Party to name a common candidate, either of the Socialist Party or of the French Communist Party, or of the Trade Union Confederations. We mistakenly did not lead this campaign, considering that, as early as September, the problems had been settled, even though the elections were to be in November. It was a serious impediment to our policy. In any case, we could not have called to vote Mitterrand. To call to vote Mitterrand was to participate in the expulsion of the working class from the political arena, completely occupied by the political representatives and organisations of the bourgeoisie.

In 1969, the presidential elections occurred after the defeat of De Gaulle in the referendum. Under a specific form, the labour organisations united to say No to corporatism, No to De Gaulle. The CCI played an important part in the setting up of the unity of the confederated trade unions and workers parties. At the Confederal Convention of Force Ouvrière, we fought with success for the conventional call for a 'No' vote. The stand of Force Ouvrière left no escape route for the leaders of the CGT, of the FEN (Fédération de l'Education Nationale), and the workers parties. The CFDT (French Confederation of Democratic Labour), the FSU, the Ligue Communist, Lutte Ouvrière, decided to boucotte the referendum. As soon as De Gaulle resigned the French Communist Party presented their own candidate, Duclos, and the Socialist Party its own, Deferre. They broke up the unity. Given the electoral law, only the two candidates obtaining more votes in the first round being allowed to compete in the second, they managed to allow that in the second round there was no working class candidate. Once more the working class was chased off from the political scene. Krivine and Rocard participated in this political trick that had no other end than to block all perspective to the working class, to comfort the sick bonapartist regime and leave the ground free for Pompidou and Poher. In the second round, only these two candidates remained. We thus correctly led the fight for a single candidate of the PS and PCF in the first round. Also we did not make a choice between Duclos and Deferre, leaving workers the choice of voting for one or the other. In the second round, the working class could not recognise itself in Pompidou or Poher and vote for one of them.

10, 1974 - Mitterrand As Candidate

In 1974, everything is different. On one side, the majority explodes and proposes many candidates: Chaban Delmas and Edgar Faure first, and then Giscard d'Estaing and Fouchet. On the other side, Mitterrand. But this time, Mitterrand is first secretary of the Socialist Party, he is supported by the French Communist Party and the left radicals. Under which label will he campaign? As candidate of the 'United Left', or as the representative of democracy alone, without any border to the right?

It is as yet impossible to say. But it is probable that he will wage his campaign toward the right, as the earnest representative and guardian of legality and the institutions of the 5th Republic. So, what should our political line be, what should we call to vote, what sort of campaign should we wage? Let us specify right from the start: the CCI calls to vote MITTERRAND.

We must first clarify a point. Mitterrand 1974 is not Mitterrand 1965. Mitterrand has since then become the first secretary of the socialist party, a workers' party, or more specifically (as with the French CP) bourgeois working class party, a workers' party linked to the bourgeoisie. In 1965, he represented the bourgeoisie right from the start and directly. Mitterrand has probably not changed his 'soul' in the meantime; his past remains; his future, or in any case his aspirations are still to be a statesman of capital, a defender of the society of order, of the bourgeois state. He entered the socialist party as a bourgeois politician, the socialist party itself is heterogeneous and even encompasses a definitely neo-corporatist tendency, the 'CERES'.

For Mitterrand, the Socialist Party is an indispensable tool for his political aims. The Socialist Party remains a workers' party and workers see it as such. The United Front, on the political plane, is the united front between the Socialist Party and the French Communist Party. The responsibility now conferred on Mitterrand as first secretary of the Socialist Party gives him his major characteristic.

We are unconditionally for the defeat of bourgeois candidates by a working class candidate in these elections as in all others. When we called to vote for a candidate of the SP or the FCP, we did not call to vote for his personality or his policy but to give a class vote: working class parties against bourgeois parties. At this level, there is no difference between presidential and legislative elections.

Should we, or should we not have called to vote for Mitterrand in the last legislative elections because of his past or his future; To pose the question is to answer it.

However Mitterrand will be the 'Union de la Gauche' candidate. He will be supported by the left radicals and maybe even worse, he will state positions to get support even more to the right. Is this not sufficient reason not to call to vote for him; This line of argument is also without basis.

The candidates of the SP and the FCP in the legislative elections, or in other elections, are also the candidates of the 'Union de la Gauche' and under other labels, they also benefit from the support of the radical Party and others. In a general way they are ready to enter a ministry assisted by representatives of the bourgeois parties, if the circumstances allowed, or required it; their 'Unity of the Left' is without a border-line to the right.

But for the working class, what does Francois Mitterrand, as candidate the first secretary of the SP, supported by the FCP mean? Although

the left radicals call to vote for him, beyond the 'United Left' tag, he will be, in the eyes of the working class and the masses, the candidate of the united working class organisations against the bourgeois candidates.

The masses will perceive this candidate as a manifestation of the workers' united front opening up a new political perspective. Could the operation of 1965, in the name of the 'Union de la Gauche' for instance, by the elimination of Mitterrand and the putting forward of a candidate belonging to the left radicals, be renewed and under what form? If the working class parties were supporting a left radical candidate, for instance, we could not call to vote for him, even if workers had illusions in him: but precisely, Mitterrand has had to enter the SF, and by a trick, like in 1965, to come out as a candidate of bourgeois organizations has become impossible. The workers, the masses want a candidate of a working class party. On the other hand, workers do not see any impediment in radicals or others supporting the candidate of the working class parties.

We must come back on the question of the common programme for government. Its content is bourgeois. Quite aside of a formally incoherent content, this programme is preparing to resort to an eventual Popular Front government, to face up to the political crisis of the regime, that would lead into a revolutionary crisis. Can one vote for the candidate of the common programme line. Is this not voting for the common programme? This question boils down to the following: a call for a vote for the working class party candidate is not the acceptance of his policy nor that of his party. For instance, Trotsky condemned the PCUR signing of a Popular Front agreement but he was totally in agreement with the call to vote SF or Spanish CP, or for that matter for all working class organisations that signed the Popular Front agreement, and campaigned on its line.

To believe otherwise would be to attribute a privileged function to elections - be they presidential, or Electoral campaigns, i.e. to vote is an important political act; it remains however only an aspect of our political action. To believe otherwise is to partake in parliamentary and electoralist illusions. And the slogan; 'We are ready to vote for Mitterrand ... if he breaks away from the common programme' would be to ask him to adopt our own policy. Obviously, this is not what is called of us to do on the level of elections. Why not then directly call not to vote for him; For it is obvious that he will not adopt our policy and our programme. The same is generally true everytime we call to vote SP or FCP in a legislative election.

11. Why and How we call to vote Mitterrand

We call to vote Mitterrand - in the name of our policy - because we are for the united workers' front and he is the candidate of the working class parties. We do not denounce the fact that the 'left radicals' support him and call to vote for him; this would have no meaning; but we condemn the 'common programme', the defence of the 5th Republic.

We are unconditionally for the defeat of the bourgeois candidates, unconditionally for the maximum vote for the working class parties. We are unconditionally for the victory of the Socialist Party First Secretary, the candidate of the SP and FCP, even if he is supported by the left radicals, and even if he claims to support the 'Common Programme'. We are unconditionally for a president of the republic being a leader of a working class party. This, not because of his policy, but because of the road it can open to the working class; in the same way we are for a SP/FCP government without any capitalist ministers, unconditionally. Because, as such, it is a defeat for the

bourgeoisie. In other words, we do not put any conditions related to a programme to vote Mitterrand, or to fight for a SF/FCP government without capitalist ministers. Let us stress this point once more: the victory of Mitterrand would be a defeat for 'l'Union de la Gauche'. This statement is not a paradox. The aim of the 'Union de la Gauche' is to paralyse the working class to shut out any governmental perspective.

Mitterrand's victory would pose the question of a SF/FCP government, without bourgeois ministers, immediately. The latter would give the demand to break with the bourgeoisie an immediate relevance and would set from the start a political fight on this fundamental theme.

During the electoral campaign, we will develop our policy and our programme. What can and must the President of the Republic, Mitterrand do, if he is elected? Immediately give the power to a SF and FCP government without capitalist ministers, and relying on the support of the masses. We say, the common programme goes directly against this. What must a SP/FCP government without capitalist ministers do? We shall elaborate the workers' and peasants' government, we do not guarantee that the SF/FCP government will be that government, no more than we vouch for Mitterrand's policies. This is the method to put to the fore the demands of the masses and extract them from their illusions by expressing them outright, in contact with the concrete political reality.

12. Mitterrand Candidate, The United Workers' Front and The Workers' and Peasants' Government

Within this political analysis, we must specify the significance of Mitterrand being a candidate. He is one of the last trumps of a bourgeoisie without a political solution for the crisis of the regime. Confronted with the crisis of all the social relationships of the bourgeois society and faced with the deepening of the movement of the masses, the bourgeoisie is not united. But, . . . hopes not to have to use the ultimate solution of Mitterrand. The victory of Mitterrand would create a chaotic political situation which would aggravate bourgeois social relationships. This victory would be an extraordinary element for the mobilisation of the masses. And the rotten framework of the 5th Republic would break up without a stable political framework having been set up in its place at short notice. It would be the signal for an intense class struggle. But let us state once more, bonapartism is a crisis regime, but popular front solutions are crisis solutions matured to explosion point. That is, when the masses want to impose the unity of their organisations and set forth into action for a political solution and government of their own. The Popular Front is the betrayal and defence of bourgeois society and its state in answer to the will of the masses and its aspirations for a government of its own. The popular front is the last resource of the bourgeoisie faced with the revolutionary upsurge of the masses. Only the OCI (and Mitterrand by his own personal ambition) are actually for the victory of Mitterrand that would open up this road. The bourgeoisie and the apparatus will do and continue doing everything possible to avoid this.

But it was not possible to avoid Mitterrand being a candidate. Mitterrand would have had to have disappeared as a politician. It was not possible to impose a division again; the FCP might have arrived at the head of all the working class parties had this been so. An unprecedented political crisis would have broken up the Socialist Party and run through the FCP. Although the bourgeoisie is trying to avoid the Popular Front, it must keep these trumps in reserve. The victory of Mitterrand is not excluded. The factions of the majority are pitted against each other, composed of political adventurers, with only their sordid interests at stake - a feature of bonapartism - on the other

hand the dynamics of unity is not a vain slogan; it can also pull into the movement part of the petty bourgeoisie disgusted with the crisis and the adventurist factions of gaullism aspiring to power for their own benefit.

Our position is not determined by this possibility. In any case under existing circumstances, Mitterrand will already contribute to the mobilisation of the masses on a political plane and precipitate the break up of bonapartism and pose the question of workers' government in answer to the political, social and economic crisis of the capitalist regime.

13. Against Krivine and Arlette Laguiller

We will fight against the candidacy of Krivine and Arlette Laguiller. These two candidates are against the united workers' front and without principle. Neither one nor the other have government perspectives for the labour movement. Rouge and Krivine put forward confusionist reactionary slogans: a constitution relying on God knows what workers' revolutionary councils (the slogan of the social democrats in 1918-1919 in Germany) for a national constituent assembly to which the workers' council, in existence, would have been subordinated. The significance of these candidates is given by their attempts to get Piaget to become the united candidate of the 'extreme left'. As we know Piaget is of the PSU, a religious man, a neo-corporatist who has led the Lip workers to accept the laying off of most of them and for the rest the liquidation of all major gains, an agreement that no other even conservative and reactionary leader in the working class movement would have signed. These are diversion candidates against the United Front and also campaigns to discredit Trotskyism and ones which set themselves up against the building of the revolutionary party.

14. Satisfaction of Working Class Demands

The position of the OCI in these elections to call for a Mitterrand vote is not the whole of our policy. Class struggle will resume its classical forms and grounds. As soon as Pompidou had died, the theme of national unity came up once more to re-establish 'social peace' ... To obtain a climate of social serenity as Seguy, Bergeron, Maire state in the trade union confederations declarations on this matter. The bosses are afraid that struggles in this acute political crisis, with their majority dislocated, and the government too, being without perspectives, in the period of elections might force them to give in to demands, as it is impossible to keep on with what was purported to be an incomes policy. Already the bankers have been led to pull back all along the line to get the bank clerks back to work, this, in spite of the fact that the leaders of the CGT and others broke up the strike bank by bank (cf. Informations Ouvrieres). To the public employees the government have conceded 2.25% in April. In the 'Informations Ouvrieres' issue 651 editorial we specified that the demands remained. It recalled that the British Miners had pursued their general strike during the elections, and that Heath was beaten under these specific conditions. Our position is simple and clear. The class struggle develops on all grounds: strikes, demonstrations and elections. The working class knows by experience that in elections it is possible to win something. The price hike will not be stopped. On the other hand the bank clerks' gains will have a stimulating effect; we have to popularise these gains. The trade union apparatus will do everything in their power to impose social peace for the sake of 'doing everything possible' to obtain the victory of the so-called candidate of 'popular unity'. The OCI stands for the united workers' front. The mobilisation of the working class is paramount. The elections are in this line a means of political mobilisation, to be used to bring about this mobilisation.

Tactically we do not call for a strike now. We do not even talk about a strike as an immediate prospect. But we state that the demands must be satisfied immediately. This refers to demands on categories of wages and all others. But obviously the Fontanet reform is postponed, and there can be no general movement for the law not to pass. On the other hand the suppression of established posts, the change of posts, auxiliaries, are problems that remain even during the elections. We must ask that these problems be solved: there must be no suppression of posts, no changes of posts, and the people must get the tenure for their jobs.

15. Enact our Policy and Build the CCI

As was previously said the co-ordination of public employees will meet on 11th April. We will regroup the teachers, the high school teachers within the framework of their committee: everywhere where militants fight for the unity of the trade unions and the satisfaction of their demands these groups must be called to meet. The orientation to be implemented is defined in the present text. We must call the different political groups to meet and build new ones. We must associate them with our political campaign (including our fight to vote Mitterrand) for the united workers' front and we must associate this with the building of the revolutionary party. In the coming weeks of intense political activity coming up we must agitate on our orientation. In every region, public, political meetings must be organised. A debate meeting will be held on 20th April to centralise our forces; another on 3rd May. In this situation we must extend the sales of 'Informations Ouvrieres'. the preparation of the convention of the youth as defined in the youth orientation of our last Central Committee meeting. A financial campaign must allow us to collect 5 million old francs; a breakdown will be given in a few days. By and during this activity we will prepare the co-ordination of political committee groups on 11th May.

To sum up we have entered a period of intense political activity initiated by the dislocation of dying bonapartism, and the masses setting themselves in movement. Everything is possible and at a rhythm of class struggle that escapes our control. Following the elections we do not know what will happen and at what speed; things may become sluggish or accelerate. Mitterrand may be elected or he may not. In the case that he were we cannot even exclude an attempt, at a coup d'Etat by an adventurist clan of the old majority. We cannot even exclude that without waiting for the results of the second round; the movement of the masses accelerates and grows. The line of the CCI stems from the previous texts. Circumstances have often obliged us to stay isolated. There have been times when 'Trotskyists were exiles in their own class', (to quote a famous saying). It was necessary to maintain the tradition of the programme. From now on the CCI expresses the most immediate aspirations of the masses, its politics is directly inserted in the preoccupations of workers and the militants. We are fully capable of linking ourselves in the course of this battle to new militants and in particular those of the French CF. Our unambiguous position for the victory of Mitterrand allows us to link all these contacts by expressing ourselves publicly on these positions. To prepare for the revolutionary crisis coming by building the CCI: that is the essence of our policy. That is the true preparation of the 19th Congress of the CCI which is not separable from all of our political activity. And as the Central Committee sums up in the text to the Congress: regions, sectors and cells must live, act and fight politically.

FENN, THE NRP AND THE WORKING CLASS

In the period since April pressure to back down on its election promises has been built up on the minority Labour government by the CBI, and by its most faithful Tory spokesmen in Parliament, especially Carr and Hesaltine. The Labour government has been defeated on crucial votes. At the centre of all the trouble is the proposed nationalisation of many major companies by Labour under Wedgewood Benn's ministry, in line with NEC and conference policy. Benn himself, along with Eric Heffer, has been singled out for special attack. This is generally designed to break professional workers from Labour, to demoralise trade unionists and to precipitate a General Election on Tory terms.

The fact that the Tory party has not yet resolved its crisis of leadership brought about by Heath's defeat at the hands of the miners, will only retard, but not stop, all sections of the ruling class from uniting behind the anti-nationalisation campaign. For the various factions in the propertied class the question is clear - to hang onto ownership and control of the means of production. To do this they now have to discredit and bring down the Labour government. This requires tact, Heath is relying on the total inability of the reformists to nationalise heavy industry. He does not want an all-out clash with Labour, on the issue of nationalisation. This frustrates large sections of the employers.

There is no doubt that the Labour Party remains dominated by the Wilson clique which now balances between the Jenkins right wing and the Tribune left. The Parliamentary Labour Party is not wholly behind largescale nationalisations. Much talking is done by Wilson to try and obscure the class nature of the issues at stake in the Labour Party Election Manifesto.

Also on more than one occasion the Tribune left has submerged principles at the behest of Wilson.

Yet these factors are secondary when compared with the major shifts in the balance of class forces since the 1970 General Election. Despite the hesitancy to adjust of both Labour and Tory parties, a profound polarisation has been taking place. The British working class, in common with that of all Europe, steps hesitantly onto the road of taking power. The British bosses, in common with the world bourgeoisie as a whole, fears the strength of the working class and is trying to postpone a generalised conflict of forces until it has prepared the ground.

Urged on though, by the most class conscious elements on both sides, the Tory right wing and the Labour left wing are forced to voice demands for strong action from capitalists and trade unionists, even when they have no immediate means to fight for such demands. Seen as an expression of the intentions of the working class, the words of Benn must be defended against the Tories. Seen as a government which workers need, to fight the bosses, the Labour Government must be defended, and made to fight.

In the British working class changes in consciousness and organisation are prepared over long periods, laying the basis for deeper and quicker moments of class struggle. The periods of upheaval and intense class struggle have been short and quick to pass. Without going into detail this has set a pattern for the working class which it will not turn out of, however hysterical the rhetoric applied to its ears. Notably the

early 1890's, with 1911-13, 1922-26, 1945-51, and the present period from 1970 to 1974, have seen giant steps forward which have left marks on the structure and outlook of trade unions. At such times large demands are made of the employers (like the right to union membership, union recognition, guaranteed wages and hours, increased workers' control over employment and conditions), the advanced layers of trade unionists have turned to the Labour Party for an expression, at the level of the state, in parliament. To defend themselves against the bourgeois state the workers attempt to control it.

Usually the erstwhile lefts in the FLP have, for various reasons, given voice to demands for workers' control, nationalisation, welfare programmes, repeal of anti-working class laws, and the like. Yet over the years the workers have learned to treat with scepticism parliamentary lefts, mostly of petty bourgeois origin or ex-trade union bureaucrats. In the 1919 to 1926 period and in 1911 to 1913, the class conscious elements turned to a kind of syndicalism, to action outside of the mass political party. They tried to 'by-pass' the obstacle of MacDonald, Henderson etc.

The bitter lesson of 1926 was that the state could not be successfully confronted and defeated through left trade unionism. The mistake of the working class was duplicated in the mistake of the Socialist Labour Party, then the early CP.

It took until the end of the second world war for the British working class to fully recover from this bitter defeat. Then, in the 1945 General Election, it turned as never before, to seek a solution to its problems through the Labour Party, in Parliament.

Social reformist programmes, or nationalisation without workers' management, as occurred then, could never remove the basis of the class struggle, capitalism itself. The Bulletin tendency in pointing out the relevance of reforms, have never said this. What we do say is that Labour Governments have carried out measures which objectively prepare the ground for real steps forward, which although they do not deliver power into the hands of the workers, weaken the ability of the bourgeoisie to control absolutely the lives of the workers. In the 1945-51 nationalisation and welfare programme of Attlee there was created an objective conflict between the forms of state ownership, generalised control, planning of supply and demand, and the content: continued capitalist economic anarchy, 'rationalisations' against the interests of the workers, power remaining in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The Labour reformists always attempt to head-off the underlying tendency of workers to fight for power. Yet in order to do this they have to grant concessions to the working class. This is the fundamental problem for reformists. It is true of Benn and Heffer, it is true of Wilson and Castle. However much now Wilson wants to operate Phase Three, like Heath, he is forced to continually assert his desire to repeal the Counter Inflation laws, 'when the moment is right'. Whenever reformists move against the working class it costs them seats in Parliament.

So long as the Labour Party is accessible to the workers, and the trade unions remain independent of the state, measures of nationalisation, even in the case of bankrupt concerns like Court Line, cause more problems objectively for capitalism than for the working class. This is ABC. Remember, there is an absolute contradiction between private property and a fully planned economy.

The 1964-70 Labour Government rarely talked, except in a general way, of nationalisation, or changing ruling class laws. The statutes which Heath used against the unions were largely on the books all through this period. Yet not only was this present government

returned pledging to repeal the Industrial Relations Act, the Housing Finance Act, and the Counter Inflation Act, but to carry out certain national measures and the repeal of the Tory counter-inflation act.

Must we remind the WRF leaders that Wilson was the same Labour leader who took office in 1964? Why the change?

A process is under way in the working class which forces such changes on Wilson. The inclusion of lefts, like Foot, Heffer, Orme, Benn, Allaun etc., in the government (however degenerate they may be in real terms) is Wilson's attempt to adapt to the pressure of the working class. The process will go much further before any 'alternative leadership' is sought by workers. A lot of testing of workers remains to be done. The turn leftward started in the mid-1960's with the re-emergence of a kind of syndicalism in the working class, for the first time since before 1926. Workers turned to the trades unions for a way around the backsliding of the Wilson government. Yet it was not a 'turn away from politics'. The labour majority increased in the 1966 election, bringing in for the first time many of the left MP's coming to prominence. A movement started in the PLP. At the same moment the militant trade unionism at first brought results: wage increases, bonus schemes, hours reductions. The shop stewards movement came to the centre of the struggles, emphasis shifted from older industries to car manufacturing, chemicals, electronics. The decline of older sections induced a militancy in sections such as toolmakers who traditionally had been able to hive-off the historical privileges of British imperialism. Left union leaders, like Scanlon, Jones, Clive Jenkins, Easnett, Roberts, emerged on the basis of this trend. The working class began to sense a fight was coming, and tried to find leaders to match up to it. It turned to the left reformists.

Throughout the period of the 1964-70 Labour government, the Labour Party itself was in decline. The Bevanite left had collapsed some years before, only a small group of cynical Tribunites remained. Constituency membership declined. But when Heath was elected and began his attack on the unions, the Labour Party began to come alive. In one sense its previous decline, and the exit of the Trotskyist SLL in 1964, made things easy for lefts like Benn, and centrists like the 'Militant' group to grow. Workers and youth joined, and are joining to build a fighting leadership. All they find is Benn and 'Militant' so they support them. Although what is really at stake is state power, the first steps being taken by the workers are more modest, and able to be reflected by Benn. Benn not only expresses the ideas of most militant workers, but also now heads a new left wing in the Labour Party, which grows week by week. The period of left trade unionism, of Scanlon and Jones, has come to an end. Each action for wages, for welfare services, for job security, now requires a Labour government in office.

The Trotskyists - if they are to gain from the growing left wing in the Labour Party, the forces necessary to remove Benn, must adopt the tactic of supporting him against the bourgeoisie when he speaks for nationalisation, and forcing him to carry the fight further. In this way unity in action can be forged with those workers who believe Benn to be genuinely fighting in their interests.

Let us now turn to recent events.

On June 12th, a group of Tories decided to forstall any move by Labour to introduce a nationalisation programme. They tabled a motion: 'That this House requests the Secretary of State for Industry to cease his destructive attack on industry'. On the same day Heath said, 'The unfortunate civil servants who are compelled to work on these plans are known in Whitehall as the Gosplan department ...'

On June 14th, Carr said in Oxfordshire 'that the Governemnt is the most extreme and doctrinaire in living memory. Its policies and plans are designed to lead consciously and deliberately to a state-dominated socialist society which would be extremely difficult to reverse'. Also on June 14th Whitelaw said of Benn and Heffer, 'Their openly declared purpose is to make an irreversible and fundamental change in our society'. He also called for an immediate election. On June 24th Eldon Griffiths, Tory front-bencher said 'Labour intends to turn Britain into the most state-controlled nation in Europe outside the Soviet Bloc'. At the same time Aims of Industry published a pamphlet attacking nationalisation, called 'The Ugly Face of Mr. Wedgewood Benn'.

In a letter to 'The Times' Richard Powell of the Institute of Directors, wrote, 'to the outside world the spectacle of British Ministers squabbling with British industry, must be ... a sorry one... Nor is this the only sign of a dangerously divided nation. Within the political world, the days of broad agreement between the main political parties on matters of basic, dare I say patriotic, concern, seem to be ending - witness the Government's approach to the EEC and industrial relations'.

'One reason is that for the first time the top ranks of the British Labour Party and trade unionism have been penetrated by men soaked in Marxist thinking. This both widens the gulf between the political parties themselves and also threatens the Labour Party with internal disruption....'

Even clearer is a lead article in the July 'Business World', under the title 'What the Fanatic Mr. Benn proposes to do to your Company and how we can stop him'. It says, 'As soon as we discovered Mr. Benn's plan we told businessmen they would have to fight. They hesitated - but last week we printed statements by Lord Watkinson, chairman of Cadbury-Schweppes and Sir Val Duncan, chairman of Rio Tinto, telling businessmen the time has come when they must fight for their existence'.

'Businessmen must use their strength ... to protect their country from the ambitions of the fanatical Mr. Benn ...' 'If you are a Conservative or a Liberal make your presence felt at the local headquarters (the leaders of both these parties are half-hearted towards business. Put strength into them).'

These statements are very clear, the ruling class will not tolerate a Labour minority government which attempts to bring in a single measure against their interests. The bosses must resume their attacks on the standards of life of workers and in order to do this Labour must be removed from office. In attacking Benn, they are attacking the working class movement. Benn, a left reformist, with no intention of taking power from the bourgeoisie, has come to personify a whole tendency in the workers' movement for Heath Carr and the CBI.

Every time the Tories attack Benn it is our duty to defend him, and through him the Labour Government, and unions from their attack.

This in no way implies being 'tied to the bureaucracy' or 'to bankrupt reformism' as G. Healy never tires of saying the Bulletin is. Surely the only way to really prove that Benn cannot nationalise industry under workers' control is to put him to the test? Otherwise it is all hot air, saying 'Benn is a traitor' ad nauseum.

This particular affair marks the turning point in the relationship between the Labour government and the bourgeoisie. When Heath was smashed by the miners, the Tories, in confusion and divided, were in no position to stop Foot granting the miners a massive wage increase, having just failed to form a 'patriotic coalition' with the Liberals. Labour has been forced to concede a number of things against its will

because of its base in the working class. These concessions and the continuing intransigence of the workers have toughened-up the Tories, and the Liberals as well.

All the forces of the class enemy are lined up against the party which the working class voted for - Labour.

Wilson is reneging on conference decisions, the working class wants a clear lead from Labour that it will fight the bosses. In the absence of such a lead it continues, like the nurses and NALGO to struggle against inflation. At this time, if sections of workers turn away from Labour, even because they have been made cynical by its inaction, is it not true this objectively helps only the Tories? The unity of the working class, behind Labour, against the CBI must be our first consideration. If we fight to strengthen this unity, on a principled basis, then we can expect to win the leadership of leftward-moving elements. If we objectively divide the working class by policies which can neither keep the Tories out of office, nor test the Labour leaders we help only the right wing and, ultimately Heath.

A campaign must be mounted, of unconditional support for the Labour Government, against Heath and the CBI, with a demand to implement Labour Party Conference decisions. Such a campaign does not contradict the Trotskyist Transitional Programme, which attempts to bridge the gap between the objective need for socialist revolution, and the consciousness and history of the working class, expressed through its mass organisations. In fact, in the special conditions of Britain where the working class has only ever supported one mass party, a reformist party, where the Comintern never played a leading role, and where the struggle for a workers' government historically takes the form of support for Labour; to denounce a Labour Government without offering a real alternative serves only to drive a wedge between the WRP and the workers who support Labour. Workers will stringently criticise Benn and Co., but within a framework of support. Didn't the WRP election results prove this? There is a world of difference between doorstep criticism of Wilson, and a mass turn away from Labour. Empirically the WRP leaders know this. That's why every lead article in the WF moronically and with the tone of a magic incantation calls for 'an emergency recall Labour Party Conference ...' What a work of genius! An attempt from outside of the growing Labour Party left wing, to galvanise it, force it into a confrontation with the rights, Wilsonites and 'lefts', break it from a 70-year allegiance to Labour and form a new mass party. All in a weekend's conference! And all to be placed on videotape.

No comrades! If Christ needed to retreat into the wilderness for 40 days to summon strength to lead the masses, the same does not apply to Trotskyists in Britain. The 10 years of increasing isolation from the mass movement have not endowed the WRP leaders with any mystical powers. In 1964 when workers turned to Labour, the SLL turned away. Today, when Benn is under attack from the bosses the WRP will not defend the Labour Government. If the WRP wants to break the working class from reformism in Britain it must first defend Labour against Heath. It must attempt to account for 10 years of mistaken perspective and re-enter the Labour Party. It must win the best Labour Party members and supporters before it can win the whole class. These problems are inescapable.

Finally, let us turn to the actual way WF has handled things over the past three months.

At the beginning of March Jack Gale in a superficial itinerary of the 1964-70 Labour Government, attempted to show it was a government whose

only desire was to serve the bosses, which had no relationship with the working class. He glossed over the significant occasions on which Wilson had been forced to back down by the unions and did not reveal at all the succeeding crises which swept over the SLL during this period because of its self-isolation. The problem of trying to change Labour from outside was revealed in great starkness during this period. For Gale though, one or two generalities suffice.

'It was time', he said 'to pass from protest to action, and to force Wilson's resignation, replacing the Labour Party leaders with others pledged to repeal all anti-working class measures'. Well comrade Gale, replace Wilson with whom? By what process? How were hundreds of thousands of Labour Party members 'to pass from protest to action' under the leadership of a small group which was not even represented in the party? Perhaps you were advising the centrists to pursue such a policy. But Gale is not without his contradictions, like all the older WRF members who cannot quite make the breathtaking conceptual somersaults performed so deftly by the newer journalists. On June 7th he expressed the position of the Trotskyists over many years, now that of the Bulletin most concisely: 'Atkinson's stand (against the BEC) should be supported and developed further. The 'left' MP's should challenge the right wing on every one of these retreats from socialism. They should be challenged both in Parliament and throughout the Labour movement.'

Correct! When will the WRF take this advice?

Two elements are inherent in all the other articles written in WF about this minority Labour government. One is that the Tories are happy with it, since it serves as a Trojan horse for Tory policies, in the workers movement and that a stereotype plan exists for a great betrayal of the workers into the hands of the Tories at the right moment. The Tories were not thrown out, after all! They simply saw it necessary to have a period to further discredit social democracy. For instance S. Johns on March 9th, 'The capitalist press will undoubtedly turn its guns on Labour when it thinks it is time to destroy social democracy and bring back to power a dictatorial Tory regime'. What a simply plan, with only one hitch, 'the working class stands in the way'. Inherent in this hitch is an important link between the workers and Labour, but is never developed. Why should workers fight to defend 'reformist class collaborators in the Labour leadership (who refuse to break with the capitalist class and end the economic crisis by expropriating all banking and industry without compensation and under workers' control' (i.e. refuse to make a revolution?) A good question.

On March 6th, S. Johns gives us the answer, abstractly and without historical reference, but correctly: 'While millions of workers may express scepticism in Labour in the big working class areas they do come out for their traditional party'. Again the Bulletin would like to ask WRF members, why do workers 'come out for their traditional party'?

According to J. Gale on June 27th 'Every sincere Labour Party member knows that the right wing of the FLP agree with the Tories on every fundamental question and would join with them and the Liberals in a coalition government ...'. So, the working class, is faced with a mass of contradictions: whilst expressing 'scepticism', millions of workers and 'sincere Labour Party members' 'come out for their traditional party' knowing 'that the right wing ... agree with the Tories ...'. You see, comrades of the WRF this appears to be a mess but life really is as complicated as this, only this reality never appears in your practice, because the only solutions offered to the 'sincere Labour Party members' by Gale is 'to join with the WRF in campaigning for an emergency conference of the Labour Party and a General Election'. Where is the campaign to take up the real demands of the working class, inside the Labour Party?

In no issue of WF do the journalists lay bare the concrete way in which workers attempt to use Labour to fight the Tories. The Labour Party is not a group of MP's in parliamentary being manipulated by the ruling class, it is a material apparatus, in which, with the unions, the workers fight, yet the WRF leaders reduce the problem of reformism to one of ideas, and ideas voiced only in Parliament, with the 'permission' of the ruling class. For example, according to Gale on July 4th, 'The principle of nationalisation has won such fundamental acceptance among the working class that subsequent Labour leaders have totally failed to wipe it out'. Here we are not fighting for real nationalisation but 'the principle of nationalisation'. Over and over WF calls the Labour government the plaything of the Tories, as if Heath consciously decided to be defeated by the miners as a good tactical manoeuvre!

For instance on March 7th, A. Mitchell said 'Millionaire merchant banker, Rupert Hambro spoke for the city establishment when he said "I do not think we will find ourselves thrown into the terrible horrors of nationalising or pulling out of the Common Market ... (this) is the assured response of a ruling class which historically has the measure of the tame reformists"'.

On July 5th, 'It is now blatantly obvious that Harold Wilson and his cabinet are completely in the pockets of the Tory Party at Westminster. Heath, Carr and Company openly express their sneering contempt for these puppets, who attack the workers who voted them into office while crawling on their knees before every demand of big business'.

So, the attacks of the bosses on Benn and nationalisation, even in magazines intended only for managing directors, and written by other directors, are all a cover, because, 'When they attack nationalisation, the Tories know that Benn's proposals present no threat at all to big business'...! (Mitchell July 1st)

Yet Mitchell contradicts himself, again without seeing a material link, in the form of the Labour Party, between Benn and the workers. In an article on June 22nd he said 'Benn becomes the target for such vituperative criticism not because of what he says, but because of what workers take him to be saying. Unwittingly he is igniting aspirations and feelings in the working class that go way beyond his own shallow dimensions of the class struggle. He doesn't see it, but the ruling class does and that is why the Tories and the capitalist press are hammering him into line'. Correct! Now, Mitchell, tell us in what form these 'aspirations and feelings in the working class' express themselves.

Here we reach some interesting conclusions. The WRF has some mutually exclusive positions, yet the dominant one of the moment is a reflection of just that anti-parliamentary syndicalism we spoke of earlier.

For instance, on June 22nd, R. Bull said 'The working class is demanding legislation attacking private capitalism (sic) Wilson's minority government cannot and will not provide it. As usual the 'lefts' in parliament are refusing to fight. They want force a political confrontation(?) to compel Wilson to call an election. The political confrontation must be forced by the mass movement'.

On June 27th S. Johns, 'The working class should urge through their unions that the Labour Party legislate such a programme'. On July 1st, 'When (the Tories) attack nationalisation ... their fire is really directed against the working class and the growing movement towards occupations as a step towards the ownership and control of private and state-owned industry'.

This peculiar and thinly veiled syndicalism is a resurrection of that voiced by Behan, in the period 1959-60, then the SLL in 1966-69, when Healy's line on more than one occasion was 'General Strike to force Wilson to resign.' Yet it is not the militant rank and filism of the workers, looking for a short cut around social democracy, but the expression of a tragic degeneration in the Trotskyist movement. There is no 'instant' way to depose Wilson or Benn from the leadership of the working class, and the political struggle, for political leadership cannot be carried out only from the unions with 'advice' being offered to members of the Labour Party. It requires entry work of a consistent nature. In trying to exclude Wilson, Benn and others from their calculations, and in appeals to 'the mass movement', the WRF leadership only sadly echo the mistake of the Stalinist 'united front from below'.

Yet a new dimension is added, by the WRF, to this error. The rank and file mass movement, based on the unions, with the support of 'sincere' Labour Party members, is to 'force legislation' on Wilson and Benn, by an emergency conference. The mistake here is monumental. First, in order to force Wilson to fight for the measures called for by the WRF nothing less than a dual power situation in society will have to exist. This cannot be called into being by any left tendency, however broadly based, it will emerge when the objective situation produces it. Second, the Labour Party emergency conference, as seen by the WRF, is none other than the shadow of a soviet. Unable to become a mass party, cut off from the mass party and turning away from Marxism itself the WRF is seeking to 'summon up' the ghosts of history by sheer will power. No comrades, such a congress, with the powers you intend, will not be produced in the working class in Britain at this stage, however hard you campaign. You may bring the spirit of Jobling, of Marx, of Lenin to life in a Pageant, with the aid of false beards and make-up, but you cannot force the live working class on to your stage. Third, a maximum programme is the only one you offer the workers, in fact the seizure of power under other names. But this seizure of power is to be 'thrust upon' the reformists! The metaphysics of WRF politics are staggering. Not only, for the first time in history, have the Trojans built the Trojan Horse (Labour Party) for use by the Greeks (bourgeoisie) against them, but the puppets are to be forced to rise against the puppet masters.

On July 14th J. Spencer: 'the capitalist system should be nationalised without compensation and placed under workers' control'. No place for Transitional demands here! Then also surely to nationalise the whole system requires also the nationalisation of the police, army and clergy?

June 27th S. Johns: 'The capitalist class will want mass unemployment ... There is no possible answer to this threat outside of the nationalisation of the monopolies and the banks, the cancellation of the debt to foreign capitalists and a state monopoly of foreign trade'.

June 21st, R. Bull, not to be outdone: 'nationalise the whole bankrupt economy without compensation and under workers control'. Not only is this a wholesale distortion of the Lenin-Trotsky demand of workers' control, which is achievable under private ownership, he actually raises the nationalisation of the whole economy as an aid to kicking out the Tories! See: 'Such a programme would invoke great response and help rout the Tories' (sic).

In conclusion we turn to an article of March 25th by A. Mitchell, in many ways the clearest exponent of ultra-leftism in the WRF.

'It is a lie that Labour is giving something to the working class. Anything that the working class gets, it gets by fighting, by struggle and not as a result of parliamentary debates'.

So the whole massive fight of the working class to break with Liberalism, to build the Labour Party, elect MP's to Parliament, pass laws, has been a waste of time. The struggle for power cannot flow through Parliament. Why did Lenin and Trotsky urge revolutionaries to work in the Labour Party? Why did the Trotskyist movement waste its time there for 25 years?

Mitchell continued, 'We say that the issues facing the working class can only be resolved in a struggle for power. While supporting Labour's minimum programme, we say it is totally inadequate to meet the onrushing economic crisis'. Here we have a full-blooded return to the positions of the Marxist movement before the first four congresses of the Comintern, before Trotsky, before Lenin. Never, never, never did they, nor must we, counterpose the programme of social democratic reforms against a more superior 'maximum' programme. In real life the demands of the workers and their relation to the leaders of the mass movement, constantly change. What does Mitchell propose to fill the gap between the 'minimum programme' and the WRF programme with? An emergency conference? Out of course!

He concludes, 'the campaign for the emergency conference must be built up at once with resolutions to Transport House and trade union offices.' Where is the real intervention of the Trotskyists, where is the fight for the Transitional Programme?

Comrades you have turned to an abstract, maximalist programme, which the workers will never support.

You would have sided with Gallagher and the British ultra-lefts in the dispute with Lenin which produced 'Left Wing Communism'.

You are sadly repeating all the mistakes of Hyndman, of the Socialist Labour Party, of the Stalinist CPGB. You will soon be heirs not to the heritage of Trotskyism, but that of British sectarianism.

Turn back to the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International, to the Transitional Programme, before a crucial mistake is made.

Comrades,

The coming general election is an important stage in the development of the political crisis which has been building up in Britain since the miners' strike and the consequent election which brought down the Heath government. The leading circles of the ruling class suffered a very serious political defeat with the removal of the Tories. Their whole strategy to deal with the working class was checked, and it has since been revealed that they have no alternative strategy at hand, nor indeed a firm leadership to carry through any alternative strategy.

The Labour Party therefor came to office as a crisis government. Unlike 1964 it was not seen by the dominant sections of the capitalist class as a government that could embark on a series of firm measures against the organised working class. Behind the return of this Labour government was the movement of the working class, expressed in the miners' strike, and over a longer period, a number of powerful class mobilisations such as the victorious miners' strike of 1972 and the movement that secured the release of the Pentonville Five later in the same year. It is for these reasons, and not any inherent powers of resistance to capitalism within the reformist apparatus, that the ruling class has no use for the present Labour government as a pliant tool for the repression of the working class.

It is therefor essential, from the point of view of the ruling class for them to halt if possible this offensive of the working class, one of the results of which has been the return of the present Labour government. It must attack both the conditions and the organisations of the working class in order to 'resolve' its own economic crisis, which grows deeper every day. The first step that the ruling class has to take along this road of a counter offensive against the working class is therefor the removal of the Labour government, and its replacement by either a Tory government or a coalition of capitalist parties.

All class conscious workers, whatever their different levels of political awareness and their degree of mistrust of the Labour leaders, will demonstrate and make concrete their determination to fight the ruling class and its parties by massively voting Labour to keep the Tories out. They will, in their millions, fight to keep Labour in with a massive majority.

In acting and voting thus they express even if on a mainly parliamentary plane as yet, their desire for a workers' government that will implement the basic demands of the class, none of which can be fully met within the framework of the capitalist state and capitalist property relations. It is this objective movement of the class to seek its own political independence and its own government that we support when we call for a Labour vote against the Tories.

What then should be the policy of the WRP at this critical juncture? Let us recall the words of the founding document of the Marxist movement - The Communist Manifesto.

"The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole."

And writing some 80 years later against the ultra leftist policies of Third Period Stalinism Trotsky declared on this same theme:

"The tactic of the united front is not something accidental and artificial - a cunning manoeuvre - not at all; it originates entirely and wholly in the objective conditions governing the development of the proletariat. The words in the Communist Manifesto which state that the communists are not opposed to the proletariat, that they have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat, carry with them the meaning that the struggle of the party to win over the majority of the class must in no instance come into opposition with the need of the workers to keep unity within their fighting ranks." ("What Next")

Bearing in mind these basic Marxist principles, it would therefor indeed be criminal on the part of the communists if they did not unconditionally defend all the positions gained by the working class,

minor or major, whether that gain be the October Revolution or the most minimal of conditions secured within the framework of capitalist property relations and the capitalist state. Any further advance of the working class is conditional upon its defence of these past gains.

That is why we of the 'Bulletin' group are unconditionally for a Labour victory at the coming election and for the formation of a Labour government without any coalition with the bourgeois parties, and against the return of a Tory government or a capitalist party coalition. This means an all out fight for a massive Labour vote and a crushing defeat of the Tories at the next election. This is, we believe, entirely in the tradition of the principles established by Marx and Engels, and defended against Third Period Stalinism by Trotsky

This does not mean the Communists should in the course of such a struggle spread the least illusion as to what the Labour government will be or can do. As a government led by reformists within the framework of the capitalist state and property relations it will function, albeit imperfectly, as an agency of capitalist rule. The Labour government is a bourgeois government, an imperialist government, not a workers' government in the sense defined by the Communist International in its Leninist period and the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International: i.e., a government based on the organised power of the working class at every level, a government that begins to break from the framework of capitalist domination, to shatter the capitalist state and expropriate the property of the bourgeoisie. In making this distinction between a genuine workers' government and the government headed by reformists, a parliamentary Labour government, we must understand that the former cannot be achieved except through the struggle for the latter.

We as communists must share the struggle for the Labour government but not the illusions of the workers who will vote for it. It is only in and through the struggle for a Labour government that we will educate the most advanced layers of the class in the need to destroy the capitalist state in order to implement the demands that at this stage, the working class places upon the Labour Party.

It is in this way that the class will break from the illusion that socialism can be achieved through the winning of a parliamentary majority for the Labour Party. The break from reformist illusions is not achieved through propaganda primarily, nor through challenging the Labour Party on the electoral plane, but through the mobilisation of the class in the struggle by means of its traditional organisations for its own government, which it sees as a government of the Labour Party. The objective movement of the class on its own demands thus comes into conflict with the limits established by the reformist apparatus, and raises in the vanguard the need for a genuine workers government. This is the method of the Transitional Programme.

Even though many of the members of the Bulletin group are excluded from the WRP, we regard this party as being the sole organisation which embodies the international continuity of Trotskyism in Britain. It is primarily within the WRP that the forces will be assembled for the construction of the British section of the Fourth International. It is only because of the anti-democratic practices of a section of the present leadership that we have been compelled to act, in a formal sense, outside of the WRP. The aim of our faction is to return the WRP, threatened with liquidation, to the Transitional Programme, and to a consistent orientation towards the traditional mass organisations of the working class, including the Labour party. We also stand for the return of the WRP to the struggle for the rebuilding of the Fourth International, as outlined in the resolutions adopted at the Third Conference of the International Committee in April 1966.

There are many differences and many problems which can only be resolved through full and free discussion nationally and internationally. But now we are faced with an emergency situation. In February 1974, the WRP ran nine candidates on a platform whose central thrust was anti-Labour. In the case of Dumbarton Central, where the WRP

candidate shared a platform with a Tory the main blow was directed against the Communist Party. The entire exercise was conducted in a sectarian spirit of a campaign to 'expose' Labour. In reality the end result was to expose the WRP before advanced workers as an organisation unworthy to counter to the real movement of the class against the Tories, a movement which could not but pass through its traditional trades union and political organisations. The WRP election intervention was destructive in a two-fold sense. Not only did it weaken and in some regions sever the links of the party with the most advanced elements of the class, who desired and were fighting for a Labour victory. It also caused grave damage to the WRP itself. By trying to compete on a parliamentary plane with the main political parties the WRP campaign liquidated the party organisations in many areas. Cadres were overburdened with activity, the party's resources strained beyond breaking point, and the membership politically disoriented by being forced to fight in a campaign that brought them into head on collision not with the illusions of the class in reformism but with the real struggle of the class for its own government.

Indeed, we can say with some justification that these reformist illusions were shared by a section of the WRP leadership. The national Secretary spoke in an election meeting of the possibility of the WRP's running no less than 500 candidates at the next election, and forming a parliamentary government that would 'nip in the bud' moves towards a military coup. Thus the WRP's sectarian orientation towards the mass movement did not preclude an opportunist attitude towards the central organs of capitalist state power. Behind a torrent of the 'corporatist' Labour leaders was concealed an adaptation to the parliamentary illusions of the reformists.

The WRP cannot emerge from another such adventure without its forces being seriously damaged and its already tenuous relationship with the vanguard of the class further weakened. For today it would be not a mere repetition of February 1974. To run a slate of candidates in the next election would be to stab the working class in the back as it concentrates its forces, through the Labour party, for a blow against the Tories. To run candidates on anything like the scale envisaged by your national secretary would be a criminal blow against the WRP itself. It would mean the virtual liquidation as a Trotskyist organisation.

Because we are unconditionally in support of all steps preventing the liquidation of our movement, we call upon the CC of the WRP to halt any moves towards the catastrophic course of standing candidates at the next election.

We call on the CC of the WRP to lead instead a campaign for a massive Labour victory, to be in the front ranks of the working class in the fight for such a victory, while explaining at every stage of the campaign the purpose of such an intervention. We must explain why Trotskyists call for a Labour vote, making clear to the working class that we have no illusions in Labour being able to meet all the demands of the working class. In such a campaign which would be entirely within the tradition of the Transitional Programme, the WRP would be able to demonstrate in practice to the most advanced workers the purpose and meaning of the slogan 'For a Workers Government'.

If this step were taken and such a campaign waged then in spite of all the differences, our group would unconditionally seek your collaboration to take a full part in it.

The Steering Committee
Bulletin Group

Copies to
Chairman of the Central Committee
All Central Committee members
All recipients of the Bulletin August issue