

CHARTIST INTERNATIONAL



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Perspectives in Britain ★

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On Women ★

Debate ★

Theoretical Journal of the SOCIALIST CHARTER

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INTRODUCTION

The last edition of *Chartist International* appeared in January 1974 optimistically entitled "quarterly journal" of the Socialist Charter. Much water has flown under the bridge since that time. Many naive illusions have been challenged.

In South East Asia we have seen the defeat of American imperialism and its puppets. The victory of the national liberation forces in Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola have re-cast the map of Africa and awakened the conscious revolt of the black masses in the imperialist fortress of South Africa. Nearer home, Western Europe has seen the fall of the Greek, Portuguese and Spanish dictatorships and the tremendous revolutionary events of 1974/1975 in Portugal. In Eastern Europe, the workers of Poland have shown that dissidence and revolt against the bureaucratic regimes of those countries are not the preserve of pro-Western intellectuals.

Yet, despite these tremendous events the rule of capital in the metropolitan countries of Western Europe and North America shows a remarkable degree of stability and confidence. This can only partly be accounted for in terms of the development of the productive forces, the strength of the state apparatuses and other material factors of this kind. The fact is in the countries of advanced capitalism the rule of capital is ensured, at least in part, by the tremendous ideological and political backwardness of the working class movement in these countries. This problem, the lagging of consciousness behind the development of events, is not a new one. In fact, it has always faced revolutionaries in advanced capitalist countries at the beginning of a revolutionary period.

However, the after-effects of the longest boom in the history of capitalism, the countervailing and contradictory tendencies at work as the system moves into crisis and the effects of these developments on the maturing of class consciousness, all these imperatively demand of Marxists, not satisfied with the stale remains of 40 years of stagnation in the Marxist movement, an answer to the question, "Through what stage are we passing?" Only an answer to this question could lay the foundations for scientific revolutionary strategy and tactics for today.

In no other European country has the contradiction between advanced stage of decay of native capital and the retarded political level of the working class been more graphically revealed than in Britain over the past few years. When the last edition of *Chartist International* appeared, British society was in the grip of the greatest confrontation of the classes than at any time since 1926. Wave after wave of strike struggles over the preceding two years, had brought new layers of the class into struggle, had revived old tactics, established new ones, turned legislation into dead letters and finally broke the back of the Tory Government. The Labour Government, elected as a result of these struggles, was committed to the most radical reform programme since 1945. The revolutionary left, swept along on the crest of this wave of struggles, grew rapidly, cheerleading the struggles of the working class. It could not and did not anticipate that within 18 months this tremendous movement would be accepting large-scale unemployment and wage and social service cuts from this Government of its 'own' leaders.

The **Socialist Charter** in common with the other groups of the far left and perhaps more than most overestimated the future of this upsurge of working class militancy. However, as the first article in this edition of **Chartist International, Perspectives for the British Revolution** reveals, we were among the first to recognise and analyse that sustained 'lull' in class struggle throughout 1975 and 1976. In this article, **Mike Davis** discusses the decline of British industry, the subdued crisis of British society in all its implications, indicating the crucial role of the Labour and TUC leadership through the Social Contract in imposing considerable defeats on the working class **without** a decisive battle. Tracing these developments, the article outlines the strategy and tactics which flow from the process of development at work in British society.

If much of Marxist theory has stagnated over the last 40 years, in some areas it has scarcely ever begun even to develop. In the third article in this edition, **Liz Adams** discusses some of the problems involved in developing an adequate

theoretical basis for revolutionary Marxist work towards the liberation of women. Since the late '60s, an immense volume of literature has been produced on historical anthropological, social sexual and cultural aspects of the oppression of women by the radical women's movement. The response of the Marxist movement has been extremely meagre. Apart from the insights of some apochryphal Marxists such as Wilhelm Reich (see *Sex and the Class Struggle: Selections from the writings of Wilhelm Reich*, Chartist Publications 1974), Kollontai, both recently re-discovered, and the attempts by Herbert Marcuse to synthesise Marx and Freud very little has been produced at all from an ostensible Marxist standpoint on the theoretical level on the question of sexual oppression. Given the difficulty of the problem involved it is not surprising that many Marxists have opted for the 'safe' area of the 'Political Economy of Domestic Labour'. While an understanding of the material basis of women's oppression in these terms is essential nevertheless it is not exhaustive. In the most rigorous formulations (see for example 'Women's Oppression Under Capitalism' Revolutionary Communist No.5) it is made clear that while domestic labour is essential to capitalism it is outside the framework of capitalist production relation as such. Yet since the entire body of Marx's later theoretical work, *Capital*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, etc is concerned with analysis of the economic laws of motion of capitalist society one is entitled to ask what does mature Marxism have to say about women's oppression and the privatised toil which underlies it. Marx never returned to the flashes of insight into sexual matters which can be glimpsed in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

The earliest attempts to take up these questions in a Marxist way was Engels' *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*. The fact that the 64-year old fighter could produce such a work in the stifling atmosphere of Victorian England is testimony of the revolutionary commitment of Marx's great co-thinker. Yet, nevertheless, in both its anthropological sources and in its concepts, the book is riddled with quaint 19th century conceptions. Thus in her article, Liz Adams looks again at this seminal work in a critical light.

The article concludes with a sharp critique of the practice which theoretical confusion of the far left engenders in campaigns such as the Working Women's Charter campaign.

It is hoped that this article can be the starting point for a serious discussion of the relation between women's liberation and socialist revolution. Our columns will be open to rival views and positions on this as every other issue.

Surely the most important event for revolutionaries in Western Europe over the past few years has been the Portuguese revolution. We

took a first long hard look at this and the response of the revolutionary left to it in the pamphlet *Portugal: Anatomy of a Revolution* (March 1976 Chartist Publications). In our second article, *The Portuguese Revolution: a retrospective*, Geoff Bender re-examines from the standpoint of Portuguese history and post-war developments the events of the revolution. Pointing to the problem of combined and uneven development as the source of the revolution and of its contours, he points to some of the peculiarities of the revolutionary process and the problems they posed for revolutionary strategy and tactics. Particular attention is placed on the role of Stalinism and Social Democracy and the strength of bourgeois democratic illusions. The lessons of the Portuguese events are vital for the development of adequate revolutionary strategy in Western Europe.

Finally, we end this edition of *Chartist International* with a piece of polemic. In the 'Battle of Ideas' No.1. October 1976 (Red Weekly supplement) there appeared an article entitled *The Rise of Gerry Healy* by Alan Jones. We re-print this here together with a reply by Martin Cook because, in the words of the reply,

'If one individual, above all, has been responsible for leaving the ostensibly trotskyist movement in the utter wilderness of sectarian isolation over the past quarter century (regarded by successive generations of youth with contempt and revulsion) it is no other than Thomas Gerard Healy'.

In a series of 14 succinct points the reply outlines a rather different interpretation of the history of the British revolutionary movement than that put forward by Jones and concludes,

"The Red Weekly's general distance from the methods of Healyism is one of its virtues. Its supporters should eschew illusions in a tradition from which they have nothing to learn."

One slightly sour note: the Reply was sent to Red Weekly in December 1976. No reply has yet been received nor has it been published. The genuine non-sectarian stance of the IMG and its stand 'Against Monolithism' are not assisted by such a lack of response.

The failure of the Socialist Charter to produce a regular theoretical journal over the past three years is a weakness to which we freely admit and one which this current publication is the first step towards rectifying. We have however, produced a number of documents on Ireland, sexual oppression, the Fourth International and Portugal. Replies to aspects of these documents, critiques etc will be welcomed for future editions of this journal as will responses to the articles it contains. Only the most vigorous and open debate can clear the stale air and sweep the dust and cobwebs from the attics where Marxist theory has too long decayed.

Geoff Bender July 1st 1977.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE BRITISH REVOLUTION, PREFACE:

WE ARE INCLUDING this brief introduction to the 1976 Socialist Charter 'Political Perspectives In Britain' document in order to update some of its contents. We have left virtually unaltered the original document so far as it relates to the general political situation in Britain. For reasons of space we have had to omit sections of the document dealing with racialism and fascism, other left tendencies; including the Communist Party, proposals on campaign work and the problem of revolutionary regroupment. Hopefully, we will be able to document these questions in future issues of 'Chartist International.'

Since the 'Political Perspectives' document was written developments in the class struggle have revealed that there is no necessary correlation between an upswing in the world class struggle, a deepening of capitalist crisis and the development of Marxist class consciousness. For too long the ostensibly revolutionary left has contented itself either with the view that the collapse of capitalism and triumph of world revolution was imminent — like the Mediaeval millenarism movements and the Second Coming — or that since the end of the post-war boom the rise of Marxist consciousness and organisation would grow in proportion to the development of the crisis. Whilst there might be some general truth in this statement, namely that capitalist crisis lays the preconditions for breaking the isolation of the revolutionary marxists, it is usually interpreted in a mechanical and dogmatic way — with working class upsurge around every corner, and inexorably leading to socialist consciousness.

Classic examples today are the IS/SWP with their view of the onward march of the 'rank and file', the IMG and their perspective of imminent 'mass action' and the WSL's view of the cavalier trade union bureaucracy holding back the stallion of the working class, rearing up for struggle. Unfortunately, nothing could be much further from the truth. As we have argued, even a fleeting glance at the class struggle in Britain over the last three years should dispel this illusion. Let us briefly repaint the situation. A succession of militant trade union struggles against the policies of the Tory government, culminating in an historically unprecedented defeat for Heath and the bourgeoisie marked a highpoint in working

class struggle not paralleled since the 1920's. Exactly three years later, we are in a situation where the working class has tolerated two years of pay restraint (under the Tories there would have 'been rioting in the streets' said the *Economist*), a doubling of unemployment to 1½ million, savage cuts in public spending and general incursions into the democratic rights of workers and other oppressed sections of society. All this with very little successful resistance.

We have earmarked the central reasons for this as being the political immaturity of the working class — conversely the strength of reformist illusions, the lack of a Marxist tradition generally in Britain and above all the lack of a scientific socialist programme and leadership. The consciousness achieved during the anti-Tory struggles was not 'socialist' as some 'revolutionaries' would argue, but largely trade union, economic consciousness — bourgeois reformist consciousness. This consciousness expressed itself logically in the election of a Labour Government, which but for a few minor initial reforms has proceeded to betray workers interests virtually from the start. Above all, it is these betrayals, carried out by the Labour AND trade union bureaucracy, under the banner of the fraudulent social contract, which are responsible for the downturn in class struggle and the consequent growth of demoralisation, divisions and bitterness within the labour movement.

2. EFFECTS OF THE DOWNTURN

Coupled with the predictable debacle of the Labour Government and its grovelling before the bourgeois state and property has come a systematic ideological offensive on the part of the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus to deepen the splits and divisions, nationalism and chauvinism already deeply-rooted inside the working class. Through the cuts, the mass media and bourgeois parliamentarians have been able to exploit sexist and male chauvinist prejudices which lie deep in the culture and consciousness of the masses. Women, and the drive to force them back into the domestic slavery of the home or to ensure they stay there, have been one of the victims of the offensive. Despite successful Equal Pay struggles at Trico and elsewhere, this offensive has met with success as only one indicator — the quadru-

pling of female unemployment under Labour — shows. This weak flank in the labour movement has also found the revolutionary groups wanting as the rush into economism — ignoring the women in the home and the general question of ideological/sexual repression — has illustrated.

Similarly, on the issue of racialism, which has also been aggravated and brought to the surface of social and political life by the crisis, we have found the revolutionary left inadequate. On the one hand, in the face of the Communist Party and Tribune lefts' de facto capitulation to racialism with the policy of non-racialist immigration controls, some groups have responded by putting great emphasis on the question of black-self-defence (a correct policy in itself) to the detriment of a consistent fight against all forms of immigration control and the racialists in our movement. On the other hand we have the IS/SWP imagining they can take on the fascists (however much we might applaud their courage) without any consideration of the balance of forces or our immediate tasks. And there is great confusion on these immediate tasks. For us they should be a recognition that the primary battle at present is the fight against racist ideas in the working class. This means developing a scientific analysis of the origins of racialism in imperialism and colonialism (and class society generally), its specifically British characteristics and tying it in with the fight against national chauvinism especially over Ireland and the South African liberation struggles.

There is a continual tendency on the revolutionary left to play down these ideological/political battles (which we conduct against the Tribuneites and CP at the level of leadership) and to retreat either into economism — imagining all will come clean in the wash of industrial militancy or capitulating to petty bourgeois aspects of the response of the victims of this special oppression — feminism and black nationalism.

Other divisions which the downturn has brought to the surface are those between unproductive and productive labour (ie unprofitable and profitable workers — from the capitalist standpoint) with many workers accepting the need for cuts, illustrated by the lack of resistance from many traditionally militant trade unions; the division between skilled and unskilled workers and employed and unemployed. Unlike the WSL who stress that 'the wages struggle is central' we must argue that it is not only the political struggle against more control, but also unemployment, cuts, racialism and women's oppression and national chauvinism which are the equally central questions in building a unity of the labour movement on a political level. It's true that the transitional demands of a rising scale of wages etc. have never been put to the test. But it is not just a question of being able to set these demands down in our papers or in

resolutions but in knowing what issues must be taken up amongst the advanced sections of the working class and how we can equip these militants ideologically — to beat back the reformist/bourgeois offensive. Workers moving into struggle on a sectional basis, eg. the toolroom workers, or on a basic issue like trade union recognition (Grunwick), have been the highest points of industrial struggle recently. On the other level, there have been few successful struggles against redundancies and the effects of the cuts, despite one-day strikes and demonstrations.

For serious revolutionaries the situation emphasises two things. That there is great ideological confusion and collapse of Marxist theory over the last 30 years and this is illustrated by most of the left groups' inability to see anything new or changed in the current situation. Improved theory, quotes from the textbooks of Marxism out of context and mindless activism have been the refuges of most tendencies. We on the contrary, have tried to argue for 1) a recognition that we have no scientific socialist programme for our time 2) the downturn gives us added opportunity to 'return to the books', and an emphasis on propaganda/educational activity 3) the need to conduct this work in the context of the mass organisations building a cadre honed, steeled and trained in Marxism capable of leading significant sections of the class in a future period of new upsurge of class struggle.

3. PROSPECTS ON THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

The hastily cobbled together Lib-Lab pact cannot save the labour government from defeat — in fact it makes it more likely. Although it seemingly averted a defeat in the confidence vote precipitated by Thatcher over the 100% abstention of Labour MPs on the public expenditure cuts vote during March, it is clear the Liberals are in no state to press for an early general election.

In fact a number of factors militate against an immediate Labour defeat. Namely, the continuing and unresolved crisis of ideology and leadership within the bourgeoisie and Tory Party, the relative success of the Labour Government's policies in cutting the living standards of the working class, at least laying some foundation stones for a temporary recovery in profitability, and primarily in its weakening of the strength and combativity of the working class. Also, the third stage of the social contract is now in a delicate stage of negotiations and for the bourgeoisie to risk completely smashing these arrangements — which an election and a Tory victory would do — could make things extremely difficult and messy.

The most recent by-elections indicate a 15%+ swing to the Tories (GLC) and up to 22% at Ashfield; if this is maintained it could result in almost almost 100 — 150 seats going the Tories way. These are omens the reformist leaders are well

aware of, besides the nightmare onrush of the Scottish Nationalists. What are the prospects? Callaghan has stated he intends to hold onto 'power' until the last moments of the remaining two years. We cannot envisage an election until at least 1978. The reformists are working on a strategy of solving balance of payments problems by that time, bringing prices down through another dose of wage restraint and then relaxing controls, lowering unemployment and the bonanza of North Sea oil thrown in for good measure. But even the most able Treasury wizards and reformist tricksters will be stumped by the intractable crisis of British and world capitalism, which even cuts in living standards of over 20 per cent over the last three years have not been able to alter.

As regards the Manifesto pledges these have all now virtually gone by the way. Following the defeat of the Devolution Bill by over 40 Labour MPs voting with the Tories its reintroduction seems unlikely. Wealth tax has been dropped as have proposals to expand local authority direct labour departments. No more nationalisation is planned following the climb-down on the Ship-repair section of the Shipbuilding and Aircraft nationalisation Bill. The main aims of the Community Land Act have been shelved. On March the 9th the repressive Prevention of Terrorism Act was renewed for the third time with only 15 Labour MPs voting against. Similarly the Immigration Act continues to be used against investigative journalists and blacks and Asians alike. Nothing illustrates more clearly the generalised bankruptcy of reformism. But it does not mean the exposure of the reformists in the eyes of the workers anymore than does a boxer realise the rottenness of a crooked trainer after his opponent has battered him in the ring. Only the conscious intervention of Marxists armed with a clear programme and perspectives can develop such an understanding.

The economy is still generating inflation at between 16 and 20 per cent (the latter over the last six months), unemployment continues to bob around the official 1½ million mark and the balance of payments deficit for 1976 was £3628 million — £2,000 m up on 1975. Although in the negative it has been shown that wages do not cause inflation, no positive alternative to the social contract has yet been developed to put this belief on a firm foundation. This leads us on to an examination of the future of the social contract and the likelihood of generalised movement to defeat it.

4. PROSPECTS ON TRADE UNION STRUGGLE

It is beyond dispute that the last few months have witnessed a limited offensive against the social contract. The moves have been largely confined to the motor industry and localised engineering plants. British Leyland workers have clearly led the way with a 6,000 strong demonstration

calling for an end to the social contract now in Longbridge Birmingham, and the toolmakers strike. These developments, taken in conjunction with decisions in sections of the NUM, ASTMS and smaller unions have prompted leaders like Gormley to call for an end to pay restraint and for people like Jones and Scanlon (despite virulent attacks and 'back to work' ultimatums to the toolroom workers) to talk in terms of "flexibility" in any new stage of pay restraint.

Above all the Communist Party, under this pressure, have made limited moves against the social contract and to put a brake on the movement. Most notable, was the February 26th LCDTU Conference: over 1200 delegates called for an end to pay restraint and a return to free collective bargaining.

5. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Virtually all the revolutionary left tendencies have reported these recent developments as if the social contract is about to suffer mortal defeat. Obviously it is not incorrect to intensify propaganda for an ending of pay restraint — that is an elementary task — but it is wrong to read into these developments parallels with the 1968/69 struggles against Labour's incomes policy and Castle's In Place of Strife. The limitations of the toolroom workers struggles must be pointed out. Sectional struggles about (fairly right-wing) skilled workers differentials over the unskilled. Not a very good basis to develop a united fight-back against the social contract. Ironically, when Jones and Scanlon mumbled about 'flexibility' and rewards for skill and productivity they are championing in their own bureaucratic way the prejudices and strengths of the skilled workers over unskilled and/or unproductive workers. For clearly under the social contract these workers have suffered most, whilst the lower paid, public sector workers have not come off nearly so badly under wage controls. This also explains in some measure Alan Fisher's statement that he "can't tell whether he's for or against the social contract yet" because of the dangers of the low paid being hit in a 'free-for-all'.

It is also important to expose the contradictions in the Communist Party's position. On the one hand the LCDTU and Morning Star call for a return to free collective bargaining and an end to the social contract, and on the other there is an implicit acceptance of the current stage 2 of pay restraint. In fact all of chief CP Leyland convenor, Derek Robinson's statements accept no battle until August. Robinson signed a joint letter with BLMC managing director Derek Whittaker, calling on Industry Secretary Varley for greater flexibility in the next stage of pay regulations. Similarly, the *Sunday Times* reported on 13.3.77 that leading CP member of the TUC, Ken Gill "said that the strike, (of the toolroom workers) and some of the toolmakers statements were not helping those pressing for an end to pay curbs."

Clearly, what the CP are aiming at is a reconstruction of their relations with the left TU bureaucracy on terrain a little closer to that originally mapped out in the hey-day of the mid '60s when Jones and Scanlon were rising lefts. In no way are the CP concerned to develop a break with stage 2 now or with the left bureaucracy. Thus they renounce the struggle for independent working class action.

Above all the dangers and weaknesses of the CP perspective is that it is couched entirely in defensive, economic terms — 'back to Free Collective Bargaining —'. No perspective, policy or politics to take the working class forward politically. At the LCDTU Conference in fact, Deason of the SWP totally failed to make any political criticisms of the CP/Broad Left line, contenting himself with calls for unity between LCDTU and the RTWC.

What we have to say on the future of the social contract is this. Despite the no strict pay policy will now be agreed it is likely some flexible maximum prospect exchange for tax concessions and 'flexibility' (space for prod deals and fringe benefits and partial restoration of differentials) will win the day. The seamen, the miners, Rubery Owen workers and now Massey Ferguson workers all went down under pressure from the TUC. But they did not go down simply because of the leadership's manoeuvres. They primarily went down because of the lack of any credible and fought-for alternative political perspective. Hence it is not simply or primarily a question of more democracy in the labour movement but of the programme and analysis around which the struggle is organised.

Even on the anti-cuts front the struggle has severe limitations, not aided by the starry-eyed prognostications of 'mass movements' by the left. As the eulogies about the 60,000 strong Nov. 17th cuts demo and the Glasgow and Dundee marches die away the reality emerges. The left rhetoric of Fisher, Drain, the CPSA, ASTMS and NUT leaders against cuts serves to cover up the lack of any nationally co-ordinated and politically based resistance to the cuts.

The SWP is typical of the organisations imagining seething opposition to the cuts. In 'International Socialism' '95 we read "In civil service union, CPSA, there has been a general ban on overtime. In the local authority workers union, NALGO, a special conference only narrowly defeated a motion kicking out the social contract, and one-day strike in Scotland was carried against the advice of the executive. The fight back against the cuts is developing at a speed that often takes old-established militants by surprise."

What the SWP conveniently ignore in its frenetic scraping of the barrel for traces of militancy is that the CPSA action — a statistics ban — was called-off just when it was gaining real support, by combined SWP, CP, Militant vote on the Execu-

tive. The NALGO overtime ban, which does not take effect until April 1st, is taking similar farcical turns, as for example at the GLC, where SWP members are now criticising the overtime ban as being "divisive" and backpeddling. This is coupled with Drain's debacle before the injunction obtained by several Scottish scab NALGO members shows the limitations of the present anti-cuts battles. The EGA has been left isolated, with very little semblance of workers control in the hospital, despite the determination of the staff to keep the hospital open. True, the EEPTU called a 6,000 strong demo on Feb 14th, but as we are too well aware in reality not an ounce of leadership or independent working class policy has been provided to the Plessey, STC and other telecommunications workers who have seen thousands of jobs go down the road.

Clearly there is a willingness to fight the cuts, but it would be a mistake to have illusions in the extent of the anti-cuts movement, which has been largely limited to protest actions. What is required from revolutionaries is a thorough understanding and analysis of the role of the cuts in the general attempt to restore profitability, the importance of defending unproductive labour in the productive sector in order to build a united fight-back. Equally it is necessary to clarify the programme on which such resistance can be mounted.

6. STRUCTURES OR PROGRAMME

Recently, several tendencies prompted by the lack of leadership from the bureaucracy and CP, have initiated "Campaigns" in an attempt to "organise action". Firstly, came the IMGs succession of 'action committees', MCAPP, National Coordinating Committee Against the Cuts etc. the SWP Right to Work Campaign and more recently the WSL Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement. Essentially, all these campaigns represent attempts to substitute political problems with organisational answers. Both the IMG and SWP, for their own reasons, argue for joint LCDTU-RTWC conference on a national level to discuss and amend resolutions on the way forward. In effect, this approach obscures the central questions facing any serious Marxist tendency. Namely a serious discussion and struggle locally amongst the advanced layers of the working class about the nature of the crisis and the way forward.

7. OUR TASKS

By implication a number of our immediate tasks have already been indicated. Our premise cannot be — as it is with most left groups — that the Transitional Marxist programme exists, pure, undiluted and as relevant and applicable as when it was written in 1938. Our task is to reconquer the essentials of the TPF, to develop our analysis of the world situation and class struggle and a scientific programme.

PERSPECTIVES...

INTRODUCTION

After more than two years of a Labour Government elected in conditions of the sharpest and most turbulent class struggle for over 40 years, the major task facing marxists is to explain how the current downturn and betrayals of reformism have occurred. Why has there been no mass resistance to the abject class collaboration of the Labour Government and trade union bureaucracy? In this period of retreat for the working class what are the prospects for transforming largely defensive struggles into offensive, largescale struggles? In short, in providing a scientific analysis of the present stage of capitalist crisis, we must present a correct estimation of the current balance of class forces, the duration of the downturn in economic, social and political terms and from this to answer the question: What is to be done?

In all spheres of capitalist society, the economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie are wracked with deep going crisis. The conditions world capitalism has entered from the late 1960's have repeated the shadow of revolution. We have seen the collapse of the post-war boom into unprecedented inflation and a recession the scale of which has not been experienced since before the second imperialist war. Once again the chief-historical obstacle to the progress of society, production and human-kind itself is highlighted as the opportunist nature of working class leadership. The objective conditions for the overthrow of capitalism and the socialisation of production are over-ripe. What stands in the way are the petty-bourgeois reformist and stalinist leaderships of the working class which throughout Western Europe are acting as the loyal servants, not of the working class who elected them, but of the bourgeoisie. This is the case in Britain, West Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Portugal and with all likelihood Italy and France in the coming year or two. The defeats for the Australian and New Zealand Labour Parties are a harbinger of what is in store for Western social democratic parties.

Despite the compromist, cowardly and class collaborationist role of the reformist parties the working class in Western Europe, and the advanced capitalist countries generally remains undefeated. Fascism and military dictatorship has been rooted out in Greece and Portugal and in Spain the remnants of Francoism count their last hours as the working class flexes its muscles. The revolutionary wave which was opened by the General strike in France during May 1968 has unfolded, but the forces which gave rise to it are now even farther advanced. Namely, the growth of world inflation and mass unemployment coupled with deeper economic and financial instability. A new wave is on the horizon. Its likely trigger will be the development of the Spanish revolution and the deepening crisis in Italy.

In Britain, the revolutionary upsurge of the working class against the Tories has now subsided. There have been no mass struggles against the policies of the Labour Government, against inflation and unemployment since the great miners' strike of February/March 1974. By examining the development of the crisis in Britain in its international context we can see a contradictory and uneven movement which provides an essential basis for understanding future developments.

CRISIS OF IMPERIALISM, STALINISM AND REFORMISM

The major capitalist countries are now making a temporary emergence from the conditions of recession which have characterised the last two to three years. An economic upswing is occurring in West Germany, United States and Japan, with the second-rate economies struggling in their wake. Whilst inflation has slowed down in most of these countries, unemployment remains at the level of approximately 15 million according to the report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This constitutes a significant political defeat for the international labour movement. For it is precisely the imposition of these high levels of unemployment on the working class – and the consequent trail of poverty, hunger, deprivation and demoralisation – that provides the material conditions for a temporary recovery in the generalised recession which has gripped the world economy over the last period.

The recession has permitted capitalism to rationalise and restructure itself providing a limited basis for the reaccumulation of capital and a marginal restoration of profitability. Nonetheless, the defeat and upswing can only be temporary as the long-term tendency for the rate of profit to fall will unfailingly reassert itself. In conditions where the postponement of the contradictions of the system have now been exhausted and where the inflation – based recovery of the post-war period cannot be repeated, partial recovery in one capitalist nation can only be at the expense of another. Thus the strongest capitalist powers, the US and Japan will be the short-term winners as against the weaker European economies and disension-wracked Common Market Nations.

The development of the world economic crisis in the form of inflation and unemployment is still the most revolutionising factor militating against any social stabilisation. Class relations inevitably sharpen in such circumstances with the question which class is to rule being constantly posed. Whilst recession and inflation have dominated the economic sphere the maturing of revolutionary struggles in Spain, Portugal, Angola and Southern Africa have dominated in the political sphere.

The unfolding and intermingling of the struggles of the oppressed workers and peasants of the colonial and semi-colonial countries and the social crisis in the Iberian peninsula have all had the effect of weakening the hold of imperialism, reducing its sphere of influence and simultaneously throwing into turmoil the shaky policies of detente and 'peaceful co-existence', between the Stalinist bureaucracies in Peking and Moscow and world imperialism.

Following the overturn of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal and the upsurge of the Portuguese masses in 1974 we have witnessed the defect of imperialism in Mozambique and Angola. The success of the Frelimo and MPLA liberation forces has had a threefold effect. Firstly, they have thrown into even deeper disarray and strategies of US and Western imperialism and compounded the defeats suffered in Indo China, Cambodia and Laos. Secondly, they have opened the doors to the national liberation movements in Zimbabwe and South West Africa, threatening not only the racist Smith

regime in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) but the bastion of white colonial supremacy and the watchtower of imperialism in the African continent – South Africa. Thirdly, these triumphant struggles have thrown the Stalinist bureaucracies in the Soviet Union and China into even deeper crisis. Why? Because they deepened the struggle between the two parasitic castes and more importantly, disturbed the world balance of forces, the status quo on which the bureaucracies depend for their web of alliances and compromise with imperialism. Despite the shift occurring in favour of the working class and the forces for socialist revolution, it has made the policies of 'peaceful co-existence' more difficult and weakened stalinism's ability to police the Western working class. This can be clearly seen in the conflicts now developing between the Kremlin and the French, Italian and Spanish CPs.

Thus the successes in Southern Africa, though the struggles there can only be completed under working class leadership, has further reduced the sphere of influence of capitalism economically, wielded heavy political blows to world imperialism and upset still further the fragile alliances of compromise and collaboration between the Kremlin and the US in particular.

In Europe, the continuation of Francoism without Franco endows the struggle of the Spanish masses with tremendous historical importance. The enormous strike movements and demonstrations in Spain augur well, not merely for the triumph of the Spanish proletariat but also for the workers of Europe as a whole. An upsurge in Spain could certainly provide new impetus to our beleaguered working class in Portugal who suffered a severe setback following the events of November 25 1975. The strength and determination of the Spanish masses to defeat the remnants of fascism in Europe make Spain the key to the European situation at present. The single biggest obstacle to success is the cringing popular front collaboration of the stalinists and reformists which threatens to propel the Spanish workers through all the disastrous policies of the 1930's. Nonetheless, the upsurge of the Spanish masses will send mighty tremors throughout Europe, adding new inspiration to all workers.

Developing at a different tempo, the situation in Italy bears great significance as well. From the standpoint of US imperialism, Italy poses the greatest threat to European stability. Once again, despite the hideous revisions of the internationalist proletarian character of the marxist programme a victory for the Italian CP of Berlinguer would mark a significant deepening of the political crisis of imperialism and present yet more opportunities for breaking the working class from its misleaders and building Trotskyist parties.

Our characterisation of the international situation as being one of pre-revolutionary struggles has thus been confirmed by the recent developments in the world class struggle. From this starting point we can examine the crisis in Britain and the tasks facing the Socialist Charter in building a revolutionary party as part of a reconstructed Fourth International.

BRITISH ECONOMY – DECLINE AND CRISIS

For British capitalism the last half century has been a period of slow but steady decline. From being the pioneer capitalist nation with the biggest empire in history, Britain has declined to the position of a second rate economic and world power, under the permanent shadow of the United States. In fact, the post-war years have been a period of permanent crisis for British capitalism, which have only been forestalled by enormous international borrowing, and continuous state intervention in the economy. It has been the relative weakness and decline of British capital allied with essentially inflationary state expenditure which have resulted in the emergence of the crisis in Britain in a particularly acute form. That is, the greatest trade debt, the highest inflation rates

and the highest unemployment of all the major European capitalist nations.

The decline of British capitalism has taken several forms. Firstly the loss of Empire. Historically the British empire had always provided British capitalism with a cushioning effect from the worst vicissitudes of economic crisis. Today, those safe markets, that cheap labour and sources of raw material have all but disappeared leaving virtually no second line of defence against growing trade rivalry and US expansionism. The loss of the colonies and the consequent decline of British imperialism has been reflected in the demotion of the pound as the major world currency and the challenge from Wall Street to the City as the centre of world finance.

Secondly, the failure of the second world war to destroy sufficient quantities of old, uneconomic units of capital, machinery and equipment, exacerbated the decline. Finance capital was loth to invest in domestic channels because of an inability to make a sufficient return on investment, preferring instead for funds to go overseas or into property and currency speculation. This is reflected in the enormous increase in overseas investments as compared to domestic fixed capital investment. From 1960 to 1972 investment in plant and machinery in Britain was only about two-fifths of total investment, that is about seven per cent of gross national product. Such low domestic investment contrasts starkly with the levels of 30 per cent for West Germany and Japan. The reasons why British capitalists refused to invest in new plant and machinery was not because of any inefficiency, stupidity or obstinacy, but rather because the amounts of surplus value necessary for such long-term investments projects, especially in shipbuilding, steel, aero-space, machine tools and motor manufacture, are so large, that only international monopolies and the state itself can command sufficient reserves to carry through such ventures.

This aspect of the decline has been aggravated by the increasing expansion of US capital into Britain (Fords, Chrysler, ITT, components suppliers, electronics, petrol, oil, computers IBM etc) and the increasing dependence upon finance capital and its corollary, 'invisible exports'. The product of this decline has been a decreasing share of world trade over the last 25 years and a steady slump in the growth of Gross Domestic Product from about 3.5 per cent in the early fifties to nil growth in 1975-76.

A third aspect of British capitalism's decline has been the growing burden of state expenditure in the national economy. The nationalisations, grants, subsidies etc, the 'welfare state', public sector employees, whilst on the one hand necessary for the maintenance of marginal profitability in the private sector, constitutes an enormous drain on profits in the long-run and has built up a huge state debt and an inflationary bubble to go with it.

As the proverbial chickens come home to roost in the form of demands from international creditors for debt repayments and the general necessary for capitalism to reduce the rate of inflation (which in the short-term distorts the rate of profit and in the long-term destroys all social and economic equilibrium), the economic crisis dovetails with the other vital major factor in British capitalism's decline – the strength and combativity of the working class.

Unlike the proletariat of Germany, Italy, France and Belgium the British working class suffered no physical defeats on the scale of their European counterparts. Fascism did not destroy the British labour movement as it did for a whole period in the above nations. Its traditions and organisations were not lost and physically liquidated. Throughout the 1950s and 60s British workers were able to force from the ruling class as a political necessity, full employment, welfare services and a relative autonomy for trade union organisation. Where the German trade unions were reconstructed by the state down-

wards, in Britain a certain independence was maintained until the late 1960s.

Thus the undefeated British labour movement, though largely quiescent throughout the immediate post-war period, proved an immensely powerful bargaining weight and prevented any substantial increase in the rate of exploitation necessary if British capitalism was to offset the long-term tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

Since the late 1960s, in conjunction with the rise of European class struggles, the economic crisis of British capitalism has now converged with a social and political crisis. The social equilibrium of the 'boom years' has vanished and a new era of class convulsions has opened up. The problems for British capitalism all hinge upon the ability of the bourgeoisie to impose a massive defeat on the working class. This is necessary in order to achieve three central tasks.

1. To reduce the rate of inflation, the balance of payments deficits, (which in 1974 was £4 billion and in 1975 £2½ billion) and the consequent international borrowing requirements.

2. To increase the rate of exploitation of the working class by driving up the productivity of labour. In other words, to increase the amount of surplus value (unpaid labour of the working class), at the expense of wages, jobs and conditions. This is necessary if the fall in the rate of profit is to be offset and capital accumulation to proceed.

3. To continue the process of concentration and centralisation of capital — a necessary tendency of capitalism in its imperialist, monopoly epoch. From this imperative flows the need to restructure and rationalise British industry, to enter and maintain membership of the EEC and for the state to continue its utopian attempts at planning and intervention.

The methods the bourgeoisie has adopted, through its labour lieutenants, and the Tories before, have been: incomes policy and state wage control; increasing the integration of the trade unions into the state and expanding the policing role of the union bureaucracy; cut-backs in public expenditure; speed-up, productivity drives, 'de-manning', sackings etc.

To achieve its ends the British bourgeoisie must turn back all the social conquests and economic gains of the post-war years. Democratic rights come under attack, including traditional trade union rights like free collective bargaining. Essentially the tasks involve a massive lowering of the living standards of the working class. It is these imperatives that endow the class struggle in Britain with potentially great ferocity. The aspirations and expectations of the labour movement are still strong, having developed over the last 25 years. The mass strike movements against Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife' and Wilson's 1976 attempt at Prices and Incomes Policy, the even broader movements against the Heath Government all revealed the potential of the working class to resist cuts in living standards and defend the gains of the past. But these struggles have not been the cause of British capitals decline, but essentially its consequence. We have witnessed unprecedented levels of militancy which have defeated two sets of 'high unemployment', policies (Wilson's in 1969 and Heath's 'lame-duck' strategy), on top of defeats for Heath's income policies, the Industrial Relations Act, the Housing Finance Act and the near general-strike which resulted in the release of the 'Pentonville Five' and the threefold defeat for the law, the courts and the Tories themselves.

These tumultuous class battles resulted in the stalemate of the 1974 elections which revealed that neither class was strong enough to impose its solutions to the crisis. The working class, due to reformist leadership and the political backwardness which in part, though not in full that leadership reflected, proved unable to take the power and the bourgeoisie, through its own party, the Tories, proved equally unprepared to meet the working

class in a head-on confrontation. In this way the doors were opened to a protracted and diffused period of struggle which has characterised the last two years.

TASKS OF THE WORKING CLASS AND REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD

The tasks confronting the working class are not derived from the bourgeoisie, although in a general sense the working class stands in direct opposition to the ruling class. Rather the tasks of the proletariat are derived from the objective situation whose central contradiction is that between the forces of production and the social relations of production. Only the working class has the revolutionary potential to centralise and plan the economy by smashing the fetters of private property in the means of production — the chief obstacle to historical progress. When the trade union bureaucrats talk about 'growth', 'reflation' and 'expansion' we must say, Yes! But how? which class is to expand the economy? On what basis and through what methods? Thus the struggle to develop the independence of the working class from the bourgeois state, to develop working class methods of struggle and the corresponding development of political class consciousness becomes the central task for marxists and the advanced sections of the working class.

As we have always argued, in times of deep-seated social and economic crisis, the working class will turn to its traditional organisations to seek a solution to the crisis. It was precisely the return of a Labour Government at two elections in 1974, that revealed the necessity for testing out in struggle the traditional leadership to which the working class has adhered. As the working class enters into conflict with the Labour Government our task will be to make conscious the dissatisfaction and anger which large sections of the labour movement will feel towards the Labour Government. In this way we can develop the political break with reformism in a positive way, showing through the course of the experience of workers themselves the necessity for a revolutionary marxist party to lead the movement to power.

The focus of struggle today is now very much on politics, as expressed through the Labour Party. When the working class turns to political answers to problems it has found unable to solve through trade union militancy alone, the expression of this striving for a political solution is the ambiguous support for a Labour Government. As the aspirations, illusions and demands of millions are shattered and disappointed through the policies of the Wilson/Callaghan leadership we must be able to transform this disillusionment from a passive, defeatist, bitter and abstentionist response into a really powerful, class conscious, offensive opposition to the reformist henchmen of capital.

Essentially, our general tasks can be summarised as the need to put the policy of the united front into action. This means intervening as propagandists and agitators in the struggles in the mass organisations of the working class. Only in the Labour Party and trade unions can a united front of working class struggles be built. We must learn to use all the splits, conflicts and tensions between the Labour Party ranks and file and the PLP, the PLP and the Government, the trade union bureaucracy and the membership on wages, prices, jobs, cuts, democratic rights, election pledges etc as the basis for deepening the class nature of the splits. In this way a united working class opposition to the offensive of the bourgeoisie can be built, which will become increasingly conscious of its world historic tasks as the grave-digger of capitalism.

As we said in the last Political Report, a period of Labour Government provides the most favourable conditions in which the Socialist Charter can fight for leadership and revolutionary regroupment. With the left centrist groups we no longer have to argue why it is necessary

to be in the Labour Party, but how to work in the LP. How to relate trade union and LP work. How to link the struggle amongst women, the racially oppressed and the nationally oppressed with the fight in the LP and against the Labour Government. Above all, it is necessary to clarify the programme around which to struggle.

THE PRESENT STAGE OF CLASS STRUGGLE

The current situation is characterised by a downturn in the class struggle. It is a period of retreats, set-backs and lull. Anyone professing adherence to marxism who refuses to recognise this is either an ostrich, a romantic or a clown. The end result will be a failure to correctly understand the tasks that revolutionary marxists face. Talk of mass struggles, left advances and rank and file successes merely serves to obscure the current realities, confuse the tasks of the hour and wildly mis-estimate the balance of class forces.

The one single factor that underpins all others as the explanation for this situation is the crisis of revolutionary leadership in the working class – a crisis of class consciousness. The wave of anti-Tory struggles that swept Heath from office and destroyed his anti-union policies created a certain form of militant consciousness. But it was a trade union consciousness, which as Lenin argued, cannot spontaneously develop into a consciousness which grasps the revolutionary anti-capitalist tasks which confront the working class. Workers still saw the world through the spectacles of reformism – which because of its non proletarian view, ties the interests of the working class to maintenance of the capitalist state. Nonetheless, the great wave of anti-Tory struggles, now reduced to less than a ripple, did produce an impetus for change which the Labour Government was powerless to immediately block. Thus, we had a whole series of minor reforms in 1974, which served to bolster the illusions workers had vested in their traditional party.

These illusions in reformism, which extend back through the generations, were reinforced by the new aspirations that developed during the 'boom years' of the 'mixed economy' with full employment, an expanding 'Welfare State' and gradually but consistently rising living standards. These illusions and expectations are taking a severe battering by the material realities of high unemployment, wage control, social spending cuts and growing impoverishment. But whilst we have reformism without reforms, the illusions continue to survive.

Many workers still accept the view of the opportunists that 'prosperity is round the corner', give 'a year or several for Britain', hold back on wages and unemployment will be down and the garden will be rosy again. In so far as a credible alternative policy and leadership does not emerge the trade union and Labour bureaucracy will have a monopoly on presenting alternatives and explanations.

What are the main reasons for the down-turn in struggle? Firstly, and most importantly is the political factor. The narrow Labour majority in Parliament has had the effect of strengthening the right-wing in the Parliamentary Labour Party and in the trade unions. We have seen the emergence of the Manifesto Group and the Social Democratic Alliance coupled with the right ward drift of the Labour Government itself. In the unions, previous 'left' leaders, supported by the CP etc, have shifted to the right. The best examples being Jack Jones – the architect of the £6 limit and its son, Hugh Scanlon and Lawrence Daly. The open right-wing have also scored important victories in the AUEW, CPSA, NUT and numerous other unions. One of the chief arguments strengthening the hand of the right-wing has been "Don't rock the boat or you'll bring the Labour Government down". This view is given permanent sustenance by

the now nil majority Labour Party representation in Parliament. It is a view which is one of the hall-marks of reformist, parliamentary, electoralist road to socialism.

Besides this swing to right which tightens the hold of the Labour bureaucracy, we have also seen a number of political defeats for the working class. Success for the strategists of monopoly capital in the Common Market referendum opened the period of defeats in earnest. The 'yes' vote showed the bourgeoisie and their open agents in the Labour Party, the Jenkinsites, has imposed their policy of international class collaboration, and partially, their 'solution' to the crisis, onto the working class. Following hard on the heels of this success came the demotion of Benn from his position as Industry Secretary, the resignation of Judith Hart and Bob Hughes, followed later by Eric Heffer and more recently, Joan Lester. These movements in the Parliamentary Labour Party, reflected, albeit in an indirect way, a shifting on the balance of forces to the bourgeoisie. The right wing labour lieutenants of capital now has the initiative. The dialectic of these defeats revealed itself further in the successful imposition of the £6 pay policy when unemployment had risen to its highest post war figure of well over 1 million. Industrial struggles were given a further rebuff.

Thus the key to the downturn has been the role of the reformists in close liaison with the trade union bureaucracy. The betrayals of the Labour Government have had the effect of disarming the working class, and in a contradictory way, tiring workers even more closely to the coat-tails of the bureaucracy. The ability of the opportunists to carry through their bailing-out operations on the sinking ship of capitalism has highlighted the political backwardness of the working class and the contradiction between the objective situation rotten-ripe for socialist revolution and the subjective factor of working class consciousness, totally unprepared at present to match these tasks. A great army marches forward and forced the enemy to retreat in 1974. But the army of the working class had no strategists, and now the bourgeoisie with its fifth columnists in the person of the Labour Government and TUC are forcing a whole series of retreats. This is having the effect of providing a breathing space for the class enemy and softening up the labour movement for a period of open Tory offensive.

Thus the second factor explaining the down-turn is the theoretical weakness of the working class. The weakness of Marxist theory in the British labour movement was a feature that Marx himself observed, and one to which he ascribed the conservatism and slowness which characterised British labour. Basically, the working class at present accepts the bourgeoisie analysis of the crisis. That wages cause inflation, "that one man's wage increase could be another's ticket to the dole queue" and that state spending must be curbed. The Labour lefts and the Communist Party provide no class alternative, to this view. Reflation clearly means more inflation. Import control is the chant of the right-wing Tories and fascists and the slogans of £100 wage for miners and return to free collective bargaining fail to provide any perspective for struggle. They fail to provide an alternative to the view that somehow workers are responsible or must play their part in overcoming the crisis.

Marxists have therefore an over-riding duty to provide both a coherent alternative, proletarian analysis of the economic crisis and extend the fight for partial and transitional demands (rising scale of wages and work sharing on full pay etc) which lay the basis for workers to reach an understanding of the crisis through the course of struggle. Only an independent working class perspective can effectively challenge the bourgeoisie perspective of Callaghan and Healey and the petty bourgeois muddle-headedness of the lefts.

The third major factor which explains the down-turn is unemployment. By imposing the highest levels of

unemployment since the 1930s, the Labour Government has managed to shift the focus of struggle away from wages onto the defensive issue of jobs. Deliberate deflationary policies have expanded the already large reserve army of labour to a size of nearly two million if married women, 'lump workers' and others who don't register are included in the figures. The effect of this large pool of jobless workers is to weaken the resolve of the working class in employment and act as a wedge to divide the employed from the unemployed. Every worker now looks behind his or her shoulder before contemplating strike action. Unemployment is being used quite cynically as a weapon to impose wage cuts and discipline the power of organised labour. Historically this has been the 'social control' function of unemployment. That the working class has not been able to resist the impact of Labour's growth industry constitutes a major political defeat for the working class.

Another, more long-term danger arising from the existence of high unemployment is the growth of racialism and fascism. These malignant sores will undoubtedly continue to fester and grow as long as unemployment remains around the one million mark. We have seen numerous struggles against redundancy left isolated with the workers split and divided on racial lines. Imperial Type-writers in Leicester being the most infamous example.

All these developments have the effect of dampening down the class struggle, sapping the militant fighting spirit of the proletariat, and producing at best, localised struggles on wages, conditions and jobs. This situation calls for new methods of intervention on the part of Trotskyists and the posing of policies to correspond to the changed level of struggle. It means less calls for action and more propaganda work preparing the advanced sections of the class for action at a later date. It means providing militants with arguments and a perspective for struggle. It means organising and building up support for actions against the cuts, unemployment and the Labour leaders' policies in each locality. This should be the character of our work over the next year or two.

THE CRISIS OF REFORMISM — THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

Any Government emerging from a party with deep and traditional roots in the working class, but which collaborates with the capitalist state, will inevitably betray the working class. This has been the case with all seven previous Labour Governments'. What concerns marxists is the degree to which a reformist government will betray the movement that put it in office. This is dependent upon the combativity, confidence and class consciousness of the working class and the depth of the economic crisis of the capitalist system.

We have now a Labour government, a government constructed on the politics of reformism, but without any reforms. Despite the material basis of reformism — a robust labour aristocracy fed from the crumbs of imperialism — having disappeared, we have always argued reforms are a product of the balance of class forces. When the ruling class has its back to the wall it will make concessions. This it did throughout 1974. But now these limited reforms are fast giving way to unadulterated pro-capitalist policies. The centerpiece of the Labour Government's strategy has been the 'Social Contract'.

It is important to understand that only a 'Labour Government could have achieved the current agreement with the TUC because of the traditional matrix of relationship between the Labour Party and trade unions. The social contract is founded on the elemental drive of the working class for unity against the employers and Tories. It is a cynical abuse of that unity, but it is one which must be understood before it can be destroyed. The social contract will not be washed away with buckets of

militancy a la the IS (SWP) Group nor will it disappear by 'forcing the Labour Government to resign' and variations on that theme. Our interventions against the social contract, with its wage cuts, unemployment, public spending cuts and policing of the trade unions must always be geared to correspond to the contradictory moods of the working class. We must say: yes, we are for a Labour Government, a government acting in the interests of our class independently and against the capitalist and their state. We want this government to take real power. Thus we stand for the unity of the Labour Party with the trade unions. But we also say: down with the policies of Wilson-Callaghan-Healey, which only split our movement, aid the Tories, and ultimately so demoralise the labour movement, that the Tories are returned. In this way our interventions will both express the loyalty of the working class towards the Labour Party and deepen the class split between the rank and file and the Government on policies which correspond to the demands and interests of the working class.

The central components in the Labour Government's class collaborationist policy have now become unemployment and wage control. These two devices have become completely integrated into the deflationary economic strategy of the parliamentary clique of Callaghan in the attempt to restore profitability to British capitalism. The initial social reform policies of 1974 have been abandoned and replaced with the £6 pay limit and its successor the 4½ per cent limit, huge social expenditure cuts to the tune of £4 billion, involving cut-backs in state aid to private industry (the National Enterprise Board under Lord Ryder now has only £750 million to play with), a slashing of finance to nationalised industry programmes, drastic cuts in social services, and support for speed-up, de-manning and rationalisation policies in industry. The unashamed aim of these fundamentally capitalist policies is to restore profitability by boosting exports, reducing the enormous balance of payments' deficits and public sector borrowing requirements running at £10,000 to £12,000 million, cutting taxation on the higher income strata as the last two Budgets have done and removing all vestiges of price control. The so-called 'voluntary' incomes policy (which reduced real disposable incomes for working people by between five to eight per cent up to April this year) is not essentially about holding down wages to bring down inflation (this is happening anyway because of the upswing in world trade) but to help create the climate in which capitalists will be encouraged to increase domestic capital investments to make British capitalism "alert, vigorous, responsible and profitable" (Dennis Healey).

The £3,000 to £4,000 million public expenditure cuts announced in the 1975 White Paper will not even be sufficient to cover the interest on the National Debt which is now running at an astronomical amount. The decline of the pound as an international currency, its current 38 per cent devaluation against the dollar from the 1971 Smithsonian Agreement and the enormous shoring up exercise by the Bank of England have reduced foreign exchange reserves to under £3,000 million. This is the measure of the bankruptcy of British capitalism which the Labour Government has taken up itself to bring back to solvency. Yet more international loans from Iran (£1,000m) the IMF (£475m) and recycled oil money will only exacerbate the intractable problems.

The economic pundits (the London Business School, NIESR, OECD, the Cambridge economists all predict unemployment will still be running at over the one million mark by the end of the decade and that inflation is unlikely to come down under 10 per cent. The CBI confidently calculate that 900,000 would be a good standard level. Only the Treasury, myopically and cynically forecast unemployment down to 700,000 (!) by 1978-79. The sops like the Job Creation Programme, recruitment subsidies to employers who take on school

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leavers and a tiny boost to retaining programmes will not interrupt the general deflationary policies.

On foreign policy the Labour Government continues the imperialist policies of their predecessors. In the north of Ireland concessions are rained down upon the loyalists and troops and SAS forces are expanded. All attempts to 'reform' the sectarian six county state have failed, and the social imperialists, through Secretary of State Merlyn Rees, have reimposed direct rule. The complicity of the British workers in this imperialist butchery and its counterpart in this country — the Prevention of Terrorism Act — is one of the greatest weakness of the labour movement and the biggest obstacle to the achievement of a class conscious internationalism. In Southern Africa and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Callaghan has pursued a policy of appeasing the racist Smith regime, with promises to send in British troops if a transition to majority rule is accepted for two years hence. Both on Zimbabwe and Angola the Labour leaders openly flout the Manifesto pledges to support the national liberation movements, condemning the military struggles of MPLA, and the Zimbabwean liberation forces and refusing to send material aid.

On all fronts the reformists are careering along on a pro-capitalist imperialist toboggan. Our tasks must start from the realities. A Labour Government whose policies are being tolerated or acquiesced to by the bulk of the working class. The emphasis is on the fight in the Labour Party. The aim of our work should be to develop all splits and conflicts that develop between the rank and file Labour Party members and supporters and the PLP Government. We must attempt to force the MPs and councillors out of the debating chambers, the cosy committee rooms and parlours into the local parties, the trade unions and local labour movements. The working class will move to confront their leaders, we must make that process conscious and clarify it with a clear programme of struggle. The lynch-pin of this work is always the active intervention of revolutionaries, constantly trying to bridge the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, the struggles in the unions and the struggles in the CLPs and break down the traditional backbone of reformism in Britain — the division between the LP and unions, between economic demands and political demands.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE LABOUR PARTY

Over the last year there have been a number of significant struggles occurring within the Labour Party which have had national repercussions. The most notable has been struggle in Newham N.E. against right-wing Labourite Reg Prentice. What this struggle, and those at Hammersmith North, Sheffield Brightside, Lincoln and many others has revealed is that a powerful movement in the CLPs is developing against the anti-working class policies of the Labour Government. In a sense the CLPs are even to the left of many trade unions. This was clearly shown at last years Labour Party conference, where a majority of CLP delegates came out clearly against the Government on numerous issues calling for a return to the social reform pledges of the Manifesto. It was the trade union block votes conversely, which came out strongly behind the £6 limit etc. A reflection of these trends came in the attack which Ian Mikardo (Tribuneite MP for Bethnal Green) made on Jack Jones at the Tribune meeting in Blackpool. He accused Jones of abandoning trade unionists and virtually selling-out through his advocacy of the pay policy.

On another level, radicalisation of the CLPs finds a reflection on the NEC of the LP. At the 1975 Conference Healey was ousted by Tribuneite Heffer and on a number of questions the NEC has come out against the Government. The most recent examples being the vote against the White Paper cut-back plans and opposition to the 'trade visit' of the Brazilian dictator Geisel, where the

the NEC took the unprecedented step of calling for mass picketing. The decision on an emergency recall of the LP conference was only narrowly defeated at the April NEC meeting.

This leftward movement in the CLPs indicates two things. On the one hand, that there is no immediate correspondence between trends in the trade unions (a rightward movement) and trends in the LP. And more importantly, that those more advanced sections of the labour movement who had their expectations raised and turned to political answers to the impasse of 1974, now constitute a sizable proportion of the LP rank and file. Once again, any marxists worth their salt could and should have predicted such a movement and been in advance of it. Unfortunately, we have had very much of an empirical reaction by some ostensibly revolutionary groups to these developments. Any cursory examination of British labour history would show that even in periods of downturn in the class struggle there have been shifts to the left in the LP which reflect the strivings of important sections of the labour movement for answers to problems which they have been unable to find through the trade union struggle. After the betrayal of the General Strike, and the later debacle of the MacDonald National Government in 1931, a centrist wing in the LP — the Independent Labour Party — swung rapidly to the left. In the 1950s we saw a similar process with the Bevanites. The task of revolutionaries is always to be one step ahead of the class attempting to politically clarify the thinking and tactics of the vanguard sections of the labour movement.

An expression of this movement in the CLPs has been the expansion of the centrist trend around the 'Militant'. Centristism is a scientific term, not a label of abuse. It is a characterisation of an essentially vacillating and confused tendency which shifts from a proletarian to to a petty bourgeois stand. Trotsky once called it revolutionary in words reformist in practice. Such is the 'Militant' tendency in the LP. The Militant must be taken seriously in order that we can undermine its influence on leftward moving sections in the LP. Its abstract propagandist insistence on the need for socialism and nationalisation corresponds to a very definite sectarian marxist tradition in radical British politics going back to the days of the Social Democratic Federation and the Utopian socialists before them.

Not surprisingly these leftward movements in the CLPs have evoked a sharp response from the Labour bureaucracy. Witch-hunts have abounded. Tony Kelly, one of the prime movers in the Newham N.E. fight was subjected to a volley of red-baiting from the capitalist press and the Transport House bureaucrats. So too has been the 'Militant' and the LPYS, the IMG and others, including Chartist comrades. Wilson saw fit at 1975 LP conference to attack so-called 'self-appointed Samufai', 'politically-motivated cliques attempting to dominate the local LPs and warned of the need to "stop foreign alien elements taking over". These witch-hunts have been necessary in order to ensure the success of the Government's strategy and prevent any breaches in the LP itself. They are an attempt to intimidate rank and file LP members away from communist politics which hold the only road of struggle against reformism.

What the moves against Prentice and other right-wingers actually signifies is something of far wider importance than the actual issue itself. For these developments pose the whole question of accountability very concretely. Who is the Labour Party? The Parliamentary clique and the 'electorate' or the 700,000 individual members and the millions more trade union affiliates. Who decides policy? The Cabinet or the annual conference? Who are MPs answerable to, their local parties and annual conference or the amorphous electorate? In other words the anti-Prentice moves challenge a whole range of bourgeois political norms and practices which have en-

trenched themselves in the Labour Party and pose the question of workers democracy. Workers democracy is not an abstract concept, involving the 'right' to recall MPs and councillors and to regular elections as the 'Militant' tendency would advocate (though these demands are not incorrect in themselves), but a concrete, living movement on the part of the working class for control over their own organisations. Workers democracy is not realised through simply passing resolutions and changes to the constitution but through the living struggle against the right-wing in the labour movement and for their removal from positions of office.

To correspond to the changed situation in the labour movement our tactics have similarly changed. The Socialist Charter has argued that the work of militants in the LP has to take on a more defensive character. We do not call for expulsions of right-wingers, especially at a time when the bureaucracy is on guard and Reports are circulating about 'subversive' activity (eg. the Underhill Report, laid on the table by the NEC). [now being implemented at M. Foot's instigation]. We fight to remove all LP representatives from positions of office in the movement. These people will leave the Labour Party when it gets too hot in the kitchen. We put the whole onus for splits and division within the Labour movement on the right wing and their abandonment of Conference or manifesto policies and ultimately the interests of the working class. As part of the fight for the unity of the working class in its organisations on the basis of struggle to defend living standards and jobs, we also advance the demands for the ending of all bans and proscriptions, and the right of all working class tendencies to campaign for their policies inside the Labour Party.

Although our LP work takes a slight defensive shift in this period, we have argued that the threat of expulsions of revolutionary marxists is not an immediate problem, given the left-ward movement amongst the rank and file, the reflection of this in the NEC and the desire of the class as a whole for unity. Though, this is not to say we should underestimate the dangers from the Labour bureaucracy, from certain right-wing CLPs (Cf the expulsion of Keith Veness in Islington North and four Campaign for LP Democracy supporters in Newham South), or of a shift in the balance of forces in the LP. This has already started in a sense with the shift to the right in the new Callaghan administration and the threatening reverses in Newham N.E.

One further point should be made about the relationship between our own programme and the LP Manifesto. The abstentionist soothsayers of the IS group dismiss the 1974 Election Manifesto as "A document with about as much contemporary relevance as the Doomsday Book" (IS 83). Contrarily, the 'Militant' tendency and the 'Bulletin Group' tend toward uncritical support of the Manifesto 'defend the Manifesto' social contract, NATO, nationalism and social imperialism and all. Whilst the Manifesto is no De Man Plan we take up every single pledge or policy in the Manifesto which would advance the interests of the working class, promote struggle and internationalism. We specify the pledges to 'restore full employment', for 'price control', that infamous 'fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families', extension of nationalisation into profitable sectors, 'industrial democracy', expansion of social services etc. as mandates from the working class and test out the leadership on these demands.

But we do not leave it at this point. How are these pledges to be implemented? How can they be struggled for? This raises the necessity for a programme which is also a guide to action. In other words a transitional programme which provides not only the goals of struggle but the means to struggle. For example, on the question of 'industrial democracy' and 'planning agreements' we argue that the demands for the complete abolition of

business secrets, for the opening of all company books to trade union committees and for a workers' veto on all management decisions as being vital to achieving real workers' democracy and control. We tied it in with the debate on the National Enterprise Board and showed, to the limits of our resources, how genuine workers control could be developed and showed the shallowness of the Bennite proposals.

Marxists can never give uncritical support to the programmes of reformism, but it is the height of sectarian abstentionism or crude economism to refuse to link our own policies with the consciousness of the advanced sections of the labour movement as mediated in the Election Manifestos. This concretely is what fighting for the transitional programme is all about.

TRIBUNE AND THE LEFT-WING OF REFORMISM

The major left-reformist current in the Labour Party is grouped around the Tribune Group (on paper 80 MPs strong) and the Clause 4 Group in the LPYS. Since the election of a Labour Government in 1974, the Tribune Group has revealed its utter confusion and lack of principle and programme. Essentially it has divided into three factions, though each shades off into the other. On the right stands people like Michael Foot, now Lord President who has consistently supported the policies of the Government and acted as the left apologist for the Cabinet. With his vivid 'socialist imagination', his florid 'red flame of socialist courage' and appeals for sacrifice he reveals all the hollowness of a petty bourgeois commitment to socialism. Foot and Jones (his TU counterpart) has become the main pillar of the present government and his left credentials gained in the Bevanite hey-days have stood him in good stead with a large section of the LP rank and file. In the centre we have people like Norman Atkinson, Brian Sedgemore, Heffer and Neil Kinnock who stand by the more traditional politics of the Tribune. And to their dubious left stand MPs like Joan Maynard, Audrey Wise, Loyden and Skinner whose politics in parliamentary circles are often labelled as 'ultra-left'.

In the elections for a new LP leader and Prime Minister following Wilson's resignation (which should not be endowed with any special significance) we supported Benn in the first ballot and Foot in the second, with the emphasis on the sovereignty of Conference and the rights of the membership to decide. The IMG and ICL who correctly called for a Benn-vote in the first ballot advocated abstention in the second. This position revealed a failure to understand the movements and illusions which exist in the Labour Party and the fact that left reputations die hard. Foot may be exposed in our eyes but in the minds of thousands of workers he is on their side when it comes to choosing Callaghan or Healey. In order to open a dialogue with these workers we had to relate to their moods. We also had to recognise that the bourgeoisie itself was extremely hostile to the election of Foot, mounted a big pro-Callaghan campaign in the press, and did its utmost to paint Foot up as a left wild-man whose election would have been a disaster for the right-wing. Undoubtedly a victory for Foot would have shifted the balance of forces in the Labour Party to the left and would have been seen as a victory for the left. Simply because Benn distanced himself from the policies of the Government and the methods of the other campaigners could not be used as the reason for supporting him and him alone. In the last analysis the whole question reduces itself to that of the balance of forces. Qualitatively there is no difference between Benn and Foot. The key is being able to translate revolutionary policies into the thinking of the vanguard. To do that, marxists have to give critical support to candidates who either command the allegiance of the bulk of left-ward

thinking workers or whose election would shift the balance of forces in our favour.

It was Trotsky who pointed out in his discussion with British Trotskyists in the 1930s, that different social democratic/reformist leaders correspond to different currents of thinking within the broader labour movement. Not an identical correspondence, but one which marxists must take account of if they want to root their politics in the actual movement of the working class. As materialists we understand that workers struggle and deepen class consciousness through attachment to leaders who embody policies, ideas and outlooks which in some degree they themselves hold. Only by confronting the leaders and the ideas can we break the stranglehold of reformist politics over the working class. It is this method of approach that should inform our own political practice.

What has been the role of the Tribune Left over the last year of the social contract, the £6 pay limit, high unemployment, savage cuts in social services, education, health, transport and housing, and imperialist policies in Ireland and elsewhere? In short they have abjectly failed to provide any consistent opposition to the Government's anti-working class course or any independent political alternative. On every key struggle in Parliament only half the Tribunites have either abstained eg. Healey's Budgets, the £6 pay limit (there has been no opposition to the 4½ per cent limit), the Chrysler 'rescue' or timidly opposed Wilson with no alternative policy. The hue-and-cry for 'selective' import controls, 'reflation', more state hand-outs to capitalist industry and 'incentives to invest' and the abandonment of any fight against the £6 pay limit reveal the complete muddle-headedness, phrase-mongering charlatanism and above all dangerous narrow nationalism of the inflation-priming alternatives the Tribunites propose.

The bankruptcy of the Tribune is revealed most clearly on the attitude towards incomes policy (£6 limit and successor). Benn, although not a member of the Tribune Group, paid tribute to those workers who had accepted the £6 limit at Labour Party conference and Heffer wrote in the October 1975 Tribune that the LP conference "must not get side-tracked into a false debate about a £6 wage limitation". In the same paper, Clive Jenkins, ASTMS leader referred to the TUC Congress which ratified the £6 wage-cut deal as "a very progressive affair leaving aside the £6 limit".

It is this issue of wage control which lies at the heart of the Labour Government strategy. To dismiss it, or relegate it into oblivion is to abstain from the fight against all the other policies of the Government. It is to sow confusion in the working class and de facto accept the core of the bourgeoisie's recipe for the labour movement. As we said in the October 'Chartist' (no. 35) "Without rejection of the £6 limit and support for all struggles against it, no serious fight to defend living standards and against unemployment, the Healey cuts and the retreat from the Manifesto can be mounted." It is precisely because the issue of inflation and wages poses at its sharpest the need for a marxist analysis and either a proletarian or bourgeois road, that the lefts find themselves devoid of any policy other than petty bourgeois confusion or the stalinist/mindless-militancy argument of restore free collective bargaining, across the board wage rises. Only the fight for a rising scale of wages based on a workers' cost of living index can provide the political pre-conditions for mounting a fight-back against Labour's incomes policy. Only this demand poses an alternative course of action to the social contract, permits the false argument that wages cause inflation to be proved wrong in practice by removing work from the treadmill of wages chasing prices and stands for the independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie.

How can the bankruptcy, blind-alley leadership of the Labour lefts be unmasked? Once again, it is first necessary to recognise that they reflect real conflicts

occurring within society between capital and labour. Against the blinkered sectarians who see no difference between left and right in the Labour Party or who abstain from the fight for leadership we must come out clearly in support of every statement and every action which the lefts make that confronts the policies of the Labour Government and facilitates the sharpening of the struggle against Callaghan-Healey-Jones-Murray alliance. We defend the lefts against the attacks of the right-wing, in their noisy but hollow opposition to cuts and unemployment and at the same time advance clear policies and class struggle methods to dispel the confusion of the lefts and develop a class conscious opposition.

In December 1975, Trotsky wrote in a letter to a British 'left' who was opposing the fight for a revolutionary communist party that-

"The lefts reflect the lethargy of the British working class. They convert its as yet vaguely defined but profound and stubborn aspiration to free itself from Baldwin and MacDonald into left phrases of opposition which do not place any obligations upon them. They convert the political feebleness of the awakening masses into an ideological mish-mash. They represent the expression of a shift but also its brake."

On issues central to the thinking of the mass labour movement, like cuts and unemployment, it is possible to build a revolutionary opposition to the Labour Government by taking up the rhetoric of the lefts. The best example of how to approach this problem is the fight against the public spending cut-backs. Health, education and social services are very close to the hearts of the masses and can be considered as real social gains. The abstention of the 37 Labour left MPs in the vote on the Healey White Paper which proposed cuts of up to £4 billion over the next four years and Benn's breach of 'Cabinet responsibility' by abstaining on the NEC, is a reflection of this opposition to cuts in the working class.

But the opposition has been confined to Parliament. It has been a mere gesture. "Left phrases of opposition which do not place any obligations upon them". Our task is to confront them head-on with their obligations. To demand that they translate their opposition from empty gestures into deeds. Drag them out into the CLPs and unions, demand that they organise and give leadership to the anti-cuts movement. They were elected to expand social services not preside over cuts. Furthermore, we should attempt to commit them to policies around which workers, tenants, women etc can struggle against the cuts on an offensive basis. The demand for a crash programme of public works to employ the jobless on socially necessary projects meets this criteria. In this way revolutionaries can deepen their influence in the labour movement and advance the fight against the lefts by involving the working class itself, through experience, in seeing through their shabby opposition.

The working class will break from the lefts through practical struggle, not simple abstract, propaganda demands which commit them to nothing. This is precisely the error of the position which advocates the Tribune MPs should have voted against the vote of confidence and thus precipitated a General Election and an almost certain return of the Tories. What is central here is not the formal propagandising of "If the lefts were really serious they would have voted against the vote of confidence", which provides no course of action for workers to learn through their own experience the 'unseriousness' of the Tribunites opposition, but rather the outlining of a course of action, organisation, and struggle around definite policies which would hasten the time when workers will throw off the lethargy and ball and chain of the lefts which ties them to capitalism. In other words, a break with left reformism in practice as opposed to a break in the metaphysical world of the ultra-left, where the class struggle takes place in the head. On numerous occasions Lenin opposed bringing down the Provisional Government of Kerensky. That did not mean he supported a single one of its policies. No. We defend the Labour-

Government against the Tories and the ruling class. We don't defend its policies when they contravene working class interests. We say we want this Government to take full power by breaking with the capitalists and supporting and organising all working class struggles against the employing class. This is the expression of the united front front at the level of government. It is the way to pose the need for a workers government in the context of the organisations and leaders with which the workers are familiar.

Once again the question is one of the balance of class forces. We would advocate voting against the Labour Government in conditions where the working class was on the ascendancy, where there was a credible revolutionary alternative or where it would not necessarily precipitate the downfall of the Labour Government. This is not a principled issue, where marxists would tarnish revolutionary principles, but a tactical question. The working class would not understand clearly why the Labour Government had been brought down and even advanced workers who had begun to see through to the bourgeois nature of its policies would not be clear on how to arm the rank and file workers who look to them for leadership. We want our policies to be listened to. To strike an echo in the labour movement. To achieve this we must take account of the moods, loyalties and attitudes of the movement if we want to change the tide of retreat.

In like vein, the question of whether we demand people like Benn resign from the Labour Cabinet, should be approached in a similar fashion. The key is always trying to generate struggle and a wider involvement of the class in the battles that are occurring within their organisations. We therefore demand Benn carries out a certain course of action, uses his position of leadership and authority with the left of the labour movement to organise and campaign to defeat the policies of the Government. The question of his resignation becomes entirely secondary, for any attempt to carry out real class struggle opposition to Callaghan et al, would without doubt lead to his demotion, thus putting the whole onus for splits on the right wing.

The lefts reflect both the pressure of the masses and a cobbled together amalgam of bourgeois, petty bourgeois and proletarian ideas, such as to make their programme completely unworkable. Our task is to use the lefts, as the means to develop an understanding of the need to break completely with policies of state-managed capitalism and strike out on the road of struggle against the state and all who refuse to break from it, and to ruthlessly unmask their pro-capitalist politics.

There is no mechanical relationship between the lefts and the industrial struggle. Because there are no mass strike movements it does not mean the influence or significance of the Labour left will decline. In fact the

perspective for within the Labour Party for the next year or so will be for a continuing radicalisation of CLPs and a corresponding movement amongs sections of the bune MPs. The collaboration of the stalinists with the Tribuneites will be a prominent feature as the Assembly on Unemployment indicated.

CRISIS IN THE TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY

The trade union bureaucracy occupies the central place in the economic and political strategy for the survival of British capitalism. In both initiating and policing state wage control the TUC has played the key part.

During a period of intense capitalist crisis independent trade unions become increasingly intolerable. Through the whole panapoly of class collaborationist schemes enshrined in the social contract, the TU bureaucracy actually smooths the path and acts as the main force in the process of integrating the trade unions into the state. Jack Jones — architect of the £6 limit—along with Murray, Scanlon, Gormley and Basnett, has effectively patrolled the wage control policy and undermined the traditional independent bargaining role of the unions. But the trade union bureaucracy, to a much greater extent, must take account of its rank and file, with opposition to cuts and unemployment finding a more direct expression through the unions that the LP. Thus the TUC has made toothless growls against the present levels of unemployment and given accolades to Healey's 'job creation' sops.

Because the bureaucracy must be more responsive to its membership we have seen the twists and turns in various unions from support to opposition back to support for Government policy. The tendency we observe in the LP of the bourgeoisie being forced to rely on the lefts is repeated in the unions. Leaders who built up their reputations against 'In Place of Strife', 1967 style incomes policy and against the Tories, namely Scanlon, Jones and Daly now shift to the centre as the main protagonists of the Labour traitors' policies. In fact Scanlon has moved perceptively rightwards over the last year. At the September 1975 TUC he played a vacillating role over the £6 limit and the vote was 19 for, 13 against. This May, after Scanlon had instructed British Leyland workers to return to work in Birmingham, his vote joined the other 26 who voted for the 4½ per cent with only five against.

This whole junket of class collaboration will not be broken up until at least one major national union moves into struggle against the Labour Government or until such time as major ructions develop within one or other of the main industrial unions.

THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION: A RETROSPECTIVE

The decline in coverage of the Portuguese situation in both the bourgeois and the left press over the last year has been in direct proportion to the ebb of the revolutionary wave of 1974/5 and the stabilisation of the political situation. It is in the very nature of the would-be agitational papers of the revolutionary left that they must constantly follow the peaks and troughs of the global class struggle. Thus, the working class which allows itself to be saddled with a 'normal' regime of bourgeois democracy must necessarily disappear from their pages. With a few exceptions neither have the journals of the revolutionary left taken up the questions posed by the rapid recession of the revolution.

In the pamphlet "Portugal: Anatomy of a Revolution" (Chartist Publications March 1976) we termed the Portuguese revolution an "acid test" for Marxist theory. Today, that view still holds. The retreat into embarrassed silence of a number of the publications of the far left reflects an inability to come to grips with the problems posed (at a theoretical level) by the development of the revolution. The Portuguese revolution refused to obey the courses laid down for it in advance in the editorial offices of the papers of the far left. It has challenged many of the traditional analyses, schema and slogans which form part of the received wisdom of the revolutionary left, and submitted the familiar nostrums of revolutionary politics to a "force of criticism" no less ruthless and rigorous than that "criticism of force" which swept away the old Salazar-Caetano regime.

In the above mentioned pamphlet we attempted to present an outline of the events of the first two years of the revolution, to clarify some of the misconceptions which abounded. Inevitably, in attempting to draw a picture of a revolution which had by no means run its course, which was still in motion, we were compelled to freeze the living process as a still photograph freezes its subject. Much of our analysis at the time remained sketchy and empirical, much of the polemic, important, in fact, essential at the time may seem in retrospect overheated, nevertheless we would still maintain that "Portugal: Anatomy of a Revolution" remains an important contribution to the debates on the left which Portugal's revolution has initiated.

Perhaps, the greatest weakness of the document was that it did not, and could not, place the Portuguese events in the context of a wider analysis of the present stage in the development of world capitalism and stalinism. Therefore, though, for example, in the articles "Portugal: The Acid Test" and "Dual Power in the Portuguese Revolution" we touch on many of the problems that have perplexed the revolutionary movement since the war: problems such as the 'national liberation'

struggles in the former African colonies, as a part of the colonial revolution', the roles of Stalinism and European Social Democracy since the war and the enigma of the Stalinist-led revolutions which have occurred in the last three decades, we touched on them only in passing.

On many of these questions, the theoretical prerequisites for a full analysis do not, as yet exist. Certainly, there has been precious few serious contributions made to the solving the tasks posed by the basic trends of world development in this, the last quarter of the 20th Century.

The task of this article is to make a contribution to these tasks by attempting to locate more accurately than we have hitherto done, the roots, in the international and national situations, of the Portuguese revolution and its subsequent course. In doing so, we hope to re-examine some of the problems we mention above in the light which the Portuguese revolution has shed upon them. If this article helps clarify either the Portuguese revolution from a world standpoint or the world revolution from the standpoint of its Portuguese manifestation it will have served its purpose.

IN THE THREE short years which have elapsed since the morning of April 25th 1974 when the coup led by junior officers of the Armed Forces Movement brought down the decaying dictatorship of Marcello Caetano, the Portuguese revolution has written a heroic page in the history of working class struggle and immeasurably altered the development of world events.

In Africa, where the seeds of the revolution were sown, the revolution provided the conditions for the difficult and painful birth of three new nations bringing closer the historic death sentence on the racist regimes of Smith's Rhodesia and Vorster's South Africa.

In Portugal itself throughout most of 1975 the working class came close to concentrating all power into its own hands. . . only to let the chance slip through its fingers.

Today, as Portugal's Prime Minister, Mario Soares seeks to lead Portugal into the EEC, it is time to assess the results of the Portuguese revolution. Is it a successful democratic overturn? Or is Portugal's democracy a shaky cover for the restabilisation of Portuguese capitalism?

Since the right wing coup of November 25th 1975 a slow steady process of returning to a 'normal' capitalist regime has occurred. The obstacles to such a stabilisation are immense; but the obstacles to the working class being able to make good its wasted chances and to strive once again for power are even greater.

From the standpoint of capital, the pressing crisis of

Portuguese industry presents itself in an annual balance of trade deficit of 15 million contos (1 conto = 1000 escudos, approximately £18 sterling, a foreign debt which has reached 95.4 million contos, a balance of payments deficit of 130,000–140,000 contos per day and with 80% of gold and foreign currency reserves exhausted. Production has fallen from 1975 levels in textiles by 17.3%; in basic metallurgical industries by 18.5%; in metal and transport by 12.7%.

Portuguese President Ramalho Eanes.

To overcome this crisis of the Portuguese economy without unleashing a new working class upsurge which would threaten the political stability essential for economic recovery is the task confronting the minority Socialist Party (PS) Government of Mario Soares. Treading gingerly on this tightrope, Soares' Government have launched an attack on the gains made by the workingclass in the course of the revolution.

In the countryside, since November 25th 1975 the farmers' organisation CAP, launched a campaign against the land reform which had legalised the land seizures in the South of the country. On January 11th 1976 a rally of 10,000 farmers demanded that all seized land should be restored to the former owners and threatened to withhold farm produce from the capital if their demands were not met.

Predictably, Soares gave way and decided to hand back 101 properties covering 20,000 hectares – less than 2% of expropriated land. Equally predictably, the CAP complained this was insufficient. In practice despite the removal of left Agriculture Minister, Lopes Cardoso, very little land has been restored.

Instead, the Government has turned towards attempting to undermine the co-operative enterprises established on occupied land. These are being starved of the credit which is necessary if investment is to take place. No fixed or guaranteed prices for their produce exist and distribution and marketing present grave difficulties, as the Government boycott co-op products and the big middlemen offer only ruinous prices. Even under a genuine workers' government committed to the building of socialism the under-development of Portuguese agriculture, its unevenness and its relationship with the cities would present serious problems. Under Soares' Government committed to the restoration of conditions of 'normal' capitalist exploitation the outlook for Portugal's co-operative farms is far from optimistic.

In industry, hundreds of bosses who fled or were kicked out in 1975 have attempted to return and once again lay claim to the prerogatives of management. While many of the small manufacturers in the North have succeeded in returning, the only factory of any significant size restored to the old owner remains Textile Manuel Gonçalves. The use of hired thugs and the police against members of the Workers Committee has occurred in a number of workplaces.

Strangely one obstacle to present attempts to restore the authority of old management and owners is the Constitution of Portugal. Article 83 Section 1 states: "All the nationalisations effected after April 25th 1974 are irreversible gains of the working classes". The rights of Workers' Committee are also defined: "1. It is the right of workers to create workers' committees to defend their interests and to intervene democratically in the life of the firm, having in view the strengthening of the unity of the working classes and their mobilisation for the revolutionary process of the construction of the democratic power of the workers. 2. The committees are elected at mass meetings of the workers by direct and secret ballot."

[Article 55]

Of course such paper rights can, in the final analysis, mean very little. The struggle decides, not the Constitution, but while Portugal's rulers remain committed to

carry through the counter-revolutionary stabilisation within the framework of democracy in order to win EEC acceptance they cannot override Constitutional rights with crude coercion on a wide scale.

Still, Soares has already attempted to revise the Constitution on this question. A new decree attempted to restrict these provisions to "national" i.e. Portuguese firms and those employing over 50 workers. Since 41.7% of all Portugal's industrial workers work in plants employing less than 50 and many of the larger plants belong to multi-nationals this would virtually nullify the whole of Articles 55 and 56 of the Constitution and leave many existing Workers' Commission open to attack.

In the trade unions, attempts to split the movement by the right-wing Socialist Party leaders aided by the ultra-right Maoists of the MRPP and the PCP-ML through the "Open Letter" movement have largely failed. A conference called by the supporters of the "Open Letter" in Coimbra last August attracted 35 unions, 18 of which were affiliated to the Inter syndical. Since then, however, one by one, the rank-and-file of the "Open Letter" unions have registered their disapproval of these splitting moves.

For instance, in October, a 5000 - strong meeting of the Bank Workers' Union of the South voted to withdraw from the "Open Letter" movement and the chairman attempted to rule the motion defeated. Altogether, by the time 1976 was out 20 unions had withdrawn from the "Open Letter" grouping.

Even in the armed forces the right-wing have still not succeeded in having everything their own way. Personal and career rivalries have made it difficult for a clear-cut right wing leadership to emerge capable of holding a gun to the head of the PS Government. But deeper reasons underlie the splits in the leadership of the armed forces. Firstly, the unimpaired strength of the workers' organisations still represents a tremendous force capable of exerting a considerable influence on the ranks of the forces, many of whom will still carry memories of the heady days of SUV and the unit assemblies. Secondly, the structure of the armed forces which, though trimmed since November 1975 are still inflated with wartime conscripts and too large for a peace-time 'professional' force. This is especially true of the officer corps who have played such a considerable role in Portugal's political life since 1974. In the ranks no such soldiers' democracy as existed in 1975 survives, but clandestine leaflets still circulate in the barracks.

The right in Portugal have gained in strength over the last year, through the economic uncertainties, through the traditional conservatism of the small farmers of the North and above all, among the "retornados" the disgruntled and displaced settlers from Mozambique and Angola. Centre of right-wing attention has been military man, Galvao de Melo who has spoken across the country on right-wing platforms. At present the far right present more of a shadowy threat for the future than a real social force, though occasional eruptions of right-wing-violence prove their nuisance and intimidatory value. Most, if not all, of Portuguese and international capitalism are still banking on Soares' experiment in social democratic counter-revolution though this means co-existing for the foreseeable future with the gains of the revolution – widespread workers' control, agriculture co-ops and 75% nationalisation of the country's productive resources. How long such a co-existence can continue depends on events outside Portugal – the world crisis, the unfolding revolution in Spain, the tensions in the EEC.

The tragic failure of the parties and other organisations of the working class to take all power into their own hands during 1975 when it was a real possibility have left the Portuguese workers a legacy fraught with

dangers. The very real gains of the revolution remain dangerously exposed.

THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION: A RETROSPECTIVE

The extremely complex national peculiarities of the Portuguese events can only be full comprehended as a national refraction of the development of the world economy and political structures resting on it, that is as a product of a world dominated by imperialism. An imperialism which once again broke at its weakest link.

Concretely, an attempt to deepen our understanding of the Portuguese events in such a fashion must take up a problem which is only touched on and treated in an implicit fashion in our analysis to date. That is the question of combined and uneven development.

COMBINED AND UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

At the risk of being somewhat schematic we can outline three main ways in which the phenomena of combined and uneven developments has helped to shape and at the same time to mar the development of the revolution in Portugal over the past three years. Firstly there is the long slow *decline* of Portugal as a world power since the early expansionist period of the 14th/15th century as Portugal lost her maritime supremacy to England. Secondly there is global problem of the post-war stabilisation and expansion of capitalism, with the associated problems of the relative acquiescence of the metropolitan working class, the rise of the colonial revolution and its effective beheading by Stalinism, thirdly, and linked to this, are the problems created by the export of capital i.e. the effective colonisation of Portugal during the mid-60s by foreign capital creating both a sizeable growth in heavy industry and the rise of a new highly organised and fiercely combative working class.

It is out of these three factors that we believe that the general course of development of the revolution can be explained. While in no way underestimating the subjective factor and the very real treachery of the parties which laid claim to the leadership of the Portuguese working class – treachery which we will deal with in later sections of this (article) – we tend to agree with Engels in the first of his articles in 'Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany' where he sets about analysing the cases of defeat of the German revolution of 1848, when he writes:—

"Everyone knows nowadays that wherever there is a revolutionary convulsion there must be some social want in the background, which is prevented, by outward institutions, from satisfying itself. . . . If then we have been beaten, we have nothing else to do but to begin from the beginning. And fortunately the probably very short interval of rest which is allowed us between the close of the first act and the beginning of the second act of the movement, gives us time for a very necessary piece of work: the study of the causes that necessitated the late outbreak and its defeat: causes that are not to be brought for in the accidental efforts, talents, faults, errors, or treacheries of some of the leaders, but in the general social conditions of existence of each of the convulsed nations. That the sudden movements of February and March 1848 were not the work of single individuals, but spontaneous irresistible manifestations of national wants and necessities, more or less clearly understood, but very distinctly felt by numerous classes in every country, is a fact recognised everywhere; but when you inquire into the causes of the counter-revolutionary successes, there you are met on every hand with the ready that it was Mr This or Citizen That who "betrayed" the people. Which reply may be very true or not, according to circumstances, but under no circumstances does it explain anything – nor even show how it came to be that the "people" allowed themselves to be thus betrayed. And what a poor chance stands a political party whose entire stock-in-trade consists in a knowledge of the solitary fact that Citizen So-and-so is not to be trusted."

(our emphasis) (Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany F. Engels pp 9/10)

We make no apology for quoting Engels a length, not only because of the need to accomplish the "very

necessary piece of work" referred to, but because for many of the tendencies we have had to do battle with over their analysis of the Portuguese events and indeed for much of the degenerated post-war Marxist movement the rich food of Marxist analysis has indeed been replaced by the thin gruel of demagogic finger-pointing accusations.

PORTUGAL AND HER PAST

Returning to our theme of combined and uneven development, and, in particular, the first form of this previously referred to we have to take up the question was (is) Portugal an imperialist country? In the pamphlet "Portugal: Anatomy of a Revolution" we answer this question thus: "The peculiarity of Portuguese development flows from the fact that (like Tsarist Russia) it was at the same time an imperialist country and the victim of exploitation by world imperialism in general." While at a general popular level, this formulation is useful in expressing the fact that Portugal was a country possessing colonies and at the same time exploited in a semi-colonial fashion, itself however, in a marxist sense it is inadequate. Portugal *cannot be considered to have ever been an imperialist power*. This point was made most clearly by Amilcar Cabral, theoretician and leader of the PAIGC, in a speech in London on the 26th October 1971. He said: *What is Portuguese colonialism? Some people talk about 'Portuguese Imperialism' but there's no such thing. Portugal has never reached the stage of economic development that you could call imperialist – there is a difference between actual imperialism and imperialist domination. Imperialism is the result of the development of capitalism. One day a comrade – an old sailor – was at a meeting where I put forward this idea. He was astonished and said "But Cabral, everybody says we're fighting imperialism. We're fighting the Portuguese, so we're fighting Portuguese imperialism". I explained that imperialism is seen in imperialist countries. In our country there is imperialist domination – a very different thing. The two are closely linked but different.*

The truth is that Portugal has been a semi colony. If you know history you will know of whom! Portugal's domination of our country was preserved because she was protected by Britain during the partition of Africa and at the Conference of Berlin. Portugal didn't at that time have enough power to keep her colonies. The reason that Portugal is not decolonising now is because she is not an imperialist country and cannot neo-colonise. (Original emphasis) Her economic infra-structure is such that she cannot compete with other capitalist powers. During all these years of colonialism, Portugal has simply been the gendarme, the intermediary, in the exploitation of our people.

("Our People Are Our Mountains" Amilcar Cabral on The Guinean Revolution pp. 4) [our emphasis.]

One needs no brief for the general political positions of Amilcar Cabral to recognise the essential validity of the above lines which are fully in accord with Lenin's writings on imperialism.

Of course, if Cabral is thought to dubious a source for political analysis and information, then we must turn to Lenin, himself. It is precisely in "Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism", Lenin describes Portugal as a country in a condition of semi-colonial dependence on Britain in the following terms; *A somewhat different form of financial and diplomatic dependence, accompanied by political independence, is presented by Portugal. Portugal is an independent sovereign state, but actually, for more than two hundred years, since the war of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), it has been a British protectorate. Great Britain has protected Portugal and her colonies in order to fortify her own position in the fight against her rivals, Spain and France. In return Great Britain has received commercial privileges, preferential conditions for importing goods and especially capital into Portugal and the Portuguese colonies, the right to use the ports and the islands of Portugal, here telegraph cables etc."*

(Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism V.I. Lenin)

How did it come about then, that Portugal with an empire embracing at various times, not only the recently

freed African colonies, but also Goa, Ceylon, Brazil, Macao and Timor could become transformed into an economically backward semi-colony?

Portugal's cities, Lisbon and Porto, were among the largest in Europe, during the Middle Ages, as centres of commerce and learning, they rivalled the Italian city states. The development of Portuguese navigational and ship-building technology in the 14th century was an outgrowth from Portugal's geographic position and age-old fishing industry. It was from this that Portugal's voyages of exploration, and later colonisation and the slave trade stemmed. But before any expansion had taken place the "perpetual alliance" with England was signed (1373). Her early expansion was possible only by taking advantage of the continual state of war which raged throughout Europe as the old feudal structures began to disintegrate under the impact of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Under the heavy shadow of Castilian Spain, to which Portugal was forceably annexed from 1580-1640 against Protestant England, neither the political, ideological nor social and economic conditions for an early bourgeois revolution were able to develop. The military and maritime supremacy of Britain consolidated in the early 17th Century and paving the way for the first successful bourgeois revolution ensured that Portugal very rapidly became a very junior partner indeed to the new power. In the Methuen Treaty of 1703 which guaranteed the acceptance of British manufactured goods in exchange for wine and agricultural produce, as well as ceding control of the port wine production and trade to Britain, the future of Portuguese industry especially the fledgeling textile trade was irretrievably jeopardised.

By the nineteenth century, Portugal's continued grip on her colonial possessions was clearly under Britain's protection. A new edition of the Methuen Treaty was signed in 1810. Brazil seceded under a Portuguese-born Emperor in 1820 becoming a republic in 1889 (ie 21 years before Portugal). The formerly profitable slave-trade petered out and increasingly it was Portugal which was, herself, supplying cheap labour to Brazil.

In Africa the last dreams of imperial greatness, of an empire from Lourenco Marques to Luanda were finally destroyed by Cecil Rhodes ultimatum of 1890, claiming the lands in central-ruled Empire from the Cape to Cairo. But even in those territories Portugal retained, lacking the capital to develop even an adequate transport system, let alone the resources of those countries, the Portuguese colonists were obliged to 'allow' Britain to build railways and ports in Mozambique and Angola owned and controlled by themselves, and used for the purpose of bringing the mineral wealth from Katanga to the Rand down to the sea.

Surpassed, very early on, in the navigational and ship-building skills from which her former achievements had flowed, by-passed by the great technological advance which changed the face of Europe throughout the 19th century, Portugal stagnated, a provider of wine, wheat, cork and fish to the richer European nations. Even her most famous export, in industry, port wine, was entirely in the hands of two British firms.

The stunted character of Portugal's industrial development throughout the 19th century and into the 20th is brought home in Figueredo's book*. In the first chapter "Salazar - the seminarist and nationalist". Though the first commercial steam engines were introduced in England in 1776, there is no recorded use of steam engines were introduced in England in 1776, there is no record of steam for industrial power in Portugal until 1834". Between 1890 and 1900 more than 60% of the Portuguese still worked in agriculture and less than 20% in secondary industries" Figueiredo relates. In the first year of the revolutionary republic, 1911, "the percenta-

ges had only changed to 57.1 per cent and 21.1 per cent, for agriculture and industry respectively." This, remember, was at a time, when the super-industrialised powers, France, Great Britain and Germany were already embarked on the feverish scramble for colonial possessions and accompanying arms race which led up to the outbreak of war in 1914. This alone should demonstrate conclusively the absurdity of the concept of "Portuguese Imperialism".

The illiteracy figures also give a convincing index of of the backwardness of Portuguese life at the turn of the century with in 1890, 67.6% of men and 83.5% women - a total of 76% which by 1911 had only fallen to 69.7% (60.8% men and 77.4% women). Seven years after the republic was established (1917) Portugal had only an installed motor capacity of 83,368 h.p. 10% of which was generated by hydraulic rather than combustion motors, as compared with Belgium, with a comparable population, 700,000 h.p. The working population of Portugal at that time was only 130,000 out of a total population of 6 million. 35% of all workers were women and 15% children. The break-up of industry into tiny units, 60% of which were around the cities and towns of Lisbon, Porto, Setubal, Aveiro, and Braga, was a marked feature of Portuguese development. In 1917, there were 4,000 factories with 10 workes or less, 19 factories with between 500 and 1,000 workers and only 6 factories in the whole country with more than a 1,000 workers.

It was on this unfavourable soil that the Portuguese workers movement was obliged to grow. Engels once wrote of Germany that it had suffered other peoples' reactions without their revolutions. Portugal suffered a similar fate, it went through the readical movements of the 19th century in a shallow political sense but without the underlying economic and social transformations which constituted their driving force on the continent of Europe. The invasions and counter-invasions during the Peninsula War by France and Britain did much to destroy this remnants of feudal power. In 1822, when Metternich was attempting to restore pre-Napoleonic, pre-revolutionary Europe, Portugal adopted a Constitution, incorporating many of the rights which were to be in dispute throughout the century in more economically advanced countries. The growth of Republicanism and anti-clericalism which was to explode in the revolution of 1910 similarly, was a politico-cultural movement of sections of the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, in incapable of effecting the kind of profound social revolution necessary to drag Portugal, kicking and screaming, into the 20th Century. Thus we find Lenin writing in comparing the "successful" Portuguese revolution of 1910 with the "unsuccessful" Russian Revolution of 1905:-

"If we take the revolutions of the twentieth century as examples. . . we. . . have to admit that the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions are bourgeois revolutions. Neither of them, however, is a "people's revolution, since in neither does the mass of the people, their vast majority, come out actively, independently, with their own economic and political demands to any noticeable degree. By contrast, although the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07 displayed no such "brilliant" successes as at times fell to the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, it was undoubtedly a "real people's revolution, since the mass of the people, their majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution the imprint of their own demands, their attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old one that was being destroyed."

V.I. Lenin "State and Revolution" Progress Publishers Moscow p. 37.

The establishment of the Republic in 1910, while an event of profound significance, did so much set about transforming the socio-economic conditions of Portuguese backwardness as attempted to deal with some of

their effects. Thus secularism and anti-clericalism were the key notes of the Republican period. It was during this brief period, that the working class emerged as a real force in society, despite the unfavourable objective conditions, referred to above. Against the background of world war and the post-war revolutionary upheavals in Europe, the Portuguese working class went through a period of heroic infancy, showing in a way, that even then no other class could lift Portugal out of its backwardness. Hundreds of workers papers flourished, strike movements took place and in 1914 the Workers' National Union was established, becoming later the General Federation of Labour. In 1917 the Maximalist Federation came to the fore, and in 1921 the Portuguese Communist Party was established. Needless to say a serious study of the workers' movement in this period (the only period of open independent activity in Portuguese history) is vital to understand the way in which the PCP subsequently developed through illegal work etc. and the burgeoning of the assortment of centrist, and "anti-partidaire" tendencies, since April 1974. Certainly for any Portuguese revolutionary tendency a study of these early years of the Portuguese workers' movement would be an important task.

Since the period since the military coup of 1926 has been well documented elsewhere, we will not go into great details about it here. The legacy of the Republic was not wholly negative. As well as a record of nine presidents, forty-four governments, twenty-five uprising and three counter-revolutionary dictatorships, it had increased the number of schools by 20% in its first year, it had separated Church and State and left republicans traditions sufficiently firmly entrenched that Salazar unlike Franco, was not able to restore the monarchy, though he did restore some of the former dignity to the Church. During the Salazar period, strict financial control, the disciplining of the workforce, the integration of the colonies where African forced labour was used to produce cheap cash crops, were all used as *substitutes* for the industrialisation of Portugal. Under the Colonial Act of May 1930 the colonies which under the Constitution of 1822, the Constitutional Charter of 1826 and during the republican period, were regarded as Portugal's overseas province were relegated to colonial status (with the exception of Madeira and the Azores which were the expressions of the Portuguese Empire which Salazar had proclaimed as an expression of national greatness).

The extraordinary stability of the dictatorship, until the sixties can be, at least partly accounted for by the refusal to industrialise on any scale, — no industrialisation, no growth in the working class, (the only force that had the power and interest to show another way forward for Portuguese society). (The global defeats for the international working class and victories of reaction, should not be underestimated either. In fact, Salazar coming to power was precisely part of the stabilisation which followed the last great post-war revolutionary wave).

How this situation was to be transformed in the '60s we shall go on to show, but first it is important to look at the post-second world war situation, and the problems it has posed for revolutionaries especially in Western Europe.

THE POST-WAR WORLD AND THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

With the defeat of the post-war revolutionary upsurge in Western Europe and Greece and its bureaucratic disfigurement in Eastern Europe, European capital, on the basis of the immense destruction of the war years, was able to enter, under US licence, some thirty years of uninterrupted growth and unprecedented stability (the closest parallel is the post-Commune period of 1872-1900). In derailing the post-war upsurge both

Social Democratic parties and Stalinist parties a key role in saving capitalism especially in Italy and France. Yet in Eastern Europe governments *apparently identical* to the Popular Fronts of Italy and France ruthlessly crushed opposition, not only from the working class but also, and especially, from the bourgeoisie, which they proceeded to expropriate. In these countries, the Stalinist parties, steered an unswerving and often brutal course for undivided power after an initial period of "power-sharing". Forcing the fusion of their parties and the social democratic parties and remorselessly driving the bourgeois elements out of the state apparatus, *Stalinism counter-posed to the democratic counter-revolution in Western Europe, the far from democratic revolution.* As we have spelt out elsewhere it is the confusion over this enigma that has sent many revolutionists in the post-war period into the cloudy realms of abject confusion, into the camp of social democracy or into the camp of open enemies of the proletarian revolution.

After the stabilisation in Europe, consequent on the carve-ups of Yalta and Teheran, and the consolidation of bourgeois democracies in Western Europe and workers' states in the East a new era of European co-operation opened up. With the pacification of the workers' movement, social democratic parties were drawn into government and into the workings of the capitalist system on a continent-wide basis. The nature natural proclivities of social democrats for tinkering about with state intervention in industry accorded well with the needs of European industry as did their concepts of internationalism (ie remnants of liberal free trade ideology). Their Europeanism and their anti-communism was liberally aided by the American CIA, through such conduits as the "Congress of Cultural Freedom", the ICFTU and even some student unions, such as the NUS.

With the exception of Britain, until the '74 referendum, at any rate, it is European Social Democracy who have been the main builders and supporters of the EEC, and their support for NATO goes without saying. Foremost in shaping the European Social Democracy as the agency of the "bourgeoisie of bourgeoisies" has been the German SPD, reconstructed after the war without the former "marxists" image, and the Scandinavian parties, and not far behind has been our "own" British Labour-Party, or at least its leading elements. It should come as no surprise that these parties have been prime movers in assisting the PS of M. Soares in carrying through the "democratic-counter revolution" to the "undemocratic revolution".

In the colonial world increased economic exploitation has been linked in the post-war world with an easing of the traditional political/military forms of colonial oppression. It was the renewed prosperity of the old imperialist and metropolitan countries, and the increase increased trade between the developed nations themselves that made such a development possible, in a way it could not have been in the years of inter imperialist rivalry, crisis and slump between the wars. In many of these former colonial countries movements of petty-bourgeois nationalist origins, often with the participation, influence or leadership of Stalinist formally for revolution, outlining classic programmes of bourgeois democracy or petty bourgeois radicalism dressed in certain "socialist rhetoric". In certain countries these leaderships formed governments implementing radical land — redistribution programmes, and even nationalising sections of international and national capital. In countries like Peru, Egypt, Syria and Libya and Algeria the governments of this character, after leaning on the Soviet bloc for a period and carrying through their programmes have either been overthrown or returned closer the imperialist orbit and *with a vengeance* as Syria and Egypt have demonstrated, thus while carrying through some of the economic tasks of the bourgeois,

and even the proletarian revolution, they have been unable to complete even the most elementary *political* tasks of the bourgeois revolution.

Only in countries where the bourgeois state has been smashed through a civil war conducted by peasant/worker forces and a new state created resting on the institutions of such a peasant/worker army and/or the existing workers' states have new workers' states been created, and the gains of the revolution consolidated. Even here the revolution has from the start assumed the deformed characteristics of the stalinist states.

The explanation for this process, is to be found in the workings of the laws of the permanent revolution, in an objective and largely unconscious fashion, in the face of the acquiescent passivity of the industrial working class in the industrial heartlands of world imperialism. Essential too, to the development of this process, is the existence in the world of deformed workers' states and of an international stalinist apparatus which, notwithstanding the conscious intentions of stalinist bureaucrats and detente-seeking bourgeois politicians, are in a permanent state of conflict with imperialism. That conflict is, in the final analysis *irreconcilable*.

The Portuguese revolution can only be understood as *both* the tail-end of that "detour of the world revolution" referred to above—that long series of "exceptional circumstances" and "historical aberrations" — which have led to the creation of workers' states deformed from birth with the stigmata of Stalinism, to radical petty-bourgeois "colonial revolutions" etc., etc., — and the re-awakening of the European proletariat and the return of the proletarian revolution to a more "normal" channel of development. The conflict between Portuguese Social Democracy and Portuguese Stalinism was a reflection of the meeting of the two forces which have imposed the period of the "detour of world revolution" face-to-face. The conflict between them reflected the *objective* conflict between imperialism and world stalinism. The importance of the conflict between the PCP and the PS in summer '75 was of literally world historic dimensions. We have traced in the peculiarities of Portugal's development, some of the reasons why her revolution should bear strong resemblances to the processes at work in some of the former colonial countries in the post-war world. We have now to explain how the elements of healthy proletarian revolution, emerged in a country of such under-development and the backwardness consequent on centuries of domination by imperialism. In doing so we hope to demonstrate the reasons why Portugal should become the historically chosen meeting ground for *two types of revolution*; why the Portuguese revolution bore a dual character.

PORTUGAL'S 'INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION'

We have already dealt in "Portugal: The Acid Test" (Internal Discussion Bulletin and in published version) with the lightning pace of industrial development undergone by Portugal in the course of the 1960s. The notes prepared for the March Conference of the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class are very useful in this respect.

"The legislation in 1961, making it possible for foreign private capital to enter Portugal more easily, was followed by further laws in 1965 and 1970. Conditions of entry became progressively easier. . . In 17 years, between 1943 and 1960, only £33 million entered Portugal in the form of private capital. In the space of six years from 1961 to 1967 the figure was *ten times* larger in the at £330 million. And by 1971, in the one year three times more private capital, £99 million, entered than in the whole of the seventeen years after the war. . .

Following the law of 1970 direct foreign investment increased by nearly four times in the three years to 1973 it accounted for a third of all private investment in Portugal.

The structure of Portuguese industry changed dramatically in 10 years. By 1971, of the top 100 Portuguese industrial

companies, 42 had foreign participation and 25 were direct subsidiaries of multi-national companies. . . of the top 100 European firms, 30 had interests in Portugal while as a part of the general wave of investment by US firms in Europe, 21 of the top 100 American industrial companies had acquired a stake in Portuguese industry".

"By 1971 the 2.5% of Portuguese companies which had foreign involvement owned 21% of all fixed capital. . .

There is no doubt that, in the face of a continued stagnation of Portuguese private investment, it was foreign investment and involvement which set the pace for the growth of the Portuguese economy during the 60s.

The growth rate was good; industrial production averaged an 8% annual increase and the Gross National Product rose by nearly 7% per annum (compared this with a British average of only just 2%). . .

Calculations show that the rate of profit achieved by foreign companies in Portugal in the 60s averaged 20% compared with an average of 10% for wholly Portuguese firms. It was estimated that it took only 5 years for companies to recoup their initial investments. In 1972 while direct foreign investments entering Portugal totalled £26.9 million, earnings on private capital leaving Portugal stood at £26.8 million. In 1973 British companies alone received £8.3 million in earnings." (Notes of SCPWC Conference 1976)

With foreign capital pouring in at this rate, and Portuguese capital unable or unwilling to invest at the levels necessary to develop the economy, increasingly the position of the few powerful Portuguese capitalist was undermined. Though foreign capital never came to have the completely dominant position it holds in Latin America, for example it increasingly was the force revolutionising the economy, thereby creating a strong and powerful working class in the new industrial centres.

As for the Portuguese monopolies, Espirito Santo, CUF and Champalimaud, they established links, as best they could, with international investors and fretted against the barriers erected the government to merger and take over and gazed enviously at the markets of the EEC. Hit harder by the rush of foreign investment were the small and middle capitalists, particularly when the colonies were opened up at the expense of their formerly protected markets.

Of course this great foreign investment gold rush, was paid for in the last analysis by the working class. While industrial production doubled between 1962-73 the industrial workforce rose by only 80,000 to 1. million. Of course this was partly due to the capital intensive character of the new industries but also, in the absence of trade union organisation, productivity was driven up by an estimated 80%. Nevertheless, these changes in the organisation of the workforce were to play a revolutionising role.*

In the late 60s after the rise of the colonial movements, the inspirations of the Cuban revolution and the rise of the student left splits appeared in the PCP and the united Democratic opposition, which resulted in, on the right the SERES group of professionals and academics who wanted to work a "social-democratic" techno-crat solution to Portugal's problems in the framework of the EEC and on the left a resurrection of Portuguese anarcho-syndicalism wedded to guerillaist-militarist concepts. It is this last current which has brought about the tendencies such as the MES, PRP and LUAR. Once again it is a coupling of 'third world' tendencies with the traditions of the working class.

Having examined three of the aspects of the combined and uneven development of Portugal and, since the Second world war, on a world scale, we must now turn to the revolution itself. In particular, we must examine the main forces at work, the MFA, the PS, and PCP and the centrist left various judgements we have made of them in our published and unpublished. In doing so it will be necessary to consider could the Portuguese revolution have been led to victory, and if so, how? It is the contention of this article that we can say, without undue self-congratulation, that the analysis we presented first in *Portugal: The Acid Test* and in *Portugal: Anatomy of a Revolution* is in all essential respects

correct, and has been confirmed by subsequent events. Not in every detail, of course, but by the underlying trend of events.

The analysis adopted by the Socialist Charter of the MFA and its factions, of the role of the PS, the PCP and the centrists, and our analysis of the largely unconscious *dual power* between March 11th and November 25/6th 1975, remain important theoretical gains in the development of an analysis. The tasks of what remains of this article is not to go over in detailed fashion the events since the publication of *Portugal: Anatomy of a Revolution*, but having placed these events in their historic and world context we will attempt to grapple with some of the strategic and tactical problems flowing from our analysis. In doing so we will take up some of the anti-Marxist conceptions and practices which have led the "trotskyist" movement into such irrelevance for the last 30 years and which have led its more 'orthodox' representatives to approach the Portuguese revolution with all the vision and comprehension of a three week old corpse. We cannot affirm too strongly that the Portuguese revolution can and must become the starting point for the rebuilding of that revolutionary marxist movement that Trotsky tried to build and which during and since the second world war was crippled by its fascist and stalinist enemies and finally smothered in the suffocating embraces of its would-be "defenders" and "preservers". We must affirm the basic dialectical truth that marxism cannot be defended in religiously preserved texts quoted form dusty tomes or in a cynical use of quotations against factional opponents but only by being developed by applying its basic doctrines to the explanation of the real forces of development in the real world.

The supreme test for any tendency claiming to be marxist is to be able to do this in the course of a revolution itself. Only by recognising the class forces at work behind the masks of parties, institutions, mass actions and programmes, can we predict the course of events and predicting, act. Those who mistook for the vanguard of the revolution its dragging tail (the SWP), hailed as a 'workers' uprising. . . joined by the peasantry" a reactionary pogrom and dressed up the defeat of September 1975 as a victory (OCI-Marxist Bulletin) are clearly incapable of doing this.

Since we are convinced of the ability of the working class to consciously, under Marxist leadership to make the proletarian revolution then we must consciously in a marxist fashion investigate, why they have not. The starting point for our investigation must be with the role and policies of the two main parties, claiming to speak for the working class.

THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Confirmed, above all, by events, has been our characterisation of the Portuguese Socialist Party, as, from March 11th onwards, the main instrument of bourgeois, or more correctly, imperialist intervention against the gains of the revolution, leader of the 'democratic counter-revolution' and the main agency for the restoration of the undivided authority of the bourgeois state. Though this view was denounced as 'third period' when it was first put forward it has been confirmed wholly by events. Since the fall of the Fifth Provisional Government, the leading force in Portuguese government has been the PS. Its policies have been those of law and order, austerity, Parliamentary rule and an orientation to the EEC'

When the PS was fighting for the downfall of the Vasco Goncalves governments and we pointed out the reactionary character of its campaign, the air was thick with formal comparisons with Chile and the MFA were still seen by many as the chief threat to the rights of the working class. Events proved otherwise. The acces-

sion of the 6th Provisional Government was a *victory for the PS*, but a *defeat for the Portuguese working class*. It was also an important step away from military intervention in politics. After waging an attack on the workers' control embodies in "Republica" and Radio Renascenca, delivering a demagogic left speech at Labour Party Conference, and organising demonstrations in favour of "discipline" with Sa Carneiro, leader of the PPD, Soares then joined the funeral cortege of the two commandos killed on November 25th.

Those who still try to pretend that it was the MFA who were the main enemies of the working class, at this time are obliged to distort the whole nature of the November 25th/26th episode. Despite the intentions of Col. Jaime Neves, it was clearly a well-planned police operation, tightly controlled, and under the discipline of the civil power. Since this, one and only intervention of the military in politics since that period, the repressive role has definitely passed to the GNR. The "democratic counter-revolution" has clearly been almost totally a civilian, operation and, ironically, directed initially at the left in the armed forces.

Why has the PS been able to play such a role, and playing it, how has it retained the support of over a third of the population?

While the support for the PS may represent a stage in the development of the working class, the PS, itself does not. It was created from outside the country as a product of West German Scandinavian social democracy, during the late 60s and early 70 traditional base of social democratic parties, the 'aristocracy of labour', bought off on the super-profits of imperialism, did not and could not exist in Portugal. Instead the PS sprang out of the needs and interests of Western European Social Democracy. Funded by the SPD's *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, the exiled leaders of the PS became experts at left rhetoric, but as early as 1971 Soares was writing in the journal of the Second International, *Socialist Affairs*, that the problem was how to escape from the "cancer of fascism" without opening the way to communism.

After the April coup, Soares was able to make substantial use of his social democratic contacts throughout western Europe, as well as making visits to Henry Kissinger, in Washington, and Mbotu, Roberto, and Savimbi in Kinshasa. Between May and July 1974, Soares held talks with Wilson, the EEC commissioners, Sisoni, Spinelli, and Thomson (all social democrats) and was visited by a delegation from the Israeli Labour Party, Willy Brandt, Olaf Palme, delegates from the socialist group of the European parliament and Francois Mitterrand. The PS European credentials stood them in good stead not only with Portuguese business interests but with the backward layers of the Portuguese working class, plunged into a revolution they did not understand, and who simply wanted a Portugal like the other Europe and countries parliamentary - democratic, with the living standards and social services of the EEC and Scandinavian countries, from which their emigre sons and daughters returned remittances and glowing accounts.

To all but the most advanced layers of Portuguese workers, rural and urban, the choice appeared to be between the West Germany of the SPD, of Brandt and Schmidt or the repressive East of Ulbricht and his heirs. It was this choice which engendered the confusion which opened the road for the triumph of reaction in its social democratic mask.

While conspiracy theories of the counter-revolutionary successes as Engels pointed out, in themselves do not explain anything, it is clearly necessary to look at the role of European social democracy in the context of the American connection, NATO and the EEC. Ince Once again the information provided by the SCPWC conference is useful. In the *Chronology of Intervention* they have prepared the following items are of special

interest. (For reasons of space it has been necessary to be selective, therefore only those entries with specific reference to the European social democratic parties during the period from May to the Autumn of 1975 have been included.)

5th May EEC Ministers meet to discuss a four point plan of economic aid to Portugal. Melo Antunes visits West Germany and is promised a loan of DM 70 million.

24th May At the home of Francois Mitterand in France, Soares meets leaders of the Belgian, French, Greek, Italian and Spanish Socialist Parties.

27th May EEC makes a conditional offer of economic aid to Portugal.

29th May At the NATO summit. . Goncalves is attacked

head on by one head of government after another in a series of interviews for his supposed harassment of Portugal's anti-communist forces, Schmidt of West Germany is particularly savage in his attack, Goncalves reportedly arrives back in Lisbon 'visibly shaken'.

According to a later report in the New York Times, Wm. Colby, Director of the CIA's funding channels' to certain European Social Democratic Parties and the Portuguese Socialist Party in particular. . .

3rd June Dr. Garrett Fitzgerald, President of the EEC Commission, states "that the EEC is prepared to help Portugal achieve a viable democracy"

4th June Britain is instrumental in imposing an EEC import surcharge on Portuguese textiles.

14th June The EEC Commission proposes a \$400 million aid programme to Portugal.

18th June Sir Christopher Soames, EEC Commissioner for External Affairs, urges the European Parliament. . . to accept the proposed aid programmes. . . but on the understanding that the aid will be frozen if the country did not continue to progress towards a "pluralist democracy". [Soames had met Soares in Lisbon in February, where it is reported that Soares had asked for the aid, and the political strings as well.]

(Soares left the 5th Provisional Government on June 11th).

16th June Soares phones the EEC Commission asking that the economic aid be maintained but made conditional on 'the restoration of democracy'.

17th July Summit meeting of EEC heads of government decides that aid to Portugal shall be conditional on the 'restoration of pluralist democracy.'

18th July Ron Hayward. . . visits Portugal and has long talks with Soares to whom he pledges Labour Party support on his return he talks of the left-wing threat to democracy in Portugal.

2nd August. . . The leaders of all the European Social Democratic governments. . . meets up with Soares in Stockholm to discuss the situation in Portugal. Out of the meeting is formed the Committee for Friendship with Socialism and Democracy in Portugal, which is used to channel cash to the PS.

We could go on. However, it should be perfectly clear, to all but the most blind Stalinophobe, that the entire apparatus of European Social Democracy, utilising the institutions of the EEC and the bourgeois governments it led in much of Western Europe, was mobilised to halt the revolutionary menace in Portugal and stabilise the Portuguese situation to the benefit of the PS.

Social Democracy, once again came to the rescue of the European bourgeoisie. In doing so it was merely continuing the traditions of 1914 and the strangulation of the German revolution in 1919. What is remarkable is the degree of resistance there was among certain 'ostensibly trotskyist' tendencies to the recognition of this fact. The economy and efficiency with which the Social Democratic party leaderships rallied to the aid of the Portuguese counter-revolution should not, for one instant, be forgotten.

Why, under the impact of this role was there not greater splits or more heated debate in the Socialist Party ranks?

The answer to this lies in the recent origins of the PS and the political climate in which those who did have disagreements with the line of the leadership, having no long-standing relationship or loyalty to the PS just left and went elsewhere, or joined the ranks of the 'anti-partidaire' workers. After the exodus of the FSP in February 75, the only revolts were the localised movements of the branches of Evora and Beja in the Alentejo, during summer of 1975. It was not until the end of 75/beginning of 76 that a new left-wing started to emerge around the figure of Lopes Cardoso, 6th Provisional Government Minister of Agriculture. This was mainly in response to the reactionary agitation against land reform, which was, after all, necessary even for a re-building of the economy on a basis of capitalism. Soares, was able, quite easily to affirm his support for Cardoso, without alienating most of the right and by doing so, he succeeded in heading off any incipient split in the PS ranks. His hand-picked choice of Legislative Assembly candidates and members of the present PS Government are all solidly rightists.

All in all, for Mario Soares, the Partido Socialista, European Social Democracy and the EEC the operation has been a success. Should the counter-revolution unleashed by Soares, under the impact of the insoluble economic crisis, assume more draconian forms and devour its own initiator, we can be sure that it will be Portugal's workers, who have fought so long and hard for their freedom who will be called upon to bear the brunt of it.

STALINISM AND THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

"What is Stalinism?"

. . . and yet Stalinism is not hard to define: it is, as an ideology the familiar ideology of reformism and centrism; it is to be concrete, petty bourgeois socialism. . . But the petty bourgeois socialism of Stalinism is not embedded as was Blum's Attlee's or Kautsky's movements, in the private property of capitalism. The petty bourgeois socialism of the Soviet bureaucracy developed on the basis of productive forces socialised by a great revolution. In order to defend the privileged peasant and labour aristocracy the traditional leaders of petty bourgeois socialism in capitalist countries were forced to defend private property and the bourgeois state. In order to defend the privileged labour and peasant aristocracy in Russia, the Soviet bureaucracy is forced to defend the state-owned property and the workers state. . .

Stalinism. . . is the petty bourgeois socialism of a workers' state. Petty bourgeois socialism has always rested on a labour and peasant aristocracy. . . It has always been conciliatory and class-collaborationist towards the bourgeoisie, and malevolent and treacherous towards Bolshevism. Stalin only expressed this line with state power.

But Stalin's line is not expressed with a bourgeois state power, as it was in Germany under Ebert, France under Blum, and England under Attlee; but by a workers state. The political line is basically the same, yet the objective consequences are sometimes basically different." (An Open Letter to Comrade Hansen Sam Ryan et al. p. 65 in Documents of the Vern-Ryan Tendency 1950-1953).

We must affirm in our analysis, against moralists, formalists and pedants that Stalinism does, indeed bear a contradictory character. As a gate-keeper of the conquests of the October revolution, it still retains a certain limited progressive character and historical validity. The stalinist armies which drove Hitler from the gates of Moscow and Stalingrad, the Stalinism which overthrew capitalism in half of Europe, which destroyed the reactionary army of Chiang Kai Shek, which drove the Americans out of Vietnam, consolidated the Cuban workers' state and recently helped the MPLA to victory cannot be, considered objectively, wholly reactionary, "counter-revolutionary through". That way lies only

confusion.

Once again, the key to understanding the role of Stalinism since the war, is a correct understanding of the historic period from which we are just emerging. For those who live in a continual state of the "imminence of the revolution and counter-revolution" (Like the OCI and the WRP) and have done so for the last 30 years, of course, all parties but the Marxist party are 'counter-revolutionary through and through'. (Even then, it should be remembered that the counter-revolutionary Mensheviks and even Kerensky were obliged to perform some progressive work, in the suppression of the Kormilov revolt, on the very eve of the October revolution).

A more sober assessment of the past period will reveal that in the period of the post-war boom and the general acquiescence of the metropolitan working class, the pre-condition for a healthy proletarian revolution (and of course, the building of a leadership capable of heading one) did not exist. It was in this historic context that Stalinism proved capable of playing a limited progressive role.

However, today, as the West European working class, having recouped the strength sapped by decades of defeats, of war and fascism, is once again advancing to the centre of the historical stage so the possibilities of Stalinism continuing to play such a role recede. Once again, Portugal marks the turning point, the intersection of two historical periods. Caught in these global cross-currents of the international class struggle, the Portuguese CP vacillated and temporised.

Even so, as we have pointed out in *Portugal: Anatomy of a Revolution*, there was the theoretical and, yes, practical possibility that the Portuguese CP could have seized power in summer 1975. By this we mean not simply if it adopted revolutionary policies, nor through becoming some sort of centrist organisation, (nor even because Cunhal was a 'certain mould of man') but as a Stalinist party. This does not mean that we would have given any political support to such a seizure, nor does it mean that Cunhal, in the last analysis, was in any way less treacherous than Soares, "the political line is basically the same, yet the objective consequences are sometimes basically different." The tasks of Marxists in such a situation would, however, be the same as those in any revolution. That is, while militarily standing ready to defend every conquest of the class, however gained, they would seek to discover and reveal the historic laws and class forces at work, behind all the bureaucratic manipulations, the back-room politicking and so forth. Exposing the class character of both the *unconscious, undemocratic* revolution of the Stalinist and the *more-or-less conscious democratic* counter-revolution of the Social Democrats they would counterpose to both, and demonstrate the possibility and necessity of the *conscious proletarian-democratic internationalist* revolution. Whether this took the form of the struggle for a proletarian revolution against capitalism or the political revolution against Stalinism would not be up to them to decide, but the basic tasks would be the same. This is the historical justification for an independent Trotskyist movement and the concrete expression of the permanent revolution in our time.

We can perhaps get a clear view of the means by which the Portuguese CP might have taken power, during the period of the Fifth Provisional Government, if we look at a historical comparison with the way the Czech CP fought its way into Governmental power in 1948. The course of the PCP policies during its leftist phase of last summer bears a certain resemblance to the strategy of the Czech CP which we could call 'bureaucratic putschism' (the attempt to take power with a minority of support through a mixture of popular demonstrations and mobilisations and bureaucratic control of the chief organs of state and media).

There are of course important differences between the Czech and Portuguese situation. The Czech CP was faced with the tasks of dislodging recalcitrant bourgeois elements from a state whose fundamentally proletarian character had been assured by the presence of the Red Army. The Portuguese CP confronted with an unusual dual power situation, as a result of a class split in the very apparatus of state power especially theory and the more or less rapid disintegration of the bourgeois sections, had a harder but essentially similar task. In Czechoslovakia dual power was reached through the degeneration of a proletarian state apparatus, but eventually liquidated in favour of the working class, or rather its Stalinist representatives. In Portugal, a disintegrating bourgeois state apparatus created a dual power situation which was eventually resolved in favour of the bourgeoisie. However, the strategy of the Stalinists was essentially the same. The takeover of the municipalities, control of the unions, the control of key sections of the armed forces and domination of the media.

The attempt failed because, given the survival of bourgeois state power, after March 11th, the success of such a strategy would have required either the intervention of an existing workers' state or the mobilisation on a massive scale of the armed workers and 'proletarian' units of the armed forces.

The first of these was clearly ruled out by the world situation. The second, given the strength of the movement towards 'poder popular', the growth in size and influence of the far left centrist currents and the strong, 'anti-partidairism' of the Portuguese left, (a product of the lack of long-standing political traditions), threatened to create a movement that would overspill the limits placed on it by the PCP and, rising over their heads, become such a movement for real workers' power that it would have led to an Iberian and possibly European-wide conflagration. No wonder the fraternal delegates from Eastern Europe and the telegrams from Moscow counselled 'caution' to Cunhal.

Thus the sturdy infant of Portuguese workers' democracy, 'poder popular', struck fear into the hearts of both the old adversaries, in the class struggle of post-war Europe, the democratic-counter-revolution, represented by Soares and the undemocratic revolution represented by Cunhal. It is only when we recognise the real, and not imagined, treacheries of Stalinism that we can grasp their full magnitude. It is only when we understand the real differences between Stalinism and Social Democracy that we can fully comprehend the essentially complementary character of their anti-working class activity, which taken together have been the main forces binding the working class to the maintenance of imperialism in the post-war world.

THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 25th/26th.

The great testing time for the Portuguese left found them wanting. This came after the set-back occasioned by the fall of Goncalves' Fifth Provisional Government appeared to have been overcome. Inside the armed forces the SUV, the autonomous movement of rank-and-file soldiers was defying all efforts to halt its activity and was spreading at an accelerating rate. The construction workers and their supporters, some 80,000 strong, had blockaded the Constitutional Assembly, and Azevedo himself confessed that Lisbon was ungovernable. How then was the tragedy of November 25th possible and could it have been avoided? Whilst much of the criticism directed at the PRP and the IS was valid, it was somewhat misdirected. (It also lost something coming from those who had advocated "guerrilla warfare from the Panama Canal to Tierra del Fuego). It was misdirected because the events of November 25th/26th were implicit in the whole non-

taneous development of the revolution, blind and leaderless, and not the work of any one tendency. Though it was possible to anticipate something of the kind occurring, by its nature it could not have been wholly predicted. The problem was two-fold, on one hand, unlike the soldiers who led the Russian July Days in 1917, the Tancos paratroopers were among the most backward of the units in the armed forces and secondly the Goncalvista faction politically-aligned with the CP were not given their (the CPs) expected backing, and, adopting the tactics and methods of the Stalinists themselves, attempted to unilaterally and over the heads of the mass of workers restore the Fifth Government. These unfortunate gentlemen, then continued their brief revolutionary career with the MPLA in Angola where it seems they met with greater success. Neither the paras revolt nor the antics of the Goncalvista were capable of inspiring the unity and self-confidence of the working class for the kind of *defensive action* that took the revolution so far *forward* in the periods after September 28th and March 11th.

A correct estimate of the relationship of forces is the supreme necessity for the elaboration of tactics. What the organisations of the FUR failed to recognise is that the period after the downfall of the 5th Government was despite all the great gains the class had made in a *defensive* period. The tasks of the hour were the defence of the 'organs of popular power', especially the radio stations and Republica, as well as the defence of jobs, living standards etc. Even the movements of the building workers and SUV were defensive in original intent. In general the greatest gains and the broadest unity in a revolution can be achieved only under the slogans of defence. Essential too to this defence would be the development of a workers' militia, in alliance with, but independent of the SUV and the left in the armed forces. The SUV itself was greatly weakened by the lack of an independent proletarian armed power and by its own autonomy, not only with regard to parties but to all the organisations of the working class. The passage of soldiers and officers into the proletarian camp can only be made permanent by the establishment of the armed power of the workers. Faced with the immense weight of ideological and material pressure exerted by the ruling class, the most heroic revolutionary soldiers will vacillate and capitulate unless they feel behind them the armed power of the proletariat.

Unfortunately the PRP, foremost group in the FUR, referred to the question of arming in only two ways, going underground and carrying out acts of sabotage, or the immediate preparation of the armed insurrection frequently changing from one to the other in the space of a few days. While a very small obstacle can derail a hurtling train, the tasks of revolutionaries is to foresee such an obstacle and foreseeing switch the points in time so that the train is saved. Since within the FUR, apart from the UDP, were all those forces openly committed to the triumph of the proletarian revolution, without equivocation, it *only* could have helped to avert the catastrophic results of November 25th, (as the 6th Government itself was to affirm in issuing warrants for its leaders), our position of *critical participation* in the FUR is vindicated if in a negative fashion.

ELECTORAL POLICY IN THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

In a country emerging from 48 years of dictatorship the question of bourgeois elections assumed key significance. The dismissive attitude of the PRP was a manifestation of the 'infantile disease of leftism' or 'anti-parliamentary cretinism' of which Trotsky accused Spain's anarchists. At the elections for the Constituent Assembly, as we have written, we would have repudiated the pact, but called for a vote for the CP. Similarly

with the Legislative Assembly election. Not only should revolutionaries have done likewise, but it would be of immense importance to mount a campaign, working as closely as possible with the ranks of the CP, to explain why we support their candidate against the bourgeois parties and the PS and why we maintain a separate organisation and programme.

In the Presidential election of June 26th would we not have done the same. Prior to the elections it would have seemed the only correct course.

The pedagogy of the results themselves should not be underestimated. In district after district the votes for Otelo Carvalho outstripped those of the CP. Nationally he achieved more double the vote for the CPs candidate (16.52 to 7.98%). Locally the tale was even more graphic. In the most political advanced areas, the proletarian centres of Lisbon and Setubal, Carvalho's vote was 23.91% and 41.43% to the CPs 10.34% and 18.68% respectively. In the centre of the Alentejo, the CPs stronghold, at Evora, Carvalho scored 34.82% to the CPs 19.65%. What do we make of this, why have key sections of the Portuguese working class turned away, however temporarily from the party around which they rallied for the 48 years of the dictatorship and which even just one month before had been given a vote of 15% in the elections for the Legislative Assembly. Needless to say all explanations in terms of the demagoguery, charisma or 'charm' of Otelo must be rejected. We have correctly and consistently characterised him as a weather-vane indicating the direction the wind is blowing. Also it is to be hoped that no comrades will now argue that support for him would be 'unprincipled' or that he is a 'left bonaparte'. The question posed by the Portuguese presidential election are in the highest degree, *tactical*.

Now it has long been taken for granted in the Marxist movement that the working class arrives at political consciousness through the class struggle and expresses the stages of the development and level of that consciousness through the creation of political parties and in their programmes and internal struggles. In most of the countries of Western Europe and even, in the ex-colonies, politics, is, in general, the struggle of political parties. Why then, an election for the highest office in the state, have the Portuguese working class abandoned their parties, and what are we, the revolutionary marxists, who are also interested in building a 'party' to make of this?

Partly, an explanation is to be found in the traditions of anarcho-syndicalism which have played such a role in the politics of the Iberian Peninsula, partly in the treachery of the existing parties of the working class, (with the PS supporting Eanes and the CP mounting a low key campaign for a candidate whose only claim to fame was a name which translated means the 'eighth duck'). Both these explanations are only partial, and do not explain the extent of this anti-party feeling or how long it is likely to last. Whatever the reasons for this break, it must be clear that the PS and CP supporters which supported Carvalho were breaking to the left, despite all its *reformist* ambiguities, Carvalho's programme, clearly reflected the *revolutionary* aspirations of the working class. Pato's reflected the bureaucratic conservatism of a functionary. (The programmes have been produced in Inter-Continental Press.)

How could revolutionaries have intervened in this break to the left and the mass movement that developed around the campaign of Otelo. It may be easy from Britain or anywhere else in the world for that matter, to denounce this campaign as a diversion from the fight against the leadership of the PS and CP but a movement that mobilises 70,000 to 100,000 in Oporto, when the revolution is in retreat, cannot be ignored. On reflection, a vote for Carvalho, participation in his campaign, patiently explaining the key question of

of the state, by asking how his programme was to be implemented? would have been the correct course to be followed. This could have been linked to an orientation towards the CP by attempting to organise debates and meetings between the supporters of Carvalho and Pato, especially work among dissident CP members could have been particularly fruitful at this time. (It is important to bear in mind that this election was *not* about power, at least in the electoral sense, but about what had been gained, and how it was to be defended, i.e. about programmes.)

Clearly, while it last revolutionaries must make full use of all the liberties democracy offers for open mass work. There must be no premature or melo-dramatic talk of going "underground", though every step must be taken to ensure the survival of the workers organisations in the event of a new reactionary offensive, a bonapartist revival. At one time it did not seem possible that a bourgeois democratic regime could come to power in Portugal, at all, even for the briefest period. The current democratic phase can only be seen as an interlude, a breathing space, reflecting the current stalemate in the world balance of class forces.

PORTUGAL AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

We have throughout this article tried to place the events in Portugal in the context of the world revolution seen, historically and geographically, as a whole. Twenty-five years in the life of a nation (or nations) matter as little as a day in the life of a man. The struggle of the oppressed of the world for their liberation, driven from Europe by treachery and defeats, fascism and war, followed by more treachery and defeats, was obliged to wander through the by-ways of the former colonial world, falling under the leadership or misleadership of Stalinist and petty bourgeois nationalists.

With the victories in Angola and the other Portuguese African colonies sweeping the last vestiges of European colonial rule from the vast African continent, and the sweeping victories of the Indo-Chinese peoples in their long struggle with imperialism, the brief, unexpected, and sometimes heroic chapter of the 'colonial' and stalinist or nationalist-led revolution reached its highest point. But in reaching its zenith, it also arrived in an impasse. Though limited gains along this road are still possible (Zimbabwe, Spanish Sahara), the historical initiative has definitely passed once again, to the proletariat of Western Europe.

The crushing defeat inflicted on the Palestinian resistance only underlines this point. The struggles of the peoples of Mozambique and Angola have brought them face-to-face with the imperialist fortress of South Africa; the whole of Latin America lies under the Iron Heel of US finance capital and local dictators; the vast Indian sub-continent groans under increasingly bonapartist forms of rule revealing once again, that in the final analysis, that the liberation of the whole of toiling humanity is the task of the conscious proletarian revolution. For this, there is no substitute.

The historic significance of the Portuguese revolution, which is far from completed, lies in this, that it provided the meeting ground for the receding figure of the 'colonial' revolution and the newly awakened European proletarian revolution. The Portuguese revolution marks the historic turning point. The significance of the achievement of the Portuguese working class lies in this, that before the last shots had been fired in this, that before the last shots had been fired in the struggles in Africa and Indo-China they rose up and undertook their historic tasks. Seizing by the scruff of its neck, the most economically dependent, politically, economically and cultural backward country in Europe, they

were able for reasons not counterposed to, but rooted in this backwardness, to turn this country upside down, and show to a startled Europe the image of its own future. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

August 1976.

NOTES

* See Portugal: Anthony of a Revolution March 1976, Chartist Publications.
"Portugal: 48 Years of Dictatorship" - A. de. Figureido 1975.

GNR - National Republican Guard.

1. This article was written in the main almost a year ago. Whilst little of drastic significance has changed over the past 12 months in Portugal the development of world events, especially in Africa, would seem to indicate that the conclusions concerning a shift in the global class struggle to Europe was premature, if not incorrect. The slow tempo of development in Spain and the lack of class-wide political struggles outside of Euzkadi, that this conclusion was not wholly accurate.
2. The original article centred a section on "*Portuguese Centrism and Popular Power*" which contained a brief and somewhat over-optimistic assessment of the far left organisations PRP, LUAR, MES, FSP. While it is still necessary to defend these organisations against their right-wing "Trotskyist" critics whether from Social Democratic, "Euro-Communist" or right-wing "Trotskyist" sources and also against their ultra-left critics e.g. Phil Mailer in "Portugal: The Impossible Revolution", nevertheless a fuller analysis of their mistakes remains to be written. Both right and left critics are capable of making valid points in criticising the contempt of these organisations for bourgeois-democratic liberties and their manipulative attitude towards organs of workers' democracy. The fact that valid criticisms come from both right and left indicate the seriousness of the questions at issue. The problem is that of the relation between bourgeois and proletarian democracy.

In Russia in 1917 the Constituent Assembly for which the Bolsheviks had fought was convened only after the October insurrection had placed power in the hands of the Soviets. It was immediately disbanded. From the beginning the Comintern was split on the question of the relationship between workers' councils and bourgeois Constituent Assembly - a major rock on which the November (1919) revolution in Germany foundered.

During the late 20s and 30s Stalinism and Fascism drove the question off the agenda as the choice became one between socialism and barbarism in a very literal sense. When the question was posed again in 1936 in Spain, the anaemic "democracy of the Republic with the aid of Stalin's secret police and the "socialist" and "Anarchist" leaders were able to impose the dictates of "democracy" over the generalised dual-power embodied in the anti-fascist "juntas", even though this served as but a short interlude to Franco's victory.

After the second World War the European movements emerging out of the Resistance in Western Europe under Stalinist leadership again subordinated a genuinely revolutionary movement under the slogans of a "national-democratic" character [the Trotskyists of the Fourth International on the contrary, insisted with sublime irrelevance, that the slogan of the coming revolutionary struggles would be the "Soviet United States of Europe."]

This apparent digression should be sufficient to demonstrate that the problem faced by the Portuguese revolutionary left was not a new one. In a nutshell, it can be summarised thus: how is it possible to demonstrate the superiority a sporadic and unevenly developing system of workers' democracy - "poder popular" - to an already existing or imminent 'perfect' bourgeois democracy i.e. a national Constituent Assembly based on universal suffrage etc. The failure of the Marxist movement to adequately tackle this question theoretically can only disarm revolutionaries practically at the most crucial moment of all - in the revolution itself.

Thus, in retrospect, we would argue that the attempt to formulate slogans of the "workers' government" variety was not only misconceived in the specific Portuguese context but illustrates a weakness and lacunae in the extant revolutionary tradition. Specifically, the lack of a clear revolutionary Marxist tradition for the conditions of the advanced capitalist democracies of Western Europe. We hope in future articles in this journal to take up this question in greater detail.

GEOFF BENDER

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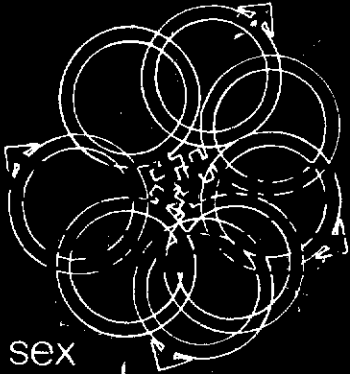
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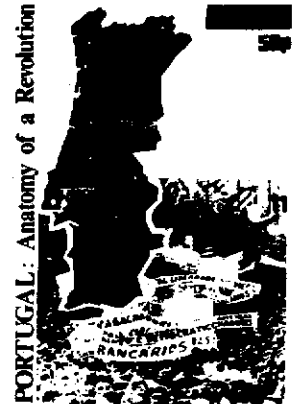
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PROBLEMS OF WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

PART 1

1. INTRODUCTION

There are what could be termed two basic approaches to women. One is the 'historical', and attempts to provide a structure in which to understand the specific form or forms of oppression of women under capitalism; ie Engels work in 'Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State'. The other is what can be called the 'issues' approach. It attempts to generalise from particular aspects of women's oppression and to create theory round it, or merge it with existent theory. eg 'wages for housework', 'right to work'. Whilst the issues in themselves and the demands raised are not necessarily incorrect, this method of working 'outwards' can either lead to negative introverted analysis (wages for housework) or a purely formal and mechanistic, onesided approach to women, (right to work).

In the former case, the demand for 'Wages for Housework' arises from the perception that domestic labour enslaves women. So far, so good. Proceeding from this, architects of this demand, radical feminists Selma James and Mariarosa Dalla Costa develop an analysis which leads them to suggest, tactically, a demand for women to be paid for housework, as a way of winning formalistic acceptance of the 'hidden' relation of domestic labour to producing surplus value. She is supported in her analysis by various theoretical contributions.¹ Whilst the strategic, as opposed to absolute, importance, of the wages for housework demand is frequently misinterpreted, by very virtue of making this the sole and central demand for 'women's liberation' the demand assumes a logic which defeats its own purpose; if women receive a wage for housework, this ties them to, rather than freeing them from, the home.² Additionally, James and Dalla Costa present the seeds of a negative class analysis:

'Most of those who have insisted from the beginning that class and not caste was fundamental have been less able to translate our psychological insights into autonomous and revolutionary political action. Beginning with a male definition of class, the liberation of women is reduced to equal pay and 'fairer' and more efficient welfare State.'

'The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community' Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James.

In a footnote, James comments on the inadequacy of demands around equal pay, 24 hour nurseries, abortion on demand, and the such like, because 'As they stand, they accept that we do not have the children we cannot afford,' they demand of the state facilities to keep the children we can afford for as long as 24 hours a day; and they demand that these children have equal chance to be con-

ditioned and trained to sell themselves competitively on the labour market for equal pay. . . The prime architects of these demands were women with a 'class analysis'. Therefore although these feminists claim to base their analysis on Marx, they reject the classic demands raised on women based on a class analysis. Now it is not sufficient to simply reject these feminists by saying, that they are 'bourgeois' and 'reactionary', because they pinpoint dissatisfaction with revolutionaries' inability to confront the totality of women's oppression. The demands to which James objects are often seen as 'back up' demands to 'a woman's right to work'; The only way of comprehending the needs of women, is to place them on the same level as men, and to 'equalise' the basis of their oppression. ie in the work place, women are exploited in the same way that men are exploited, by selling their labour power.

One of the specific features of capitalism is that the activities at the centre of family life, the creating and servicing of the individual members of the family, (reproducing both the means of reproduction and the means of production) are seen to be totally separate from the activities of economic production. It is the actual physical and social separation of the home from the sphere of socialised production, a historical process which has been taking place over a number of epochs, which has thrown up nearly all the theoretical problems for organising and politicising women. These range from, how do we approach women who are not at work, isolated in their homes to, can we recognise this 'split' between home and work as an ideological one, and therefore it is possible to trace the material relationship between home and work. (eg as Seccombe attempts). Whether the latter two problems are correct in their formulation or not is not something I intend to go into here, the point to be made, is that such starting points are welcome in that they are prepared to consider relations as they are now, rather than assuming, tacitly, that 'women as workers' or, 'women as potential workers' is the only valid formulation.

What is missing out of these different perspectives is a historical context from which to understand the specific relation of women, the family, to capitalism today.

2. THE WEAKNESS OF THEORY

One of the stages for the theoretical debate about the specific form of women's oppression under capitalism in recent years has been the examination of the role of domestic labour. Participants of the debate have tended to fall into two camps - those who favour the argument that domestic labour indirectly produces surplus value (eg Seccombe), and those who argue that it does not create surplus value (see Gardiner, Harrison (NLR))

1. See Seccombe, Gardiner, Harrison.

2. Wages For Housework was introduced in Hungary and Czechoslovakia (see subsequent sections).

Revolutionary Communist No. 5. and also, Celia Holt's recent article in 'Socialist Women'). The arguments centre around whether or not we can categorise domestic labour within any of the definitions which Marx applied to wage labour in 'Capital'.

'A productive labour has two characteristics: it is conducted in direct relation with capital and it produces surplus value. Domestic labour meets neither criteria. Its relation with capital is not direct (ie it is not wage labour) and secondly, it does not create more value than it itself possesses. Domestic labour is unproductive (in the economic sense) and conforms with Marx's description of an unproductive labour exchanged not with capital, but with revenue, that is wages for profits' (Seccombe, 'The Housewife and her Labour under Capitalism'). Gardiner, in taking up the argument against Seccombe, argues that :

'His (Seccombe's) view that it is consistent with Marx's value theory to say that domestic labour creates value which is equivalent to the amount of the male worker's wage going to reproduce and maintain the domestic labour is based on an incorrect analogy with petty commodity production.'

(NLR. 89 "Women's Domestic Labour" p. 57)

The RCG, in their recent article "Women's Oppression Under Capitalism", also pick up Seccombe on explaining 'value by exchange', and for his attempts to equate domestic labour with abstract social labour:

'It is precisely the quality this average labour possesses, that of being abstract (social) labour that housework as privatised toil can never attain' ("Revolutionary Communist N. 5) (P.10).

The starting point for all these interpretations, is 'Capital'. Whilst all contributions to this debate openly agree that domestic labour is somehow different from wage labour, no-one questions the adequacy of using an analysis which Marx intended to describe economic life. At the most, it tells us what domestic labour is not, ie that it cannot (as even Seccombe admits) be fitted into Marx's strictest definitions of productive and unproductive labour. 'Capital' was never intended to act as a 'blueprint' for social and economic life. There is as yet no Marxist analysis which has attempted to integrate economic and social life. It is not enough to 'reinterpret' social structure through existent economic theory, or to simply state it as 'different' and by implication, incompatible with economic theory. The effect of this is to reinforce the idea that such 'intangible' problems which are "outside" the sphere of capitalist production can be tackled after the economic revolution has taken place. The very absence of adequate theory in this respect forces this conclusion upon us, although to reverse the separation of the economic and 'personal', privatised areas of our existence is one of our main tasks.

One way of beginning is to explode the myth that the socialist revolution is firstly, or even, primarily, an economic revolution. The first stage of revolution, of the working class 'seizing state power' has no social /sexual correlative. Tactics which implicate a structural change in social (ie domestic/sexual) life are not considered because they strike at the core sexual inequalities, divisions created thousands of years ago and prejudices which are the unconscious fabric of everyday relations. It is not impossible to make inroads into the uneven relations between the sexes, (see later section on WWCC.) but this entails bringing sex into, rather than keeping it out of, political life in a conscious way. The examples cited later of the abortive revolutions in Stalinist countries indicates some of the pitfalls for women in ignoring the importance of the sexual, as well as the economic, revolution.

3. MECHANISTIC APPROACHES IN REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE TODAY.

The consequences of the weakness of theory can be seen in two tendencies in the revolutionary left today. One is the tendency to immerse in activism, shrouded in a hotch potch of rhetoric to mask the lack of political direction for action; the other tendency is to command women by

'moral imperative' to subsume their activities to one or other of the revolutionary leaderships.

In relation to the first tendency, the Socialist Worker's Party (IS) must be awarded first place in their various attempts to involve women in 'mass action' at the mere whiff of a campaign. Certainly they are consistent in this respect. In the National Abortion Campaign, (NAC), SWP (IS) supporters have moved at every turn in the Campaign to call women out onto the streets. This in spite of the lack of political clarity as to what exactly was under attack at various stages in the campaign. One of their leading members argues in the recent issue of 'Women's Voice' their strategy, when they were accused by the NAC steering committee of sabotaging the united basis of the NAC by continually calling for independent mass action:

'And we have always argued for more activity. After the June (1975) demonstration we argued for another demonstration. It took us six months to win the vote, and even then that decision by a national planning meeting was greeted with suspicion by the steering committee. . . .

We do believe in the more activities the better. . . .'

(Women's Voice No. 2 p. 10 - 'Debate - NAC').

NAC's first demonstration drew an estimated 25-30,000. The second, in April '76, when the select committee was still considering White's Bill, drew an estimated 12,000. How many will the next demonstration pull out? In the same vein, the IMG used the recent - Working Women's Charter Campaign rally (Feb '77) to call for national action - in a pamphlet printed in their name all the slogans are pulled out to heighten the apparent basis for co-ordinating action for women - 'Demands like the sliding scale of wages, equal pay now, against low pay, a national minimum wage and worksharing with no loss of pay, 24-hour nurseries and free abortion on demand will provide a basis to make sure the fight back can succeed' (from 'The Fight Has Just Begun. . . ' pp IMG.) Whilst the IMG comrades argued against the SWP in their continual calls for 'mass action now' in NAC the tendency to 'throw everything in' for good measure does nothing to clarify the relationship between these various demands. The earlier part of the leaflet referred to above does spend time outlining the importance of some of the demands in the Charter, but only refers to the other more generalised demands (Sliding scale of wages, etc.) at the end. As such they become empty rhetoric to confusing.

On the second point, concerning the recruitment of women to revolutionary groups, the paucity of revolutionary theory and practice is reflected in the low number of women in most revolutionary groups in Britain today. Of course, this reflects the realities of the relations under capitalism - but many more women are involved in independent organisation, in WLM groups, many more identify with, without 'belonging' to a group, than are actually engaged in revolutionary organisations.

Whilst Lenin was aware of the need for a separate International Communist Women's movement, he did not envisage a separate and autonomous organisation developing.

'We derive our organisational ideas from our ideological conceptions. We want no separate organisations of Communist women. . . However we must face the facts. The Party must have organs, working groups, committees, commissions, sections or whatever else they may be called, with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women, bringing them into contact with the Party, and keeping them under its influence.'

(On the Emancipation of Women)

The emphasis was on bringing women to an understanding of their independent class position, but using the tactics of agitation, education, aimed specifically at women through separate wings of the party. There existed (as there still does) a deep rooted suspicion of

autonomous women's groupings which were not under the leadership of a (male) revolutionary leadership. The tension which existed then, as it does today, was between developing means of winning women to the party, but avoiding at the same time a capitulation to feminism.

Marx first argued for separate women's branches in a resolution to the General Council of the First International in 1871. In Germany, under the leadership of Clara Zetkin, the women's organisation reached its peak in the first decade of this century. In Russia amongst the Bolsheviks, Killontai argued, with some success, for prioritising work amongst women.

As the Revolutionary Communist Group (amongst others) point out, the decline of organisational work amongst women is linked to the failures of the revolutions, nationally, and internationally. In Russia, and later, in other Stalinist countries, the socialisation of domestic work was reversed and the specific struggles of women subsumed in the struggle for the development of the productive forces.

Women are after seen as a subsidiary group in the working class, difficult to ignore, but an important aid in the class struggle (which has already been defined). They are not seen as being able to contribute to defining the nature and direction of the struggle itself – but rather, women are 'coaxed' into political struggle by showing them that, until there is a revolution, they will never be free. A classic example of this is the International Communist League's (I-CL)'s.

'Women's liberation is necessarily linked to a communist revolution. . . or else it is either utopian, or reformist. . . or both. The struggle for Women's liberation must become a specific but integral part of the working class struggle to grasp hold of the means of production and wield them in its own interests. Only when society is geared to the needs of the working class can these tasks presently be done in the home be socialised, and the basis laid for freeing women for domestic slavery for ever.' (P.3)

There is no hint here of a possible process of mutual exchange in the process of struggle itself – but merely a thinly veiled threat along the lines of 'join us or you will be doomed. . . we have the answer, you don't'. The statement continues by saying that if the women's movement remains autonomous, 'then it will have no alternative but to become impotent, caught up in reformism, with no way forward.'

Sisters beware – you are being asked to forego your (no) way forward for their way forward (which way and where?)

The initial thinking around the 'organisation of women' was to make women more aware of their need to understand their class position first and foremost. But what about the need of their male comrades to prioritise the position of women and integrate it into their independent, or rather, common working class interests? There has never been an understanding of the need for mutual exchange in the developing of women in a revolutionary context. The process has traditionally been seen as a 'one way' process. (Bringing women into the party.)

To what extent is the failure of the revolutionary left to come to terms with the position of women dependent on the ill defined, and essentially one way formulation of the function and operation of women's organisations in their midsts?

The above remarks are not arguments against women organising in a revolutionary organisation. But rather, to organise on the basis of mutual exchange, and co-operation, so that experiences, ideas, can flow between male and female comrades and we can learn from each other. Until women are more widely accepted as 'equal partners' in our own labour and socialist organisations, we cannot expect to win over those women who do not have a fully developed revolutionary consciousness. In this respect, organisational methods embody important theoretical principles.

4. THE WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER

The Working Women's Charter represents a step forward for the working class, and for women in particular; it is the only recent attempt in labour history to recognise the particular problems of women not only paid, as wage workers but also as housewives and as mothers. However, the Charter has a number of weaknesses which reflect the 'women as workers/potential workers' formulation, the insistent and ever failing attempt to bridge the gap between production and reproduction mechanistically as a means of accommodating women's oppression.

The following remarks are considered in the context of these questions. Firstly, what is the purpose of the Charter – is it purely agitational, or propagandist and agitational; how do we use the Charter? Secondly, is the Charter reformist or revolutionary – does the sum total of the Charter represent a 'transitional programme' for women?

The debate which took place at the 1976 Charter Conference reflects the degree to which these questions have been asked or answered by the participants in the campaign itself. Discussion at the Conference centred around the need to alter the WWC and on what basis. The report back from a workshop on 'Why the Charter?' runs as follows:

'Most discussion was on whether amendments to the WWC should be adopted definitely or not. Some argued that we could couldn't afford to amend the Charter; women are under attack now. Others said the WWC had often been passed 'on the nod' in TUs and there had been little discussion since; rather than just take back another Charter to TU branches, involve them in a process of discussion.'

In discussion on whether or not to amend the Charter, the debate centred around the difficulties of mobilising around an unwieldy list of demands:

'Some delegates argued that the present Charter was too long for agitational purposes; a shorter list of principles was needed which could be used either as headings to the full demands or independently in agitation. . .'

A summary of the resolution put by the London Planning Committee on living standards and unemployment emphasises the centrality of the 'right to work' in the Charter; but also raises some (unanswered) questions by other delegates as to the implications of this:

'Many demands of the Charter hinge on the right to work as a precondition. The WWC should play a leading role in the fight back against unemployment. This means raising demands like work sharing without loss of pay, nationalisation without compensation etc. All these demands are linked. We must stress that women's jobs are as important as men's jobs. In the discussion, a delegate asked why the figure of £40 was specific for a minimum wage; it was argued that it was because it was a realistic figure to mobilise around. Another delegate argued that the slogan 'a woman's right to work' confused the issue since women already do work, are we fighting for a woman's right to two jobs?'

(Conference report, National WWC Conference, April '76.)

What is striking about the recorded discussion at the Conference is that serious political questions which are raised are subordinated to the pre-occupation with the structure of the Charter itself. Nowhere has there been any serious consideration of the questions raised above: – why is it that TUs pass the Charter 'on the nod?' – are we asking women to do two jobs? Why the discontent with the length and structure of the demands?

These questions hang in the air because of the confused objectives of the Charter. First, there is no consistent basis for involving TUs in 'a process of discussion', as some delegates wanted. Many TUs would agree in principle with many of the demands – some of which are so general as to represent little challenge to any self respecting trade unionist. For example, the first demands embodying the right to work, to equal job and training opportunities, the right to the rate for the job. However,

a closer look at the Charter shows that a more 'revolutionary' commitment is required from the TUs in respect to certain demands — and that this is further complicated by the fact that the more 'revolutionary' aspects of the demands are embodied in the 'policy' statements, and therefore not integrated into the demands themselves. Some demands take up where legislation such as the EPA and SDA have left off — and go beyond the present 'acceptable' requirements placed upon employers — eg by demanding longer maternity and paternity leave and pay; others, such as the demand for £5 Child Benefits, tax free, include the 'policy' statement that these must be linked to protection against inflation by automatic increases based on a working class cost of living index.

The inclusion of these policy statements supposedly transforms an extended legal right in a revolutionary way. But this process of 'extension' in no way transforms the nature of the basic demands. Instead it leaves in limbo some rather intractable questions about the rationale of the demands themselves. For instance, why argue for a Child Benefit level of £5? Why not £10? Why Child Benefit at all? Is it to provide a 'choice' for women with large families (say, 4–5 children) to stay at home? Or is it supposed to supplement low wages? Other demands focus on sexual and social rights — eg abortion and contraception on demand. But if the principle of the Charter is to recognise the double role of women in the home and at work, why not add a demand calling for work sharing in the home?

There is no overall perspective for the relationship between the various demands. The order of the demands themselves — relating to work, social, sexual rights, ending with the demand for unionisation of women — subordinates questions of sexual rights and oppression by surrounding the more 'taboo' subjects such as abortion in the principles of work. Implicit in this structure is the notion that abortion, for example, is acceptable only if it enables a woman a more uninterrupted work cycle. The fact it is called the working women's charter means that it provides a readily available stereotype for male TU unionists to identify with — ie fellow women workers, but definitely not, wives or daughters. It enables them to conveniently ignore the fact that most women spend the largest part of their lives outside of productive (in the capitalist sense) labour.

The WWC does not challenge TUs because it makes no reference to the sexism in the labour movement. To facilitate the 'process of discussion' in TUs, the WWC should contain a statement of aims, which includes a preamble on the need to combat sexism in the TUs, outlining the way in which capitalists have used the division between the sexes in implementing cuts in jobs and to perpetuate women's primary roles in the home. The Charter should be amended to be called simply 'Women's Charter', so as to direct the balance to reflect the realities of the situation — ie that most women are outside the labour force, but that this does not eliminate the TUs responsibility to fight for their rights. In this way, a real challenge to TU consciousness might be explored.

PART 2

1. ENGELS RE-EXAMINED: MONOGAMY AND 'INDIVIDUAL SEX LOVE'

Engels work, 'The Origins of the family, Private Property and the State', represents the only major revolutionary Marxist writing on the historic relationship between the family and the economic structure. His great contribution in this field was to express a relationship between the development of private property, and the rise of the

specific form of the family, monogamy, which we know today. Whilst he raises some very important considerations, because the basis and conclusions of his research have rarely been critically examined in the light of new knowledge, both his analysis and the practical implications of work for women are applied mechanistically. One area of controversy, which can lead to a misunderstanding of the basic historic oppression of women, is his adherence to the generalised existence of the patriarchal form of the family. This will be examined in the next section. In this section, the development of his argument on the contradictions of the development of monogamy are traced, and the concept of individual sex love is critically examined.

Briefly he states that monogamy is the specific form of the family under capitalism. Whilst this pre-dates capitalism, the development of monogamy co-incides with the development of private property. Monogamy is characterised by 'the rule of the man in the family, the production of children that could only be his'. This particular form of the family marks the development of the first antagonism between man and woman.

'The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamian marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex and the male.'

A central contradiction arises out of this form of the family. On the one hand, a double standard in sexual relations between men and women, 'heterism', where by men are permitted sexual relations with unmarried women outside the conjugal bond; on the other hand, prostitution amongst women. Sexual freedom, once the custom for both sexes, now works in favour of men. A further contradiction which arises out of this is the development of adultery, as in the first instance, the only 'vengeance' open to women for their unequal sexual status.

The development of 'individual sex love' also appears along side of the rise of monogamy. The essence of 'individual sex love', as defined by Engels, is in a relation which is contradictory to monogamy, although it has as its ideological base, monogamy, the 'superstructure' which hid the essentially property base of the monogamous union. Engels defines it as follows:—

'Our sex love differs materially from the simple sex desire, the "eros" of the ancients. First, it pre-supposes reciprocal love on the part of the loved one; in this respect, the woman stands on a par with the man. Secondly, sex love attains a degree of intensity and permanency where the two parties regard non-possession or separation as a great, if not the greatest, misfortune; in order to possess each other they take great hazards, even risking life itself — what in antiquity happened, at best, only in adultery. And finally, a new moral standard arises for judging sexual intercourse. The question asked is not only whether such intercourse was legitimate or illicit, but also whether it arose from mutual love or not?'

Whilst monogamy provided the context for this development, historically amongst the ruling class it took place outside of marriage. The first form of this was 'chivalrous love' in the Middle Ages. By contrast, however, the propertyless working class are capable of developing 'sex love' relations within the confines of marriage, and presumably, choose their partners by this criteria alone:

'Sex love in the relation of husband and wife is and can be the rule only among the oppressed classes, that is, at the present day, among the proletariat, no matter whether this relationship is officially sanctioned or not. But here all the foundations of classical monogamy are removed. Here there is a complete absence of all property, for the safeguarding and inheritance which monogamy and male domination was established.'

Engels therefore attributed to the working class the existence of relationships which are freed from the inhibitions of property ties, and which are therefore more fulfilling, 'freer', than those of the bourgeoisie. Women are free from the tyranny of male domination. This is a fact, which in my view, is highly contentious. Far from being free from male domination, the working class has, demonstrably, assumed the chauvinism characteristic and consequent of the bourgeois monogamous form. How,

otherwise, can one explain the continuous myth of woman's 'inferiority'; her place is in the home, domestic work, as women's work', socially inferior to wage labour: and the trade union movements' reluctance to champion the needs of women at work.

Apart from the blatantly unrealistic conclusions on the development of sex love in the working class which Engels expresses, there appears to be a central contradiction in the conclusions which Engels reaches on the future of the monogamous form of the family under socialism. Remember that for Engels, Monogamy was borne out of the development of private property, the seeds of capitalism; it is the private property relationship which socialism destroys. One would imagine that, therefore, the particular form of the family which grew up to defend the right of private property, and to ensure its inheritance by the appropriate heirs, would de facto be abolished. But no; for Engels, the monogamous form *per se*, and here he equates it with 'individual sex love', will continue, but in a pure form:

'Since sex love is by its very nature exclusive — although this exclusiveness is fully realised today only in the woman — then marriage based on sex love is by its very nature monogamy... With the disappearance of the economic considerations which compelled women to tolerate the customary infidelity of man — the anxiety about their own livelihood and even more about the future of their children — the equality of women thus achieved, will, judging from all previous experience, result far more effectively in the men becoming really monogamous than the women becoming polyandrous.'

It seems to me inconsistent to assume that the essential form of sexual oppression, in this case, monogamy, can be retained, but somehow, the basis of the relationships 'equalised' within it. It is like saying, 'we'll keep private property, but make sure that everyone has the same amount of it'. This is not just a formalistic argument, because through socialism we intend to destroy the very basis of capitalist relations, and in this case, if Engels' premise about the direct relationship between property relations and sexual/family relations is correct, abolishing one entails abolishing the other.

There are various points to note about the context of Engels' above remarks. In part, he is attempting to answer, or assuage, the fear that 'the socialist family' entails a complete breakdown in moral behaviour. He does this by transferring the 'myths' of monogamy, the concept of individual sex love, which, as he has shown, is acted out outside of the conjugal bond, for which 'sex love' is the ideological construct, to the actual and potential 'reality' of 'sex love'. But by doing so, he perpetuates the division of the personal and economic aspects of life, a split which is essentially a capitalist division. Alexandra Kollontai, a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, directly challenges the criteria which Engels outlines as the basis for sex love, and emphasised the characteristics of bourgeois relationships thus: the idea of possessing the married partner; and the belief that the sexes were unequal in every way:

'It is the bourgeoisie who have carefully tended and fostered the ideal of absolute possession of the 'contracted partner's' emotional as well as physical 'I', thus extending the concept of property rights to include the right to the other person's whole spiritual and emotional world. Thus the family structure was strengthened and stability guaranteed in the period when the bourgeoisie were struggling for domination. This is the ideal which we have accepted as our heritage and have been prepared to see as an unchangeable moral absolute. The idea of 'property' goes far beyond the boundaries of lawful marriage. It makes itself felt as an inevitable ingredient of the most 'free' union of love. Contemporary lovers with all their respect for freedom are not satisfied by the knowledge of the physical faithfulness alone of the person they love. To be rid of the eternally-present threat of loneliness, we 'launch an attack' on the emotions of the person we love with a cruelty and lock of delicacy that will not be understood by future generations. ...'

(Kollontai, 'Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle'. p.6. 1919).

Whilst her discussion centres around the premises that the basis of bourgeois morality, inherited from the

past, will be weakened only when there is a 'change in the economic role of woman, and her independent involvement in production', she is most emphatic that the basis of the 'new morality' still had to be defined:

'To search for the basic criteria for a morality that can reflect the specific interests of the working class, and to see that the developing sexual norms are in accordance with these criteria — this is the task that must be tackled by the ideologists of the working class.'

The Individual Ethic

Engels correctly pin pointed one particular aspect of the development of human beings fostered and exploited by capitalism — the growth of individual self consciousness. As he points out, capitalism nurtured the concept of 'free choice', both in the economic and personal sphere. The 'survival of the fittest' was the interpretation of the anarchy of the market place. We need to go further than this. In the sphere of personal life, the growing expectations of fulfillment have been frustrated and strangled by the stereotyping of relationships; images of the family became a commodity used by capitalism by proxy through consumer goods. However the growing gap between the 'official' image of the family, as happy, harmonious, and healthy, and relatively well off, and the 'reality' of the family, reveals itself in tensions between its members, the claustrophobia of family life, the escalation of marital breakdown, mental breakdown, in official statistics. R.D. Laing defines self consciousness as 'an awareness of oneself as oneself, and an awareness of oneself as an object of someone else's observation.' (Laing: *The Divided Self*). (emphasis in the original). Similarly, the anthropologist Margaret Mead described the development of subjectivity as 'the ability to see oneself in the eyes of the other'. Social control is exercised by exerting influence on individuals to subordinate, or repress, definitions of themselves which conflict with the ruling ideology. In economic political terms, for instance, the worker is asked to subordinate, or substitute, interests as a member of his/her class, for the interests of the nation, i.e. the ruling class. Under capitalism, the notion of a free individual necessarily conflicts with the stereotyping of the range of experience available to those individuals. The myth that the 'Englishman's home is his castle' is exacerbated because of the 'unfreedom' to develop within the confines of capitalist family relations. Expectations of fulfillment are even higher, however, because, since the sphere of 'private' life, the home has been increasingly isolated from the world of production, family life holds expectations of compensation for slavery of wage labour. Therefore it is not only for reasons of disposing of the 'reserve army' of female labour that the centrality of the woman in the home is necessary for the maintenance of the capitalist system, but because of the excessive burdens placed on women in providing the emotional compensation for the capitalist relations at work. The psychological process used to cope with the assertion-denial of subjectivity, as Laing describes it, is one of objectifying the other person, so as to drain their subjectivity, and depersonalising the other person, ('petrification'), so as not to have to respond.

Therefore the objective basis for the fulfilment of personal relationships for the subject, is turned on its head — capitalism is unable to provide the framework for the development of the subjective self which it has invoked.

'Mother Right' and 'Father Right'

Engels establishes a crucial link between the transition of 'mother right' and 'father right' at the point where property privately, rather than collectively, owned, and the

question of inheritance became critical. Monogamy, as discussed above, developed as a result. Engels emphasises that this transference of inheritance through the female line to through the male line represents the greatest 'revolution' the world had ever seen — 'the world historic defeat of the female sex'. [Women were, for the first time, deprived of economic power]. Unfortunately, though, exactly how this transference of power came about is buried in 'prehistory'.

The lack of evidence of this transference of power, which Engels notes, questions the credibility of the universal existence of 'mother right'. How, and why is it, that women allowed their power to be usurped by men? Modern anthropological evidence seems to suggest that there are a whole variety of patterns of kinship which have and do continue to exist, but that there is little evidence to suggest the existence of matriarchy. If this is the case, then it is impossible to equate 'the world historic defeat of the female sex' with the development of monogamy and private property. (This is not to deny, of course, that capitalist relations intensifies the oppression of women.) Nor does there appear to be any generalised form of division of labour based on sex, even that of child rearing shows an extreme diversity of patterns in different cultures.

In the writings of recent feminists, we can see attempts to come to terms with the 'pre-historic' role of women. One strand of argument can be summarised as, were women primarily acted upon by nature, and find their primary creative role in reproduction, or did they take the lead in acting upon nature, in the sense of creating the first tools, directing the development of agriculture, etc. Evelyn Reed's book, 'Woman's Evolution', takes the former view as the basis of her argument:

'Social labour is the prime feature distinguishing humans from animals. In the beginning this was largely in the hands of women. They were so to speak, the first farmers and industrialists, the first scientists, doctors, nurses, architects, and engineers; the first teachers, artists, linguists and historians. The households they managed were not merely kitchens and nurseries; they were the first factories, laboratories, clinics, schools, and social centres.'

'Far from being 'drudgery', women's work was supremely creative; it created nothing less than the human species. This expresses the essence of the matriarchal period of social organisations. Women then were not simply the procreators of new life. the biological mothers. They were the prime producers of the necessities of life; the social mothers.' (Emphasis in original).

By contrast,

Shulamith Firestone argues in 'The Dialectic of Sex':

'The biological family is an inherently unequal power distribution.' The biological family is characterised by, among other things: 'that a basic mother/child interdependency has existed in some form of society, past or present, and thus has shaped the psychology of every mature female and infant', and 'that the natural reproductive difference between the sexes led directly to the first division of labour at the origins of class, as well as furnishing the paradigm of caste (discrimination based on biological characteristics.)'

Firestone goes further and assumes a universal split between the 'technological' and 'aesthetic' modes, by which she means that men are associated with technological developments, from the development of the earliest tools, women are associated with the development of religion, art, etc. In the transitional period of a 'socialist revolution', we have to first break down the barriers of this culture differentiation based on sex, and then re-integrate culture on a new plane.

The problem of Reed's contribution to the understanding of the historic position of women rests on the validity of the anthropological evidence, and the basis of interpretation. There is no doubt that anthropological method has been dominated by men, and interpreted in the light of bourgeois culture for the most part; but the re-interpretation of the same material, or search for alternative material, on which to base hypotheses, does not

solve these problems in itself. There is yet to emerge anthropological analysis based on scientific Marxist method, to evaluate new knowledge and develop the beginnings of this task as indicated by Engels. But, we cannot afford to simply brush aside the contributions of Firestone and other radical feminists; she raises important questions which challenge our reluctance to concede the universal phenomena of male domination, and challenges us to improve on her explanations of the basis of 'male power'. As socialists, we have yet to embark on that task.

2. THE LESSONS OF THE BOLSHEVIK PROGRAMME

The problems of implementing the Bolshevik's programme of radical social reforms, their limitations, and subsequent failures, were inextricably tied up with the political and economic failure of the world revolution, [envisaged by the Bolsheviks as an essential precondition for the successful conclusion of the Russian revolution.] The defeat of revolutionary forces throughout the Western World after the Bolsheviks had seized power in 1917, meant that the new worker's state was not able to draw on the highly developed technology, from the skills, of their fellow workers in Germany, France and Great Britain, as they had expected to aid the development in Russia. Consequently, the development of their productive forces was severely stunted. This factor, in relation to the projected social reforms, created problems of prioritising the development of resources. — Although this did not stop the Bolsheviks from implementing a whole series of social reforms, the extent, for instance, of nursery provision was limited by the material means available. A second problem was, as Lenin defined it in 1919, the 'low cultural level of the working masses.' The backward consciousness of the mass of working people made them ill prepared for a radical upheaval of their family lives.

In the early years after the 1917 seizure of power the Bolsheviks advanced a head on assault on the traditional family. Their programme included the abolition of ecclesiastical marriage; legal abortion and contraception; marriage and divorce codes based on the equality of men and women; recognition of the de facto marriage; equal rights for illegitimate children. Along side this was initiated the socialisation of domestic tasks such as child care; nurseries were provided; social dining areas at the place of work were built, laundries on a community basis, all these replaced the need for each family to carry out domestic labour in isolation. Not all these changes were immediately welcomed. Peasant women, at first, often resisted the idea of putting their children into nurseries — but as often these facilities were near the fields where she worked, the women gradually became used to the idea. In fact, the proximity of their children enables them to continue to see them throughout the day — and in this respect the child's links with the mother were not threatened or broken.

Despite the great advances that these reforms represented, the essential patriarchal nature of the family was never challenged. There were various isolated experiments carried out in communal living, and variations to the monogamous family unit, but the Bolsheviks never addressed themselves seriously to the need to fundamentally change the balance of forces within the family. It was, therefore, with comparative ease that Stalin was able to reverse some of the major changes in family law which the Bolsheviks had pioneered, to re-establish the centrality of motherhood for women. Both Lenin and Trotsky recognised that the emancipation of women in any complete sense was not possible even under socialism, but that it was an ongoing task of

the socialist revolution, of which only the most basic material preconditions for emancipation could be laid during a transitional period. As Lenin states in 'Women and Society':

'The working women's movement has for its objective the fight for the economic and social, not merely formal, equality of women. The main task is to draw women into socially productive labour, extricate them from 'domestic slavery', free them from the stultifying and humiliating resignation to the perpetual and exclusive atmosphere of the kitchen and nursery. It is a long struggle, requiring a radical remaking both of social technique and of customs. But this struggle will end with the complete triumph of communism.'

Trotsky, in an article in Pravda 1923, emphasises the prolonged upheaval expected in the development of any changes in the family structure:

'A radical reform of the family, and more generally, of the whole order of domestic life requires a great conscious effort on the part of the whole of the mass of the working class, and presumes the existence in the class itself of a powerful molecular force of inner desire for culture and progress. In regard to family relations and forms of individual life in general, there must be also an inevitable period of disintegration of things as they were, of the traditions, inherited from the past, which had not passed under the control of thought. But in this domain of domestic life the period of criticism and destruction begins later, lasts longer, and assumes morbid and painful forms, which however, are complex and not always perceptible to superficial observation.'

The process of struggle requires, as Trotsky puts it, 'A powerful molecular force of inner desire for culture and progress' — it is this motivation which has not only to be given the material precondition for change, but the theoretical basis, the direction of such change, and an indication of the problems to be confronted: male workers, as well as female workers, have to be prepared for such change, and it was this point that the Bolsheviks ignored. Alexandra Kollontai, a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and a leading advocate of the social reforms, recognised and fought the theoretical weakness in the party:

'The problems of sex concern the largest section of society — they concern the working class in its daily life. It is therefore hard to understand why this vital and urgent matter is treated with such indifference. This indifference is unforgivable. One of the tasks that confronts the working class is its attack on the 'beleaguered fortress of the future' is undoubtedly the task of establishing more healthy and joyous relationships between the sexes.'

(Kollontai: 'Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle') Trotsky saw the problem as this: 'you cannot 'abolish' the family, you must replace it.' But with what? What exactly is it one wants to 'abolish'? These are still problems which require much careful examination and thought if we are to progress from the 'women in factories, children in nurseries' formula.

3. CZECHOSLOVAKIA — THE 'DUAL ROLE' OF WOMEN

The experiences of women in Czechoslovakia is informative in showing how the ruling bureaucratic caste have managed to maintain the oppression of women by perpetuating the 'dual role' of women as workers and unpaid domestic workers. It is worth referring to their experience, documented in Hilda Scott's book, 'Women and Socialism', because it exemplifies the role played by ideology in reinforcing the pre-historic assumption of the subordination of women to the family it also raises some important questions on the relationship between reproduction and production, individualised and socialised child care. The entry of women into the employment market following the Second World War was not peculiar to Czechoslovakia; but the rate of growth of female labour was higher in this country than in the capitalist world, and the entry of women who were married increased by 68%, as opposed to a world average of 55%, in the years immediately succeeding World War II. Women were generally absorbed into light industry, and service in-

dustries. Because the needs of the economy were geared towards developing heavy industry, a policy of awarding 'brawn' rather than brain' became the rule. Women received much lower wages than men. Fifteen years later, the needs of the economy shifted — in the early sixties on the threshold of the 'technological and scientific revolution', the need was seen to release funds to encourage training of scientists and technicians, and to increase the productivity of the work force, so that fewer workers could produce more. The inevitable conclusion from this logic was that the 'least efficient' sections of the work force — would have to loose their jobs. Women, although their right to work had been established as part of the constitution of the new workers state, now were under attack. Women were seen as a liability because the demands of their domestic roles, inspite of the growth of 'nursery provision were such that they were more likely to be absent from work than their male counterparts. Sickness of children, the demands of shopping, housework, were additional tasks which had to be born in by the women. Whilst some attempts were made initially to accommodate the extra tasks performed by women, such as extension of shopping hours, laundry services, care of sick children by older women, and so on, the fact that women had to perform extra domestic chores, sometime, was not challenged. Thus women were faced with a two fold problem; first, entry into a male-dominated world of production, where the organisation of work was not geared to the needs of women's double role; second, in the face of this situation, the failure to provide sufficient means to alleviate women from the tasks performed outside the work place.

The dilemma of course is faced in capitalist countries, and the debate, should women work, or should they stay at home? — is a familiar one — the ideology of women in the home reinforces the need to deprive some sections of the work force of their jobs, when the demands of capital require it.

Production and Reproduction?

The problem of the demands of production, and choice in reproduction of the species, was acutely experienced not only in Czechoslovakia, but in other Eastern European countries dominated by Stalinist communist parties. Hungary's birth rate in 1964–5 was the lowest in the world, at 13 per cent 1,000 population live births. It was in Hungary, that women were first paid an allowance to stay at home to reproduce and care for children — a measure also adopted later in Czechoslovakia. In Czechoslovakia, the birth rate in 1967 was 15.1 per 1,000 inhabitants, the lowest birth rate in fifty years. Because of the low level of wages for the majority of families, the choice of having children, or not, was not a free one — material conditions militated against large families. The first liberal abortion law was passed in 1958, and was used by women as the main form of contraception. The conditions under which women could procure an abortion were quickly altered so as to discourage women from seeking an abortion — commissions set up to investigate a woman's reasons for terminating pregnancy applied stricter criteria, and discriminated so as to discourage women from approaching them. By these means control over abortion rights, and incentives to stay at home, the population 'problem' was brought under control. As in Russia, the centrality of motherhood for women, her place in the home, won over and above the attempts of women to gain economic independence.

What Kind Of Child Care?

One of the problems in the provision of nursery facilities is the basis which they are set up. A frequent accusation levelled at those supporters of 24-hour nursery provision

is the lack of consideration for the children, and too much emphasis on the mother's needs. Part of this argument, at least, is tied up with the confusion between existing styles, and standards, and quantity, rather than quality, of institutionalised child care. In Britain, for instance, institutionalised care assumes a punitive character, reflecting the ideas that parents have failed in being unable to provide a stable family home for children; this is even the case with nursery provision, where, because of the appalling shortage of nursery places, especially in inner city areas, eg. nursery places allocation on the basis of 'urgent need', a one parent family with emotional/psychiatric problems, in poor housing, and who is already in full time work.

In Russia, and Czechoslovakia, the formal right to work had been established, but the acceptance of nursery care, the development of optimum conditions for child care, were far from automatic processes. Again, at the root of resistance to re-examine the basis of child care, no revolutionary theory informed these questions. 24 hour nurseries represented the optimum provision for production, as it ensure that women could work shift work, start early in the morning, work late, or whatever the requirements, without having to worry about when and where to leave her children. The level of nursery provision provided, was, as stated above, dependant on material means available. But the establishment of the allocation of resources the priorities set, is dependent on answering the question, production for whom by whom production of what, in other words, what kind of society are we trying to create? In Czechoslovakia, for instance, controversy raged as to the relative investment of provision of child care facilities as against the gain in productive forces of female labour released. Whilst it was established that nursery provision represented an asset, and not a liability, in the long term, politically, this argument was not always acceptable — as noted above — when women still represented the 'reserve army' of labour, relatively easy to dispose of, when their hold on their 'right to work' was a purely formal one.

In Russia, about 35% of children were catered for in nursery provision, in (1967). In Czechoslovakia, the number of children in nurseries in 1971, was about 69% of potential users. Of this 60% about 20% of the provision was 24 hour nursery care. Nursery Education was seen as a prime opportunity to implant socialist ideas into young minds, and a more scientific way of ensuring socialisation than care by the individual mother. At first, the importance of the collective, the need for female labour power, merged to provide the pre-conditions for

the easy acceptance of the supporting scientific and social explanations provided by Pavlov, and other behaviourists. Pavlov adapted Darwin's ideas for his own means; using those parts of the human responses which could be conditioned, human beings could adapt to a new environment in one lifetime, and the fruits of this experience handed down to the next generation. It would, therefore, only take a few generations to produce well adjusted 'socialist' human beings.

In the 60's, however, some 20 years after the acceptance of these ideas, when the needs of the economy for female labour power were not so great, conflicting ideas on child care, notably from the writings of Bowlby, in Britain, permeated the thinking of the policy makers. First formulated in the fifties Bowlby's ideas, still highly influential in the West, developed from his studies of certain forms of institutionalised care in the West for children. He concluded that children were affected by emotional and sensory deprivation in institutions, and that the prime need was for a warm and continuous relationship with their mothers. These ideas were taken up by soviet social scientists in the sixties, who concluded that collective care could only act as a supplement, and not a substitute, for family care. As a result, 24 hour nurseries were reduced from 20% of nursery provision to 3.8% of all nursery provision. The debate which followed on to try and decide the best balance between family and collective care substituted the real ideological debate for a compromise between the need of production and the needs of reproduction, outside of the control of the working class as a whole. No basic re-examination of the division of roles in the family for a socialist society which ensured the progressive liberation of all its members, has been formulated. Again, the basic patriarchal pattern has been left undisturbed.

What can be learnt from these experiences, is that once the 'dual role' of women in the family is disturbed, urgent problems arise as the stable nature of the family is threatened — the functions which were performed privately cannot be transformed wholesale into socialised tasks without uncovering thousands of years of prejudice and deep rooted sexual conflict. Lacking any direction, these potential conflicts can quickly be suppressed, old forms revitalised. The theoretical legacy we inherit from Lenin, Engels, Marx, has to be developed if we are to be prepared to understand the basis of these regressive forces and arm ourselves with the theory to fight in practice the deep rooted prejudices which flow from sexual oppression.

LIZ ADAMS

APPENDIX I, A REPLY TO ALAN JONES ON HEALYISM

RED WEEKLY, LONDON,

Dear Comrades,

I was interested to see the article *The Rise of Gerry Healy* by Alan Jones (*Battle of Ideas* no.1, Oct. 1976). As was correctly stated, to explain how Healy "built an organisation, which from the early 1950s until well into the mid-1960s was the strongest single force on the revolutionary left" is a task of some relevance. If one individual, above all, has been responsible for leaving the ostensibly trotskyist movement in the utter wilderness of sectarian isolation over the past quarter-century (regarded by hundreds of thousands of labour movement activists and successive generations of youth with contempt and revulsion) it is no other than Thomas Gerard Healy himself. This is a tradition with which accounts have to be settled. Yet I was amazed to read a virtual eulogy of the halcyon years of Healyism: the WRP leadership must be flabbergasted to receive such praise from their 'Pabloite' bogeys!

An adequate reply to the article would necessitate a full-length alternative analysis of the trotskyist tradition in this country. I shall confine myself here to a brief series of rejoinders to some of the points made by Comrade Jones.

1. The starting point of Jones's analysis is that the Marxist movement in Britain has historically lacked two of the three main preconditions for the establishment of a revolutionary tradition, i.e. an internationalist orientation and a firm grasp of theoretical matters. He describes at some length the particularly philistine, narrow-minded, provincial and sectarian traditions of British Marxism from Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation onwards. One can hardly disagree with a word of this. However, to assert that the Healy current has ever represented anything other than a classic example of this wretched tradition is positively bizarre.

2. We then proceed to the resurrection of an old canard which really ought to be given a decent burial. This is the denunciation by the founding conference

of the Fourth International of the Workers International League (WIL) as a "national" and "reactionary" grouping for its refusal to participate in the artificial scotch-tape fusion of British Trotskyistists in 1938. This decision not to 'give it a go' may well have been tactically mistaken, nonetheless this does not give the WIL's factional opponents and their political descendants the right to perpetuate old myths and distortions on the subject. The fact is that the WIL's estimate of the fusion was empirically verified when it collapsed into its component parts in less than a year; while the main remnant thereof, the Harber-led RSL, remained inactive, faction-ridden and obscure. The latter's failure was not that it remained in the Labour Party while local branches were inactive, but that it was incapable of doing anything else in such circumstances. Moreover, but the WIL's alleged "anti-internationalism" will come as something of a surprise to anyone who has ever perused the files of *Workers International News*, *Youth For Socialism* and *Socialist Appeal* during the war years: they are studded with lengthy reprints of Trotsky's writings, and of documents of the Fourth International and the American Socialist Workers Party. The fusion of 1944 with the RSL was little more than a formality, undertaken to gain the official F.I. "franchise" — the new RCP was in effect the old WIL.

3. Healy's clique following evolved from about 1943, without any clear political basis. He admitted at one point that his inability to work with other comrades in the leadership was solely due to personal factors. Having no clear ideas of his own, Healy decided to become the mouthpiece for the Cannon leadership of the SWP and the Pablo leadership of the reconstructed post-war FI. He has kept up a secret factional relationship with both of them, particularly Jim Cannon, behind the backs of the RCP membership. In June 1945, he was writing to Cannon to ask when to declare his faction (see SWP Internal Bulletin Vol 8 No 1. of 1/46). We are told that Healy learned his internationalism and theoretical concern from this source; in view of the almost legendary reputation of

the SWP in general and of Cannon in particular for insularity and theoretical philistinism, one takes leave to doubt this. Since the '40s, the theoretical contributions of this organisation (apart from Novack's work) have been almost as non-existent as those of the SLL. *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* was a 'basic textbook' of the Healy group? It is difficult to see what anyone could possibly learn from this sorry publication, other than a generalised tendency to denounce political opponents as "petty-bourgeois" dilettantes and renegades. In this, we must concede, Healy certainly proved himself an apt pupil over the years. In any case, it ill becomes *Red Weekly* supporters, who have been the butt of such criticisms so often themselves over the years, to laud the virtues of a book which makes "middle class" social origin a term of abuse in revolutionary politics.

4. We are further informed by comrade Jones that the Healy tendency displayed its break from sectarianism by its advocacy of "entry" into the Labour Party. Now, even a dangerous lunatic may experience lucid intervals: he is not generally let out of Broadmoor on this account! In the long run, there is no value at all in coming to a "correct" decision on paper on the basis of a totally mistaken analysis and orientation. Both the RCP majority and minority at this time were labouring under the burden of the obsolete 1936 Trotskyist theory of the French Turn, which views the participation of marxists in reformist working-class organisations as a short-run 'smash and grab raid' to recruit members, as the exception rather than the rule. To retrospectively endow Healy with Pablo's "entry *sui generis*" position of 1952 (another question altogether) can only confuse matters further. It is true that British Trotskyism in general was dominated by the sterile sectarianism of 'Orthodoxy', i.e. repeating programmes and policies of the past mechanically and by rote, instead of creatively developing marxist theory as a living force. But it was precisely the Healy tendency and the Fourth International who remained totally wedded to this orthodoxy, who were distinguished on almost every major issue at this time by a "sectarian and bankrupt

refusal to accept reality". At the time of the 1948 'World Congress' of the FI, it was describing in its manifesto the growth of a mass fascist movement in Britain. For two or three years it refused to acknowledge the fairly obvious fact that bourgeois democracy had been restored in most of Western Europe.

5. The Healyites faithfully reflected this 'bankruptcy'. This is how their statement (June 14/15) to the 1947 Revolutionary Communist Party Congress justified their orientation to the Labour Party: "Loyalty gives way to discontent and, particularly among the lower-paid and most oppressed sections of the working class, to downright anger. Dissatisfaction with the policy of the Government and the desire to substitute for it a far more revolutionary policy is a feature of working-class life today." Such 'leftist' phrasemongering is familiar today in the rantings of those who, despite all evidence to the contrary, continue to assert the existence of mass struggles of the workers which are only being held down with the greatest difficulty by the devious manoeuvres of the bureaucrats. While maintaining much of the same ideological baggage, what characterised the politics of the Haston-Grant majority was a sober and realistic appraisal of the situation they were in and the tasks that must flow there from; moreover, a willingness to admit that the prognostications of Trotsky and the FI on Postwar developments were inadequate to say the least, and in need of revision. In this they had the beginning of wisdom. A real *potential* existed for the adaptation of the Trotskyist tradition to new realities. We can thus assert that, with all its weaknesses, the RCP was probably the healthiest section of the FI at this time (we could also mention its consistent record of industrial work and its high working-class composition).

6. Central to the majority analysis as presented in the PB Resolution on the British Situation to the '47 Congress, was a recognition of the rapid economic recovery (in spite of the fuel crisis and shortages). Furthermore, that the nationalisations and welfare measures of the Attlee Government counted much more to the workers than its reactionary foreign policy and wage restraint; "The most striking phenomenon of the past few years of Labour's term of office is the *stability of the government*." (my emphasis MCC) Consequently, "... developments inside the Labour movement as a whole, and especially inside the Labour Party... have been exceptionally slow." "Stikes are even less popular today among the workers than during the war." "The development of a left wing has been conspicuously absent in the twelve months since the 1946 Conference of the Labour Party." Labour Party wards were generally inactive or had small attendances: this despite the unprecedented rise in individual LP membership referred to by comrade Jones. The plain fact is, constituency Labour Parties have never been seething hives of mass left-wing activity at any time (or of any

activity at all in some cases). Ward attendances *did* reach their highest level at this time, but not enough to justify the particular perspective of Healy. (It is worth at this point noting the importance of Grant's efforts at this time to analyse the basis for a restoration of profitable production with the help of Keynesian type methods. Not that he (or anyone else) foresaw the 20-year "post-war boom", nonetheless it was the total absence of any attempt at an economic analysis and a theory of crisis which has contributed to much of the political paralysis of the ostensibly trotskyist left in the period since). In these circumstances of what the RCP leaders correctly called a "political lull" it had to be recognised there were no shortcuts to mass support; a central task of daily activity would be "to raise the theoretical level of our party and its sympathisers". This perspective was, in every way, incomparably more *realistic* than that of the minority; if carried out consistently it could have laid down a steered marxist tradition in the British labour movement capable of reacting correctly to the long-delayed upturn in the class struggle of recent years. Its major fallacy was of course, as has been pointed out elsewhere that this perspective was in no way incompatible with consistent activity in the Labour Party, which would have been perfectly complementary to it. Nevertheless they were correct to reply to the International Secretariat of the FI, thus: "Congress further rejects the objective set by the IS for entry: the setting into motion of the entire awakened British working class along the path of revolutionary action within the framework of the Labour Party, as completely out of accord with the objective situation and with the subjective possibilities of the Party in the present period." Presumably such an attitude was what led Pierre Frank of the IS/FI to berate the RCP leaders at a previous conference for "empiricism". So be it. At least empiricism is a historic advance on dogmatic refusal to accept reality.

7. After the 1947 split, did the RCP come round to the conclusion it had been in the wrong? As a point of fact, the situation in 1949 was that while there were small pro-entry and anti-entry factions, the majority felt that, since there were no possibilities for building a mass organisation whatever course was adopted, one might as well be in the LP as out. (A similar view seems in practice to have been adopted by most of the trotskyists in the Labour Party in the 50s and early 60s.) The Haston-Grant tendency had been worn down not merely by their undoubted mistake on the Labour Party, but by the constant faction-fight with Healy and the FI. It is wrong to say Healy's eventual "success" vindicated him. He did recruit his own sect, of course, but until the late 50s at least this was no larger than the organisation in whose destruction he had

* See *Labour in Power* by Ted Grant (Militant pamphlet)

played a leading role. There was no room for building more than a propaganda group at this time: the main task was the preservation, training and educating of a marxist cadre, and in this sphere Healy's influence was needless to say totally counter-productive (see below). Comrade Jones states that anti-internationalism and a tendency to split over 'tactical' issues are the bane of the British left. Yet he himself recognises it was precisely the intervention of the International that split the RCP in fact, no less than three of the main trotskyist tendencies up till the 1950s created in this manner: characterised by the international building up of a faction which then split off to be later recognised as the official section. This happened in the mid-60s again. So much for the anti-sectarian role of international organisations. I would argue that the split of '47/'49 aborted the very real potential the RCP had for the growth of a marxist tradition in the British working class. Instead the main components polarised into the sectarian chiliastic activism of the SLL/WRP and the passive abstractness of the Militant tendency — both sharing the worst of the traditional *sterile orthodoxy of the movement, preserved in a fossilised form over a quarter-century*.

It is a testimony to the bankruptcy of this tradition that it was only the third product of this debacle the Cliff Group (International Socialists) which was capable of making a serious intervention in the upsurge of industrial struggle of 1967-74 (in the process it jettisoned all pretence at fighting for marxist politics in the class struggle however). It is no accident that the decline of this tendency in the recent period of lull has led it in substitutionist fashion down the well-trodden road of Healyism.

8. Comrade Jones holds up as an example the Healy Group's participation in the paper *Socialist Outlook*. He seems to think it a principle *not* to produce an independent marxist journal in the Labour Party; this view should be rejected as much as seeing it as *de rigueur*. While it may have been tactically appropriate to produce a joint periodical with left Bevanites, this is not the same as refusing to differentiate

oneself from them. *SO* continually displayed a failure to engage in a struggle for political and programmatic clarity against the congenital vacillation hesitation and muddleheadedness of the centrists and left social-democrats. These tasks could not be fudged over. The future capitulation of Bevan himself and the impotence of his followers to mount effective challenges to Gaitskell and Wilson over the years was to show this. Whatever excuses could be made for *Socialist Outlook*, it is well known that for two or three years after it collapsed the Healy 'Club' actually used to sell *Tribune*. Allegedly, they would write in letters and, when these were printed, outline them in red biro and sell the paper with that part to the fore. What such antics could possibly have in common with the fight for a marxist prog-

ramme in the labour movement it is difficult to see.

9. At the same time, Healy was also producing a propaganda journal called *Labour Review*. Anyone who looked through the issues of this for 1951-54 (vol 1) would be disappointed if they expected in this more theoretical periodical the political clarity absent from *SO*. Its political line could be generally characterised as 'consistent Bevanism'. Criticism was almost totally confined to the Labour Right and the Stalinists; any differences with the Bevanites were vague and implicit. Of course it was 100% correct to *participate* in the Bevanite movement, but not at the price of abandoning any independent voice at all. The use of demands like "Finish without delay the job of nationalising, democratising, and reorganising industry along Socialist lines" could only serve to reinforce the idea that the Attlee nationalisations had been Socialist rather than state capitalist measures (precisely the sort of illusion it was necessary to combat most sharply). Or, "Together let us find out what ways and means can put Labour back in power where it belongs so that our class can resume its march towards Britain's socialist future" (LR Jan-Mar 1952). Socialism is identified as so many more nationalisations, albeit under workers control. Obviously plenty of good points were made, but of what value in an overall context of confusion and chameleon-like adaptation to the conceptions of left social-democracy? What tends to come across is a view that with the replacement of the current Labour leaders with more honest and thorough-going socialists along the lines of Bevan, a future Labour Government could be pressurised into carrying through (completing?) a socialist transformation of society by parliamentary means, without a qualitative break with the capitalist state.

10. More. We read: "... A reinvigorated Labour Party can rescue England from capitalist reaction and war" ... "Britain, however, can rise to a new and higher level of world leadership. ..." (under socialism). Such formulations unfortunately are quite typical in the writings of Healy and others in *Labour Review*, rather than the exception (and here I think Ms. Braddock can escape the blame). Far from recognising the paramount duty of marxists to combat the gangrene of the ideology of British imperialism, Healy & Co. were actually aiming to *appeal* to chauvinist sentiments in the labour movement. If internationalist traditions are conspicuous only in their absence in the British working class, the epigones of pseudo-trotskyism have a share in the responsibility. As for the claim that *SO* had a clear line of solidarity with North Korea, this was generally left vague and implicit amid Stalinist-type calls for 'Peace' and the withdrawal of troops. The latter were referred to as "British boys in uniform" (Healy, *Plain Speaking on War and Peace* p 26.) Vis-a-vis general perspec-

tives, in 1954 Bill Hunter was already referring to the Post-war boom in the *past* tense, employing 1931 analogies, and describing a mass upsurge of industrial militancy. To sum up, comrade Jones seems to think the allegedly great influence Healy achieved in the 50s justifies anything. This is really a "Never mind the quality, feel the width" theory of politics. Of what value are cadres recruited and influence acquired on a thoroughly false basis, politically miseducated as to tasks and perspectives? Castle made of sand fall into the sea. . .

11. Once more, in 1953 in the split in the Fourth International, Healy went fully along with a break which *Red Weekly* will be the first to admit had no political basis at all (Healy had always expressed confidence in the policies of Pablo and the IS). Simply, he put his factional loyalty to his mentor Cannon above any concern for principles or clarity.

12. Let us now turn to the 'Golden Age' of 1956-59. *The Newsletter* and *Labour Review* (Mk II) were indeed open and non-sectarian journals because, as Alan Jones says, Healy was using them to gradually recruit an exceptional layer of ex-CP intellectuals. In 1957 Tom Kemp was outlining an economic analysis way ahead of the crude under-consumptionist crisis-mongering of earlier days. In 1959 Peter Fryer's book *The Battle for Socialism* (written just before he quit the SLL) was an attempt to outline a strategy for the British labour movement greatly superior to anything the Healy current produced before or since. However, this was a very short period. Most of the intellectuals concerned were either converted into demoralised hacks ('squeezed lemons') or more often driven out of the movement to cynicism or into the arms of reaction. They had fallen into the grip of a rotten organisation. Healy's successes over the years have been due to his talent (almost genius) as an organiser: and despite the absolutely total theoretical poverty of himself and his acolytes at all times.

13. Another fundamental point. Jones notes with scant comment the hatching of the Grant and Cliff tendencies back in 1950. The organisational methods which the WSL comrades have recently made acquaintance with, have a history of 25+ years. They were responsible for the loss of most of the elements won from the CPGB, and of thousands of other potentially valuable militants over the years. At this point let us quote a document written by Martin Grainger (10.6.60) after he was expelled from the SLL. "Their petty organisational intrigues flow from the needs of politically bankrupt people to preserve their positions by organisational methods. This explains. . . their dissolution of branches, their 'moving' of political dissidents, their repeated intimidations of comrades, their obsessional fear of even mildly unorthodox views. . . their ready expenditure of Party funds for long journeys to 'straighten out' comrades diverging even a few degrees. . . their reduction of all real intellectual life within the organisation

to the level of a religious service. . . their whistling in the dark in relation to sales of the paper or to membership, their need for a strong man to hide their own intellectual poverty, and finally their almost gleeful use of the disciplinary clauses of the constitution as some modern kind of guillotine." (from G. Thayer, *The British Political Fringe*, 1965. See pp 126-37 for an excellent account of Healy & British trotskyism.) Other anecdotes on the physical and psychological treatment of GH's luckless alversaries are, I think, too well known on the British left to bear repeating. This sort of picture should be familiar to anyone from the trotskyist tradition. It is a caricature of the worst excesses of Stalinist practices of the 1930s CPs (in fairness, most present-day CPS have abandoned such extremes). Tragedy repeated as farce - fortunately without the state power to back it up. Yet we are supposed to believe from comrade Jones that Healy led a fundamentally healthy revolutionary organisation up to his break from the SWP in the early 60s, and that he had absorbed the "lessons of party building". An organisation run on the disgusting bureaucratic, manipulative, puritanical, repressive and philistine lines which have *always* been characteristic of the Healy sect cannot be a genuinely revolutionary or marxist one, whatever its formal programme or tactic of the moment. The reasons should be obvious. Firstly, the membership receive no real political education (they were kept occupied on a diet of mindless activism). Secondly, the lack of discussion means mistakes cannot be rectified, but are usually repeated or turned upside-down to mirror-image errors. Thirdly, the practices of such a sect can only induce nausea in those who come across it, convincing them that communism is, after all, just another form of religious cult. Agree, the SLL did get a lot worse and a lot nuttier after the early 60s. This was, however, the further degeneration of an already degenerate tradition. The basic methods were the same, whether expressed in adaptation to Bevanism or lunatic ultra-leftism. So were the political perspectives (imminent catastrophism). To date Healy's 'fall from Grace' to his break from the SWP and USFI is to adopt another variation on the 'apostolic succession' theories of the Lambertists and the WSL, who date it from their own respective splits from the SLL/WRP. Healy and his leadership clique have remained intact - the same people - since the early 50s. At no stage did they suffer a collective brain-storm. Even their present paranoid phobia about GPU agents can be logically traced back to their early origins (cf. the antics of similar 'trotskyist' cults in France and the USA).

14. In terms of practical conclusions, comrade Jones's main lesson seems to be 'flexibility', i.e.e Healy's ability to flit about from one get-rich-quick scheme to another. Orientation to the Communist Party, to industrial struggle, to the LPYS, to CND - followed rapidly as the locus

for immediate recruiting gains appeared to change. Fair enough, swift changes in the emphasis of activity in relation to developments in the real world are necessary; but not *at the expense of* pursuing consistent activity in the mass organisations of the working class. Jones gives the game away in referring to the Labour Party (up to the late 60s) as "the chief source of recruits for the Trotskyist movement." (In practice it is arguable

that as many people were recruited from Trotskyism to social democracy in the process, but let it pass). The point is that focussing one's activity around the areas of maximum recruitment to marxism is the wrong perspective in the first place. One can usually build an organisation of sort sorts out of all sorts of milieux, but unless those won over have been inculcated in a correct conception of tasks, theory and practice, involving an understanding of how

to relate revolutionary politics to the existing working class movement, then one will have built precisely *nothing*. As Healy has. The *Red Weekly's* general distance from the methods of Healyism is one of its virtues. Its supporters should eschew any illusions in a tradition from which they have nothing to learn.

Yours fraternally

Martin C. Cook

APPENDIX 2, ALAN JONES ON HEALYISM

BRITISH TROTSKYISM, like British Marxism before it, arose in almost uniquely unfavourable objective conditions. Lenin had stressed in *Left Wing Communism — An Infantile Disorder* in his famous analysis of the rise of the Bolshevik Party, that the conditions for the creation of a real proletarian revolutionary party were a mass tradition of *revolutionary struggle*, a firm grasp of *Marxist theory*, and a wealth of *international connections*. Only the absorption of those most advanced experiences of class struggle could provide the guide to action necessary to lead a national revolutionary struggle. (2)

Conditions in Britain were virtually the exact opposite of those Lenin had described. Firstly, although the British working class has a tremendous record of trade union struggles, there is absolutely no modern tradition of mass *revolutionary struggle*. There is no British equivalent of the 1848 Revolution in France or the Paris Commune, of the German revolution of 1918-23, of the factory occupations of Italy of 1920, or of the Spanish revolution and civil war, let alone of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. Secondly, British socialism was marked by an absence of any serious *Marxist theory*. Far from, in Lenin's words, 'following with the utmost diligence and thoroughness each and every "last word" in this sphere in Europe and America' the veteran Trotskyist Harry Wicks expressed the situation perfectly accurately when writing of the early British Communist Party:

'The British movement as a whole for generations was devoid of theory, one could almost say contemptuous of it. What Deutscher termed the "classical Marxism", those debates that occupied Social Democracy before 1914, scarcely found an echo in this country.' (3)

Finally, in contrast to the Bolsheviks' 'wealth of international links and excellent information on the forms and theories of the world revolutionary movement such as no other country possessed' (2), the British labour movement was *insular* and shut off from these *international connections* and developments. While in Europe the Pole Rosa Luxemburg polemicised with the Frenchman Millerand on reform and revolution; the Russian Plekhanov denounced the German Bernstein on philosophy and politics; and the Austrian Adler was attacked by the Russian Lenin on the national question; in Britain many of these discussions were considered 'hot air' to

be left to 'theoreticians' while British revolutionaries got down to 'bread and butter practical issues'. (4)

This great political underdevelopment of the British working class and British Marxists is not a reflection of the inferiority of the inhabitants of this island, but a product of the historical strength of British imperialism — a strength which in the nineteenth century kept the British working class under the domination of liberalism; and in the twentieth created the hegemony of the consistently reformist Labour Party. This political underdevelopment could not but deeply affect the development of Marxism in Britain. Marx himself pointed out:

'The development of socialist sectarianism and that of the real working class movement always stand in inverse ratio to each other.' (5)

The counterpart of the great political underdevelopment of the mass working class movement in Britain was the ultra-sectarian and nationalist characteristics of those weak revolutionary and Marxist currents which did develop. (6)

Under these conditions of national insularity, sectarianism, and theoretical backwardness, it is not accidental that the most developed theoretical and political expression of the interests of the working class, Trotskyism, developed with extremely thin roots in British society. Trotskyism did not at all emerge even out of the core of the Communist Party—let alone the core of the working class movement. (7)

Roots of British Trotskyism

THE EFFECTS of this backwardness could not be overcome simply by adopting the label and formal political positions of Trotskyism. Historical materialism does not stop at the door of the revolutionary organisation with everything inside determined purely by theory and ideology. The founders of the British Trotskyist movement undoubtedly came to their positions not merely because of

British, but also international, developments of Stalin's policies. (8) Nevertheless how little had been absorbed of Lenin's conclusions on how to build a revolutionary party can be seen by this extraordinary estimate by one of the founders of British Trotskyism of the relation between the 'Balham Group', the founders of the Trotskyist movement in this country, and international Trotskyism:

'Instead of clearing away political lumber and its jargon, the pronouncements of the International Left Opposition (LO) merely added to it... As the British section LO we were invited to send someone to an enlarged meeting of the LO International Secretariat, to be held from 4 to 8 February 1933, in Paris. On 30 January, Hitler had been appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Hindenburg, and it was felt that we ought to send someone to the meeting. A reluctant delegate, I travelled to Paris, and sat through complex, heavily jargonised discussions in French and German, with someone whispering occasional explanations in English... That evening, walking through the streets of Paris with an aching head and jaded spirits, I saw newspapers being sold on the streets, the news vendors carrying placards — "250,000 à Hyde Park". So the movement was on the mend, and even officialdom had been pushed into making an impressive show of strength — indeed within 12 months the government would be in startled retreat. There was a revival, renewal of struggle, but to what end? So that the working people could be sold out by shallow-pated Labour careerists, or duped by Stalinism? There was, too, something unreal even in retrospect about the LO conference solemnly pronouncing on the controversies of the Comintern, and even earlier ones of Russian Social-democracy. Hitler and the Nazis stood on the threshold of total power. Surely there could be no true renovation of socialist ideas, or renewal of the forces and spirit of rebellion and resistance, in those old, obscure contentions, argued out again in the thick accents of a now degenerate communism.' (9)

To understand just how extraordinary this text is, it is necessary to assess the Trotskyist movement at that time. It was led by one of the founders of the Soviet State, Trotsky's closest collaborators were nationally, and in some cases internationally, known leaders of the working class. The events which the Left Opposition discussed were the greatest in the world — the defeat in Germany, the French Popular Front, the Spanish Civil War. Absolutely no political writings in the entire world in the 1930's were on a level even remotely comparable to those Trotsky developed for the Fourth International. Yet British Trotskyists could find in these developments only ridiculous 'solemn pronouncements on the controversies of the Comintern' and the 'thick accents of a now degenerate communism'. The events which centred their attention were not the gigantic struggles of Spain, Germany and France, but demonstrations against unemployment in Britain. While Lenin stressed the 'last word' in international experience and revolutionary theory British Trotskyism was fixated on Hyde Park.

Hand in hand with the national insularity of Trotskyism in Britain went the sectarianism. While Trotsky had refused a split with the Communist International over its betrayal of the British General Strike and the Chinese Revolution, and was later to reject the idea of a split in the American Socialist Workers Party even over the issue of the class character of the Soviet state itself, British Trotskyism right from the beginning commenced the long series of splits over tactical questions which have marked its course ever since. The very first split in a British Trotskyist organisation, over the tactical question of whether or not to enter the Independent Labour Party, occurred within 18 months of the organised foundation of British Trotskyism. (10) The 1938 founding congress of the Fourth International, then personally led by Trotsky, could note that:

'For a long time the adherents of the Fourth International in Great Britain have been divided into small separate groups... This light minded attitude on the organisational question led not only to ill-considered splits

over tactical differences but even to splits over purely personal disputes having no discernible political base.' (11)

By June 1940: 'no less than four groups claiming adherence to the Fourth International exist outside the ranks of our official section in Great Britain'. (12)

Fundamental

These splits took place on the national sectarian basis of subordinating the fundamental interests of the proletariat to various tactical disagreements — expressed in an organisational form in splits over various questions of national tactics. For once Healy himself is quite correct in characterising what was the attitude of the particular organisation to which he belonged:

'Shortly before the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938 the Workers' International League (WIL) opposed the unification of British Trotskyists on the tactical grounds that it was necessary to discuss our attitude towards entry into the Labour Party before unification could be achieved. This was a serious mistake which had at its roots a rejection of international responsibilities in favour of a nationalist approach.' (13)

The founding conference of the Fourth International was quite clear in its political characterisation of the WIL:

'The invitation of the International Secretariat delegate to this group to be represented (at the founding Congress) and present its point of view at the world conference, either by delegate or letter, was disregarded; all we have is a statement, apparently addressed to the world at large, rejecting in advance any decision of the world conference hot in accord with their untenable demands.

'Under these circumstances it is necessary to warn the comrades associated with the Lee group that they are being led on a path of unprincipled clique politics which can only land them in the mire. It is possible to maintain and develop a revolutionary political grouping only on the basis of great principles... It is possible for a national group to maintain a constant revolutionary course only if it is firmly connected in one organisation with co-thinkers throughout the world and maintains a constant political and theoretical collaboration with them. The Fourth International alone is such an organisation. All purely national groupings, all those who reject international organisation, control, and discipline, are in their essence reactionary.' (14)

These words could have been written as an epitaph to the later degeneration of two thirds of British Trotskyist groups.

Rise of Gerry Healy

AGAINST THIS appalling background of national insularity, sectarianism, and political backwardness the Healy current developed. Gerry Healy apparently joined the British Trotskyist movement in summer 1937. (15) At that time the main organisation of British Trotskyists was the Militant Group. This consisted both of British Trotskyists and a group of South African Trotskyists led at that time by Ralph Lee. This latter group became the subject of various slanderous attacks by Stalinists, which the leadership of the Militant Group mishandled, and in December 1937 a group of members including Lee, Jock Haston, Ted Grant and Gerry Healy split to form the organisation which later became the Workers International League (WIL). Healy played no leading role in

this split — although he was involved in an extremely unpleasant episode in which he felt it necessary to deny that he had declared that various political opponents would give information to the police. Although the circumstances surrounding the split of the Lee group were extremely obscure they were in fact rooted in differences regarding the policy of entry into the Labour Party.

During most of the period following the founding of the Fourth International in 1938, and during most of the period of the Second World War, the WIL maintained its independence from other Trotskyist forces. It also rejected membership of the Fourth International. The Militant Group and various other smaller forces had meanwhile unified into the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL). The chief difference of tactics between the two organisations was that of entryism into the Labour Party.

The RSL advocated a policy of entry. This was entirely correct in the late 1930's and rapidly became so again following the formation of the 1945 Labour Government. During the actual war years, however, it was wrong. The Labour Party was part of a coalition government with the Tories which was pursuing an imperialist war and savagely attacking the working class. Far from being attracted into this Party workers were, in these conditions, repelled from it — individual membership of the Party, even on paper, fell from 409,000 in 1939 to 266,000 in 1944. Although holding a general strategy, that of entryism, which was correct for the period of the 1930's and most of the 1940's, the RSL failed to grasp the needs of the particular specific situation, and the tactics which flowed from them, and remained extremely weak.

The WIL however, although sectarian to the core and holding quite false estimates of the general political situation, nevertheless was led by its very sectarianism and wild overestimation of the situation to an essentially correct tactical position — to do fraction work in the Labour Party but to concentrate on building an external public organisation. In consequence of this correct tactic, the WIL grew rapidly while the RSL stagnated.

In March 1944, under the impact of these developments, the RSL and the WIL fused to form the Revolutionary Communist Party. The WIL recognised its error in not joining the Fourth International and corrected this by fusing with the official section, the RSL. The RSL, in practice, came over to the more correct tactic of the WIL as in a fused organisation the WIL, with 52 delegates to 17 at the founding of the RCP, was bound to have a majority on tactical issues.

It was also at this time in the mid-1940's that the Healy current as a specific formation came into existence. Its exact origins are not clear — Healy claims it was over recognition that the WIL had made a grave political mistake in refusing to join the Fourth International. (16) Whatever the exact motivation for its formation, the Healy current came rapidly to stand for one clear and distinctive thing — it supported and called for a policy of entry into the Labour Party. As the war ended, and international links between Trotskyists became re-established, this policy of Healy was endorsed by both the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, whose General Secretary at that time was Michel Pablo, and by the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, whose National Secretary was James P. Cannon.

At the same time as the main leaders of the Fourth International supported the policy of entry into the Labour Party Healy absorbed at least some of the lessons of the international class struggle and the international Trotskyist movement. Above all he learned from the SWP. Cannon's *History of American Trotskyism* and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* were the basic 'textbooks' of the Healy current. It was from these that Healy absorbed both Cannon's experience of the American workers movement, and involvement with the Communist International, and the flexible tactics for building the Party which the SWP leadership had carried out with the collaboration

of Trotsky in the 1930's. Compared to the inveterate sectarianism and dogmatism of the early British Trotskyists, the necessity for concrete analysis and organisational flexibility utilised by the SWP in its successful propaganda struggle with the Communist Party of 1929-33, its participation in the leadership of the mass Minneapolis strikes of 1934, its fusion with the Musteite American Workers Party in December of that year and its entry into the Socialist Party in 1936 and then its turn to open work again, were a blinding revelation in British revolutionary politics — and they remain a magnificent school to this day. This experience was insufficient and one sided and should have been supplemented by an understanding of the European and colonial class struggle, but for a British Trotskyist leader to have seriously absorbed the experience and lessons of even one other country in the world was, in the 1940's, a decisive step forward. (17) In particular it was an incalculable advance on the insularity, chauvinism and philistinism of the leading circles of the RCP.

By the late 1940's, therefore, the Healy current was clearly demarcated within British Trotskyism on two decisive criteria — its advocacy of a break with sectarianism and entry into the Labour Party and its absorption of the lessons of, and close ties with, the Fourth International. A new force had developed.

The first clear demonstration of the superiority of the Healy current's links with international experience over the national insularity of the Haston group and traditional British Trotskyism came precisely over the very Labour Party question which Healy made the touchstone of his political line in the late 1940's. The relation between open work and entryism had always been the most vexed of all questions among British Trotskyists because it clearly involved, in particular in the rapid shifts often necessary between the two types of work, a clear break with sectarianism. (18) Instead of the revolutionary standpoint of firmness in principles and the utmost flexibility in tactics the British Trotskyists thundered along on one tactic or shibboleth or another. They gained temporary success in the moment when that tactic was particularly appropriate and then fell into decline the moment it was no longer apt. (19) What a contrast to this record of sectarian bankruptcy Healy was able to find in the experience of the SWP!

THE CORRECTNESS of the orientation of the Healy current towards the Labour Party, and the correctness of the position taken by the leadership of the Fourth International on this, was rapidly revealed in the developments of the late 1940's: While the 'open' RCP stagnated and declined, individual membership of the Labour Party leapt from 266,000 in 1944 to 645,000 in 1946, to 730,000 in 1949. However, despite the arguments of Healy and the International leadership the RCP majority refused to change course and orient towards entry into the Labour Party — a more sectarian and bankrupt refusal to face reality has seldom been seen. In 1947 confronted with this refusal of the Haston leadership of the RCP to change course, the International took a disastrous decision. In a reversion back to the very worst principles of splits over tactical decisions which had crippled pre-war British Trotskyism, the International leadership intervened to split the RCP and allow Healy's current to enter the Labour Party. Only eighteen months after the split the RCP majority recognised that they had been wrong on the question of the Labour Party and came over to the policy of entryism. By then, however, the damage had been done. Relations between the majority of the Trotskyist cadres who had remained in the RCP and the Healy group had become even more poisoned than the already factional atmosphere of the RCP. When the reunification took place, Healy demanded, and got, a majority on the leading bodies of the fused organisation, even though he was in a minority in the section. This impossible situation was then rapidly 'resolved' with Healy's expulsion of the supporters of Tony Cliff and Ted Grant. Not merely were many valuable militants demoralised and lost in the process but a splintering of

the forces of British Trotskyism was started which was to continue right up to the present.

Although the long term consequences of this decision of 1947 were to be disastrous, in the short term they allowed Healy to demonstrate the superiority of his political line over any other proposed at that time. Although by 1949 even the RCP majority had abandoned its line and turned to entry inside the Labour Party this in itself by no means exhausted the issue of what political line to take. Above all what had to be decided was what *practical* attitude to take towards the developments in the Labour Party and the left wing that was developing there.

The RCP majority of course had its own answer to this problem. Both their own sectarianism and a mechanical analogy with the experience of international Trotskyism in the 1930's led them to the answer which Pablo was later to correctly describe:

... this tactic (the pre-war entry one) had a rather ephemeral character, of short duration, and with limited objectives. What was involved was to enter these parties (the mass reformist parties), to profit from their temporary left turn, to recruit members or to court certain thin leftist currents which were developing there, and to get out... The entire conception of carrying out the entry and the work inside these parties was dominated by this perspective.' (20)

The type of entry which flowed from this approach was the refusal to engage in joint collaboration and publications with the left social democratic and centrist forces, a propagandist commentary on centrist developments and a wariness of alliances. In the case of Britain this had been compounded by the natural sectarianism of the Trotskyist groups involved. All the experiences on entryism previously were of that type.

The trouble was that by the late 1940's and early 1950's this model 'did not fit at all'. The left wing currents which developed in the Labour Party were gigantic in relation to the Trotskyist forces. Furthermore, far from being 'thin and shortlived', the general development of the left in the Labour Party showed every sign of being prolonged and wide. With the temporary exception of 1956-58, it was not until the mid-1960's that the left of the Labour Party ceased to be the political focus of the working class and the chief source of recruits for the Trotskyist movement. In these circumstances what was required was not at all the type of entry pursued before the war, but a real penetration into these left social democratic and centrist currents with the aim of becoming a real organising centre for them. Without this the Trotskyist forces would remain simply ineffectual commentators and *in practice* leave the workers in the hands of the reformists. As the resolution of the Tenth Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International in 1952 put it:

'We are not entering these parties in order to come out of them soon. We are entering them in order to remain there for a long time banking on the great possibility which exists of seeing these parties, placed under new conditions, develop centrist tendencies which will lead a whole stage of radicalisation of the masses and of the objective revolutionary processes in their respective countries. *We wish in reality from the inside of these tendencies to amplify and accelerate their left centrist ripening and to contest even with the centrist leaders for the entire leadership of these tendencies.*' (21) *My emphasis - AJ.

While this orientation was undoubtedly based on quite wrong short term economic and political perspectives, in particular the 'War Revolution Thesis', and was later to be developed by some of Pablo's followers into outright liquidation of the Trotskyist forces, nevertheless, this general orientation gave a correct answer to the necessary tactics towards the British Labour Party at that time. Its conclusions were supported by the SWP and by Healy as well as by the European Trotskyist leadership. Most of all it gave a correct orientation to Bevanism as something which could not be skipped over or gone round, but as something which revolutionaries had to plunge into

with their full forces. As the Tenth Plenum of the IEC put it:

'Bevanism, varying in scale from one country to another, is an inevitable phenomenon of the present conjuncture... Bevanism polarises the discontent of the masses... and will retain it within the framework of these organisations (the social democratic parties)... Just when and how Bevanism will be by-passed and a genuinely revolutionary tendency and leadership having a mass base will be created we cannot say at present with exactitude. *What is certain is that it will first be necessary to go through the experience by penetrating it and helping it from the inside to develop its last resources and consequences.*' (22) *My emphasis - AJ.

In order to carry out the necessary tactics a complete break with the sectarianism of British Trotskyism had to be made. It was on this basis that the real differences between Healy and the other currents from the RCP emerged in the early 1950's. Healy himself abandoned Trotskyism in 1949, but the ex-members of his majority, Ted Grant and Tony Cliff, who later founded respectively the Militant current and the International Socialists, remained fully active and gradually came round to the policy of entryism in the Labour Party. As events were to show, however, they had not at all broken with the national sectarian concepts of British Trotskyism. The Cliff group went on, after their utterly bureaucratic expulsion by Healy, to form a newspaper *Socialist Review* which continued the old tradition of the 'independent' Trotskyist journal. It, and the organisation which produced it, remained, not surprisingly in the circumstances, without significant influence. The Grant group, after a period of wild syndicalism, settled down to producing the standard sectarian paper *The Militant* which continues to this day.

Healy however had a wholly different experience which he could draw on. He was well aware of the extreme organisational flexibility which, in sharp contrast to the British groups, the SWP had shown — producing a three times a week paper in some circumstances, abandoning their own paper altogether in others, joining the Socialist Party as individuals, offering organisational compromises to get a fusion with the centrists etc. Drawing on this experience, Healy was able to break radically with the sectarianism of the RCP in line with the perspectives of the International, and plunge into creating an organising and political centre for the developing left wing of the Labour Party.

The instrument which above all embodied the break with sectarianism carried out by Healy in this period was the paper *Socialist Outlook* which his current created on their entry into the Labour Party. While Cliff's *Socialist Review* for example stood on the edges of the movement in a sectarian fashion, and in effect simply commented on it, Healy launched right into a policy of collaboration with left social democrats and centrists. Issues of the paper included headlines such as 'Bevan Gives the Lead that Workers Want: Socialist Planning is the only Answer' and 'Left must press the Offensive'. (23) Elements such as Bessie Braddock, then a 'left' figure, wrote articles for the paper. While undoubted errors were committed nevertheless, and in contrast to the sectarianism of the other currents of British Trotskyism, Healy's essential line and tactics were vindicated. Around issues such as the defence of the Health Service, German re-armament, the Korean war, and all the other issues of Bevanism, the Healy group acquired real impact. Real influence was gained in particular in the Labour League of Youth. By the end of the first four years of the 1950's Healy, through an absorption of some of the lessons of international class struggle and party building, and through a radical break with previous sectarian traditions of British Trotskyism, had succeeded in building an organisation which not merely completely outstripped all its rivals which had emerged from the RCP but which had an influence and significance qualitatively greater than anything which had hitherto been achieved by a Trotskyist

organisation in Britain. It could not have been achieved through a different tactic. It was also in this period, in his non-sectarian tactics and a clear line of solidarity with the North in the Korean war against the anti-communism of the Cliff group, that he laid the conditions for the next decisive step forward — the wide recruitment from the Communist Party following the crisis of that organisation in 1956.

THE WAY in which Healy plunged into the crisis of the Communist Party in 1956 was another confirmation that at this time his current, which was still working closely with the SWP following the split in the Fourth International, had still absorbed what it had learned from the SWP and the International. The theoretical journal *Labour Review*, which was the Healy group's initial chief theoretical instrument for intervening to win over the ex-CPers, had a wide range of contributors. Its March-April 1957 issue stated its aims quite clearly:

'We do want, however, to emphasise that *Labour Review* is not a sectional Trotskyist journal. We wish to make it the main journal for conducting the principled discussion of every aspect of revolutionary theory... Our columns are open to all who wish to put a point of view on how Marxist science is to be enriched.' (24)

Furthermore, *Labour Review* did welcome the whole range of political views in its columns. Isaac Deutscher was a contributor. Brian Pearce wrote outstanding articles on the early history of the Communist Party and the history of Bolshevism. Tom Kemp wrote a fine reasoned article on the class nature of the Soviet Union. Cliff Slaughter at that time was acknowledging the importance of Gramsci and even Lukacs. Even twenty years later many of the articles of this period could be reprinted with profit. *Labour Review* stands as one of the high points of a theoretical journal in Britain to date, which still has to be fully appropriated for the Trotskyist movement in Britain. It achieved its eminence because, in exactly the same way that *Socialist Outlook* had gone out in a non-sectarian way to be a real organising centre for the Bevanite milieu, so *Labour Review* set out to organise and hegemonise a whole layer breaking from the Communist Party after 1956. Nothing less like the shrill ranting monologues of latter day Healyism could be imagined.

At the same time that *Labour Review* developed as a non-sectarian organising centre for various layers breaking from Stalinism around important theoretical questions, Healy also helped found, in May 1957, *The Newsletter*. With its first editor, Peter Fryer, the ex-correspondent of the Communist Party in Hungary who had broken with the Party over his support for the Hungarian Revolution, this was a non-sectarian newspaper with particular emphasis on trade union struggles. Linked to the trade union cadres recruited from the Communist Party it came to reflect the major intervention of the Healy current into important industrial struggles in 1956-59 — in particular the London busmen's strike and a number of important building strikes. Through this activity *The Newsletter* was able to call an industrial conference in November 1958 which was attended by over 600 militants. This was followed up by a number of good pamphlets and a second conference the next year.

In retrospect it can be seen that the period 1956-59 was a crucial one in Healy's development. He was still working with the SWP (Novack's famous essay on uneven and combined development (24) was written because Healy was scared by the type of conceptions the ex-Stalinist intellectuals were bringing into his organisation) but by now the ties were much weaker. Under the conditions of the terrible retreat of the American working class in the 1950's the SWP was undergoing the decline in membership which was to last until the early 1960's. Furthermore the American government had banned the SWP leaders from travelling abroad. Simultaneously with the decline in direct influence and weight of the SWP, the split of the International in 1953 had removed Healy from the

direct influence of the European leadership of the International. As for the 'International Committee' itself, which the SWP, Healy, Lambert, Peng and others had created in 1953, it scarcely existed at all by 1956-57. (25) Finally Healy, showing a clear sectarianism in contrast to 1953-54, when he had been most opposed to a split, was in sharp disagreement with the SWP moves in 1957 to reunify the International. This was undoubtedly connected with the fact that Healy both drastically overestimated his own possibilities in Britain and furthermore had by now no intention of letting any opposition whatsoever develop within his own organisation — a reunification of the International would have meant a fusion with other Trotskyist organisations in Britain. Undergoing a relatively rapid development of his own forces, seeing his main international collaborator in decline, and with the International Committee in practice non-existent, Healy began to break with the two great political assets, ties to the International and non-sectarianism in orientation, which had brought him from utter obscurity in the RCP and WIL to the position of the dominant revolutionary current in Britain. Instead Healy fell back on his own resources and the few Marxist intellectuals and theoreticians he had recruited from the CP. As Healy himself put it to the SWP:

'In 1957 when the SWP claimed differences (with the International Secretariat) were growing less, we were undergoing an important theoretical development.' (26)

The results of that 'theoretical development' were to bring Healy to his present state!

ALTHOUGH FROM 1956-57 onwards the Healy current was clearly beginning to develop away from the strengths which had brought it its early successes, it was shortly after this that the massive desertion of cadres which marked the first stage of the open degeneration of Healyism was to start. However, the utter sectarianism of later years did not commence immediately — that was to begin in the 1960's with the final break with the SWP and the Fourth International. In particular the Healy current, which had organised itself as the Socialist Labour League at Whitsun 1959, oriented itself, after the crisis in the Communist Party, to the rising campaign against nuclear weapons.

Already in 1957 the Norwood resolution to the Labour Party Conference, which had been a key event in stimulating the unilateral disarmament movement, had been moved by a Healy group member, V. Mendelson. Peter Fryer's 1958 pamphlet *Black the H-Bomb* called for the Summit Conference to be opened to the representatives of all nations and for the extension of the Rapacki plan for a nuclear-free zone to the whole world. (27) All this was codified in the more or less correct analysis made at the 1960 SLL conference that:

'The CND movement is an indirect reflection of the growth of the class struggle in the ranks of the professional and middle classes. A considerable portion of its membership consists of young people, who find the policies of the reformists and stalinists repulsive. They are looking for a lead in the fight against the war and their membership of the CND is their first step in this direction. The SLL must retain friendly relations with this stratum of the population.' (28)

It was the last non-sectarian and correct campaign the Healy current was to participate in — the gains in the LPYS in 1962-64 were rapidly lost in an orgy of sectarianism. Within three years the SLL had split definitively with the SWP and the international ties which had been its mainstay. The next time it was to encounter a major political campaign, in the rise of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, everything which it had once learned in *Socialist Outlook*, *Labour Review* and the crisis in the Communist Party, and the CND had been forgotten. Instead of its previous orientation the SLL was to announce to the world that the VSC and the people who led it, and who got 100,000 people out onto the streets of London in solidarity with the NLF were:

... not just left groupings, but a definite middle class diversion of the proletarian struggle and the fight for Marxism. They now appear openly as the advocates of anti-theory, anti-programme, trying to bring together all kinds of middle class elements, particularly students, as a substitute for the revolutionary organisation of the working class.' (29)

Another seven years on and Healy was to discover that Hansen and Novack, the two people apart from Cannon who were his political mentors, were 'accomplices of the GPU'. How far Healy had travelled from his origins! The current which had developed itself as the healthiest in British Trotskyism

on the basis of its absorption of international lessons and non-sectarian orientation had descended into the most disgusting of all national sects.

But not everything that Healy did was water down the drain. Not merely does his present degeneration stand as an excellent reminder of the road of 'national Trotskyism' but the early years of the Healy current show what can be achieved by a Trotskyist organisation in Britain which is really linked to an understanding of the development of the international movement. The decline from that early achievement is the story of the degeneration of Healyism.

Footnotes

(1) Resolution on Britain of the Founding Congress of the Fourth International.

(2) Lenin — *Collected Works* Vol. 31, p25.

(3) H. Wicks — *British Trotskyism in the Thirties in International* Vol. 1 no. 4.

(4) History has of course already given its verdict as to whether the really practical people in building a mass revolutionary working class party were the 'bread and butter' men of Britain or those obsessed with revolutionary struggle, Marxist theory, and international connections such as Lenin.

(5) Marx to F. Bolte, 23 November 1871.

(6) The sectarianisation and national insularity of British 'Marxist' organisations developed right from the beginning of the revolutionary socialist movement in Britain. Already by 1894, in describing the first Marxist current in Britain, Engels could write:

'The Social Democratic Federation ... has managed to transform our theory into the rigid dogma of an orthodox sect; it is narrow minded exclusive and thanks to Hyndman (its leader) has a thoroughly rotten tradition in international politics.' (Engels to Sorge, 10 November 1894).

These traditions of nationalism and sectarianism were carried over into the early British Communist Party. It took the personal intervention of Lenin to persuade the CP to apply to affiliate to the Labour Party. It was largely the determined intervention of the Russian Communists which succeeded in persuading the Party to reject the proposal to refuse on principle to participate in Parliamentary elections. As for its national insularity, even the official Communist Party historian Klugman cannot make out a serious case that the CP carried out a major campaign of solidarity with the war of independence in Ireland which was raging throughout the period of the CP's formation.

(7) In most countries, even leaving aside the overwhelming case of Russia, the original Trotskyist forces were founded out of the absolute central core of the proletarian leadership. In France, Alfred Rosmer was one of the leaders of French Syndicalism and then a delegate of the French Communist Party to the Executive Committee of the Communist International; in the United States, James P. Cannon was one of the three chief leaders of the Communist Party and a delegate to the Congresses of the Comintern; in Spain, Andres Nin had been one of the top leaders of the CNT, a founding member of the Communist Party, and the secretary of the Red International of Labour Unions; in Greece, Pantelis Pouliopoulos had been the secretary of the Communist Party; in China, Chen Tu-hsiu had been the secretary of the CP. In Britain, however, the roots and tradition of revolutionary Marxism were so weak that not a single one of the central leadership of the Communist Party came over to Trotskyism. The British Trotskyist movement was formed from heroic militants but ones who were, at best, in the local leadership of the CP. They would have been the first to have ridiculed the idea that they represented the continuity of the historically created leadership of the working class in a way that Nin, Rosmer, Cannon, or Pouliopoulos, let alone Trotsky and Rakovsky, did.

In fact so weak were the traditions from which British Trotskyism emerged, itself reflecting the political backwardness of the labour movement, that most of the major leaders of Trotskyism in Britain came to Britain from other countries. The Lee-Haston-Grant group which dominated the RCP were Trotskyists from South Africa. Tony Cliff is from Palestine. Even Healy had his roots in Ireland, although he was won to Trotskyism in Britain. It is a sad comment on the tradition of the far left in Britain that it could not even rise to the level of producing home-grown sectarians. Internationalism is the precondition of building anything remotely resembling a Trotskyist group — even if it is just at the level of personal ties.

(8) Reg Groves, one of the founders of British Trotskyism, writes:

'Events in Spain and Germany in 1930-32 ... together with changes taking place in the British Party, convinced us in the end that the disarray of the British Party was no mere national peculiarity.' (Groves — *Against the Stream in International Socialism* no. 54).

(9) *Ibid.*

(10) H. Wicks — *op cit.*

(11) *Documents of the Fourth International 1933-40* p 268.

(12) *Ibid* p 359.

(13) Healy — *Problems of the Fourth International in Trotskyism versus Revisionism* Vol. 4, p 273.

(14) *Documents of the Fourth International 1933-40* p 270.

(15) See M and J Archer — *Notes on Healy's Role in the Early Days of the British Trotskyist Movement in International Press* 10 May 1976.

(16) Healy — *op cit.*

(17) Healy never attempted to conceal his debt to the SWP. He accurately wrote in 1953 to Cannon:

'We educated ourselves from your history. This not only served us well in the big fight with Haston, but continues to assist us all the time.' (Healy to Cannon, 21 June 1953). Even as late as 1961 Healy was prepared to admit:

'It is well known internationally that the Socialist Labour League (the predecessor of the WRP) is deeply indebted to the great and constant political assistance given it in the past by the Socialist Workers Party.' (Letter of the National Committee of the SLL to the National Committee of the SWP, 2 January 1961).

This was of course in the days before Healy 'discovered' that the chief leaders of the SWP were, or at least were infiltrated by, 'accomplices of the GPU'!

(18) Already in 1933 Trotsky had attacked the first British Trotskyist group for its sectarian refusal to enter the ILP — they had instead counterposed retaining the majority of their forces outside and therefore in practice merely orienting to winning over a thin layer through an 'open' paper. (See Trotsky — *The Lever of a Small Group in Writings 1932-33*, p125). Then in 1936 Trotsky had to wage a struggle against those who wanted to remain within the ILP when that organisation was clearly in decline and refused to enter the Labour Party. (See Trotsky — *Interview by Collins in Writings 1935-36* (First Edition, p 76). Finally during the war, as we have seen, the forces of the RSL refused to see the necessity for a clear turn to the building of an open organisation, while in the post war period the majority of the RCP refused to orient to entry in the Labour Party.

(19) This pattern has continued right up until today. Apart from the one period when Healy broke with this nonsense — for example in the policy of entry in the early 1950s, the turn to the Communist Party in 1956-58, the turn to industrial struggles in 1958-60 and the turn to the LPYS in the early 1960s — each of the groups rose and fell with its particular tactic (e.g. as it favoured entry the RSL would quite probably have overtaken the WIL again in the post war period). In general commitment to the 'strategy' of entryism or the open party or whatever is justified by selective quotation of one period of Trotsky's advice in the 1930s — for example entryism is almost always justified in terms of his interview with Collins. This completely misses the point that the hallmark of Trotsky's policy was its extreme flexibility — for an orientation to the CP in the early period, for entry in the ILP in the mid 1930s, for a turn to the Labour Party in the late 1930s etc. Absurd timeless formulae such as 'we must be with the masses therefore we must enter the Labour Party' were the complete opposite of Trotsky's method. In 1933 for example, Trotsky was for entry in the ILP, because that was where the most advanced workers were to be found at that time, and not for entry in the Labour Party despite the fact that the ILP was not at all an organisation of the masses.

(20) Pablo — Report to Tenth Plenum at the IEC (1952).

(21) *Ibid.*

(22) *Ibid.*

(23) Cited in Martin Cook — *The Myth of Orthodox Trotskyism*, p21.

(24) Cited in D. Hallas — *Building the Leadership in International Socialism*, no. 40.

(25) For a description of conditions in the International Committee in 1956-57 by a leading participant see Peng — *On the Suggestions and Proposals on the Unity of the World Movement in Trotskyism versus Revisionism* Vol. 3.

(26) Minutes of the NEC of the Socialist Labour League, 3 February 1962.

(27) Cited Cook — *The Myth of Orthodox Trotskyism*, p 21.

(28) Resolution on British Perspectives of the Second Conference of the SLL, June 1960.

(29) May 1968 Perspectives Resolution of the SLL.

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