

TROTSKYISM TODAY ★

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■ BRITISH
PERSPECTIVES OF
THE WORKERS
SOCIALIST LEAGUE

■ THE POISONED
WELL

■ THE SPARTACIST
SCHOOL OF
INVENTION

■ TURKEY: THE
BACKGROUND TO
TODAY'S CRISIS



TROTSKYISM

TODAY

**quarterly journal of the
Workers Socialist
League**

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EDITORIAL

Sack Callaghan to defeat the Tories

Prime Minister Callaghan intends to stomp the country from now until the General Election campaigning for a fourth phase of rigid wage control—with increases no more than 5%—followed by permanent pay limits. This was made abundantly clear in his arrogant, provocative speech to bureaucrats of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions conference at the end of June. Callaghan declared not only that there would be a Phase 4, but also that he had no intention of seeking prior agreement with the TUC on his proposed figure. In other words, as with the Phase 3 10% limit, the government has decided simply to throw down the gauntlet to the TUC bureaucracy knowing full well that these union leaders are so eager to assist the employers to pull through their crisis and so scared of the strength of their own members that they will do nothing to challenge a pay ceiling.

True to form, the Confed. leaders did nothing to challenge this high-handed display by Callaghan. The press next day described official union reaction as "guardedly favourable".

There can be no doubt that if Callaghan is allowed to carry out this policy it can only bring fresh setbacks to the workers' movement.

Callaghan's latest plan for further wage control, combined with the whole treacherous record of Labour in government which in four years has thrown 1½ million out of work and inflicted historic cuts in working class living

standards, may well be sufficient to alienate further working class Labour voters and bring the return of the Tories under Thatcher's right wing leadership.

But even if Labour were to scrape a majority in a General Election, the Callaghan cabinet would regard this victory as a mandate to crack down with renewed viciousness on any section of workers that defied the pay policy and fought to defend their living standards. The Lib-Lab coalition may be about to expire but its central policy—wage control—is far from dead.

The decision in May by Liberal leader David Steel to break the anti-socialist Lib-Lab pact stems from his belief that an October General Election is all but certain, and his anxiety to salvage what remains of the Liberal Party's electoral support prior to that date. For the second string capitalists in the Liberal Party and the reactionary leaders of the Labour Party the 14-month coalition arrangement has already fulfilled its purpose:

*It propped up the minority Labour government through a period when strike action threatened to overthrow Phase 2 of wage control.

*It provided Healey with solid support drawn from outside the labour movement in laying down his Phase 3 ultimatum to the TUC traitors.

*It gave the Callaghan government the confidence to carry through a military scabbing operation unprecedented since the 1926 General Strike to crush the Firemen's strike.

*It has pressured even the most talkative Labour 'lefts' into abandoning even the pretence that the government stands for a socialist programme.

There is every indication that, with the beginnings of an upturn in inflation, working class pressure on wages after the expiry of Phase 3 will unleash further mass struggles and further acts of treachery from Callaghan and the coalition cabinet. The question now posed starkly before every Labour Party member and trade unionist is how they must act to prevent Callaghan's planned sabotage. Nothing could be more dangerous than to stand back passively and allow the Labour right wing and their allies in the TUC bureaucracy to ride roughshod over the interests of the working class.

Those 'left' Labour MPs who have consistently taken this position, and tamely gone along with every reactionary government policy have created the opening for this latest move by Callaghan.

Headed by Cabinet 'left' Wedgwood Benn, the Tribune Group of MPs have trooped time and again like sheep into the government lobby to register support for mass unemployment, social service cuts, pay laws and attacks on democratic rights—each time arguing that the 'only alternative' was the return of a Tory government.

Those Labourites who follow Callaghan and Healey are quite wrong to interpret the recent renewed electoral support for Labour as a vote for their policies of wage cuts, mass unemployment and destruction of the social services. Workers have been turning out to vote Labour because they have come to feel that a Tory government would be even worse. It would mean a further intensification of racist propaganda and legislation, a new battery of laws against the unions, still more spending cuts to benefit big business and hundreds of thousands of jobs lost in a new round of speed-up and rationalisation in industry.

But now Callaghan has informed them that a renewed Labour government would mean permanent wage controls!

Workers have voted Labour because they recognise that Tory attacks would destroy jobs, rights and living standards won in decades of struggle. But the very fact that Callaghan-Healey intend to campaign in the election on their record as wage-cutters and job-slashers makes it clear

that it is by no means enough to sit back until October and vote Labour.

The Labour leaders themselves pose a major threat to living standards and basic rights. Acting in defence of British capitalism they have opened the door to the return of the Tories.

The way to fight and defeat the Tories is to advance the independent struggles of the working class. And this can only take place if a clear stand is taken at each point against the reactionary policies of the Labour leaders. The 'lefts' have demonstrated their refusal to take such a stand at *any point*—and in doing so they have contributed to demoralisation and cynicism among Labour supporters who want to fight the capitalist offensive. Callaghan and the right wing feed off such weakness.

They are counting on the traditionally low level of Labour Party activity during the summer period and the likely cancellation of this year's Party conference, in order to force through a thoroughly reactionary manifesto with rank and file members being denied even the pretence of a democratic voice. This strategy for betrayal must be fought throughout the workers' movement.

Every trade union branch, Labour Party ward and GMC must discuss these latest developments and pass resolutions demanding a full Labour Party conference be called prior to the General Election, at which delegates will have the opportunity to throw out Callaghan's proposed manifesto and the entire Lib-Lab cabinet. Local MPs must be forced to state their positions, and Callaghan's supporters removed from lists of candidates. It is on this issue and the fight in practice for a socialist programme based on abolition of wage controls, restoration of spending cuts, a programme of public works to create new jobs and nationalisation of the banks and major industries without compensation under workers' management that the Labour 'lefts' can be put to the test, and the illusions of a Parliamentary road to socialism which they peddle can be stamped out within the workers' movement.

As the 'lefts' are proved unable to challenge the right wing, the best layers of workers will recognise the necessity for a break from social democracy and the construction of a revolutionary leadership to take the working class to power.

July 3, 1978.

Our columns are open!

The last issue of *Trotskyism Today* carried a lengthy analysis entitled 'Aspects of the History of the Fourth International'. Our Editorial drew attention to the 40th Anniversary of the foundation of the Fourth International in 1938 and stressed the need to stimulate the widest discussion on its reconstruction. We offered to use the pages of this journal as a forum for such discussion.

This offer remains open. To further press the need for more thorough discussion of the historical problems of the FI, this issue carries the document written by the WSL in response to an invitation from the International Marxist Group and the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International for us — as non-members of the USFI — to submit material for discussion

within the USFI prior to its XIth World Congress next year.

This document, 'The Poisoned Well', attempts to show the necessity for a *historical* grasp of the problems of the post-war International if the current realignments and changes within the USFI and the confusion of other self-styled 'Trotskyist' groupings internationally are to be correctly understood.

It has been circulated to many of the left groups in Britain and internationally that claim the title 'Trotskyist'. In each case we have invited the group concerned to submit replies to us for publication. We reaffirm this invitation, and particularly urge the USFI's British section, the International Marxist Group, to declare publicly its position on this document and the problems of programme, principle and method that it raises.

Have you read it yet?

The essay *The Theory of Structural Assimilation* by Tim Wohlforth — until now virtually unobtainable — now republished with a commentary by Adam Westoby entitled *On Wohlforth's 'Theory of Structural Assimilation'*.



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In short, this book stands as a major step to reassert and develop the analytical method and programmatic principles of Trotskyism. It is essential reading.

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In defence of working class political independence

The following document, drafted in November 1977 and endorsed by the majority of the WSL National Committee early last December, was adopted as the British Perspectives document by the Second Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League in February 1978.

The Crisis

Without even denting the total of unemployed in the capitalist and colonial countries, the much-vaunted 'boom' that bourgeois economists thought had begun in 1976 has already run out of steam. A pointer to this is the way figures show a pull-back from long-term investment in the key US economy.

The dollar is weak on the international money markets; unemployment in the US remains at around the 7 percent mark; orders for new plant and machinery have not significantly increased; and the steel industry, ravaged by both international market anarchy and domestic crisis is imposing a whole series of lay-offs and plant closures to tackle the problem of unused capacity. The steel bosses, backed by the AFL-CIO union chiefs are among those leading the clamour in the US for protective measures against imports. This gives a clear indication that problems in the US economy must mean problems ahead also for Europe and Japan.

Indeed capitalism internationally is inflicting a new age of mass unemployment on the working class. The EEC has announced that the number of workers registered as unemployed throughout the EEC has reached 6 million. Even this vast figure is an underestimate. There are further millions of jobless in the rest of capitalist Europe, including probably 2 million in Spain and Portugal. Countless

millions of others in capitalist countries throughout the world are without a job.

The latest economic news makes it clear that there is no prospect of the problem of mass unemployment being solved by the capitalist system. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development held a conference in Paris at which its 'experts' produced figures to show that the rate of growth of capitalist economies was everywhere lagging far behind the predictions of a few months ago. And they showed an equally bleak prospect for the future. As the *Financial Times* said: "Failing any new expansionary measures, the OECD secretariat has painted a gloomy picture for 1978, involving lower growth of industrial production, a stagnation of investments, rising unemployment and a sharp decline in world trade which could lead to much greater protectionism".

"Protectionism" is the polite word for the trade war which is already raging between the major capitalist countries, desperately searching for a bigger share of the world's diminishing mass of profit. Although in general the frightened economic authorities of the capitalist world have stopped this trade war from taking the form of an increase in tariff and custom duties on trade, it is still there in the form of the increasing number of 'voluntary' restrictions on exports which the US in particular is trying to impose on a growing number of countries.

The textile industry in Latin America has already been stunted by these arm-twisting methods. And the British government, which has rejected the overt import controls demanded by Labour 'lefts' and Stalinists, has instead wrested 'voluntary' limitations from Hong Kong and Japan on such products as TVs and cars. Meanwhile the capitalist states are increasingly throwing around accusations against each other of 'dumping' (selling goods below the cost of production).

Committees of the US Congress are at present investigating accusations of dumping and demands for protection based on that and on other grounds against goods which account for *two thirds* of the exports from the EEC to the US. The chronic US payments deficit and the weakness of the dollar add to the pressure for increased protectionism.

This trade war has been highlighted by two recent events. The first was the announcement of the half-yearly financial figures for the British Steel Corporation. The loss for 6 months amounted to over £200 million. At the same time the Bethlehem Steel Company in the US, which is similar in scale of production to BSC, announced losses which were double this figure. But both British and US producers blamed the situation on cheap 'dumped' imports from Japan, and are threatening to step up protection against Japanese steel. The capitalists' answer to the crisis of this industry, which is simply reflecting the general crisis of the capitalist system, is to bargain with each other as to whether Japanese, American or British workers should be forced to shoulder the costs.

But as the trade war becomes more aggressive and sections of capitalists become more desperate we must remember that only a narrow dividing line separates trade war from physical war between capitalist states. The bourgeoisie is not in complete control of the situation. The result is international instability with the ever-present threat of war.

The complicity of the 'left' reformists in this international bartering of jobs is an indication of the complete bankruptcy of a nationalist approach to the crisis of capitalism. The working class, as an *international* class must be offered an independent programme to defend both against its 'own' national bourgeoisie and against imperialism. Attempts to enlist the working class in efforts to press for measures protecting their 'own' employers against 'foreign' competition must weaken and confuse the working class as well as dividing it along national lines. It is no coincidence that the same 'left' reformists who have thrown in their lot with the class collaborationist Lib-Lab coalition in Britain are also the ones calling loudest for import controls.

At the same time reformists both 'left' and right as well as the Stalinists have rallied to support the bourgeoisie in every capitalist country in its efforts to stem the fall in the rate of profit in domestic industry—the amount of profit in relation to capital invested.

Almost every capitalist government is now imposing or drawing up packages of 'austerity' measures designed to slash workers' living standards, cut government spending on social services that represent a drain on surplus value, and force through a new round of rationalisation in industry. *Socialist Press* has outlined such packages in Italy, France, Portugal and Spain, as well as the Social Contract in Britain.

The key in every instance to the implementation of these policies is the role played by the mass reformist and Stalinist leaderships in checking the resistance of a powerful and undefeated workers' movement. Hence the drive towards Popular Front and coalition forms of rule designed

to bind the working class to the requirements of capitalism in decline. Reformist and Stalinist leaders see two alternatives posed starkly before them: either they must collaborate to the full with the bourgeoisie and assist its efforts to extract additional surplus value from the working-class; or they must face the political consequences of a struggle *against* the bourgeoisie under conditions where the weakness of capitalism and the strength of the working class could immediately place the question of power on the agenda, jeopardising the whole balance of class forces upon which they rest as bureaucrats. In every instance these leaders have, predictably, each in their own way, rejected the second course and sought out ever closer working relations with their 'own' ruling class. This has brought a revival, under completely different objective conditions, of the treacherous strategy of the 'Popular Front' developed in the 1930s. In Britain the form taken by this class collaboration is the Lib-Lab coalition.

Economic Crisis in Britain

The crisis in Britain—with record numbers of unemployed, no prospect of an upturn, and inflation continuing in double figures, generally matches the world pattern. And even while bumper profit figures have been recorded in certain industries—particularly in the public sector—the *rate of profit* still lags behind the kind of figure demanded by the capitalist class.

In Britain, as internationally, it is around this key issue—the exploitation of workers for profit—that the main collision between the classes has been centred. The struggle by employers to impose rationalisation and speed-up and to increase the rate of exploitation on the shop-floor in a desperate bid to step up the rate of profit is now being carried through on all fronts simultaneously.

With the level of production still below that during the three day week of 1974, "surplus" factories have been shut down; public spending on social services has been slashed; and the labour force in existing factories and enterprises has in many cases been cut back by sackings or by "natural wastage" coupled to speed-up of those remaining. Such policies create unemployment and thus doubly assist the employers' drive to step up the productivity of labour by also weakening the organised strength of the working class. Additionally public spending cuts avoid the need to impose added tax burdens on the profits of private enterprise. On top of this battery of attacks, the enforcement of two years' of wage control has inflicted unprecedented wage cuts upon the working class. None of these policies could have been carried through without major pitched battles if the employers had not been able to count upon the absolute collusion of reformist political and trade union leaders, ably assisted by their allies in the Communist

With the backing of these leaders, a massive pool of unemployment now gives employers and government added confidence in their drive for further speed-up and cuts in manning levels. They still rely however on the police role of the TUC leaders to avoid the prospect of a decisive confrontation.

The decision of the Ford motor company to build a brand new car complex in Wales indicates that, thanks to union officials and their errand boys at convenor level, the price of labour-power to employers in Britain has been reduced to one of the lowest levels in Europe.

The loudly-hailed emergence of regular supplies of North Sea oil can only have a superficial effect on the

pattern of the crisis in Britain. By strengthening the balance of payments (cutting oil imports) the oil has helped to stem the fall of the pound in the foreign exchange markets. The balance of payments is in any case favourably distorted by the chronic low level of production which has minimised the level of imported raw materials. While a strengthened pound would of course be a limited asset to the government in that it cuts the imported aspect of inflation, the perils of large inflows of speculative "hot money" have been illustrated in the recent forced floating of the pound. This reached the point where the pound's increased value threatened to make sluggish exports even harder to sell in a depressed world market.

The oil revenue has of course enabled the government to make some cuts in taxation, and provides resources for additional hand-outs to employers facing difficulties. Cuts in income tax of course benefit largely management and director grades, while for shop-floor workers they are intended as a means to stall off substantial wage claims.

But the oil is not a permanent asset. It will run out. And it is not cheap—it sells at world market prices. It does not give British capitalism any particular competitive advantage. And although the high profits on the oil itself will tend to raise the average rate of profit, the oil as such will do nothing to improve the profitability of industry as a whole. The long-term effect of North Sea oil on the rate of profit depends, as statement after statement from Callaghan and Tory leaders makes clear, upon the way the government uses the revenue directly to assist the capitalists in carrying through rationalisation and investment in new plant designed to increase the rate of exploitation of the working class.

The Lib-Lab Coalition and Wage Control

From the very outset we have analysed the Lib-Lab deal as an undeclared coalition in which the Labour traitors, unable to sustain their policies purely through their alliance with the TUC bureaucracy, reached out to seek a base of support *outside* the organised labour movement to assist their anti-working class policies.

While the fundamentals of the Labour leaders' reactionary bourgeois programme have not changed—wage controls, public spending cuts, unemployment and handouts to industry remain central—what has changed fundamentally is the class basis of the government. The bourgeois Liberal leaders have more control over the policies and actions of the government and the whole Parliamentary Labour Party than the LP conference or the TUC. This government owes its very existence to an undertaking jointly with the Liberals to enforce a third phase of wage controls and to refrain from the least hint of socialist policies. For this reason it *cannot* be 'pressured' to change its line by organisations of the labour movement. To open the door for a fight for socialist policies, the Lib-Lab coalition must first be *broken*. The refusal of almost every other tendency in the labour movement to spell out this fact to workers is an indication of their political bankruptcy and opportunism. This is epitomised by the tame 'lefts' of the Tribune Group and the pet 'Marxists' of the 'Militant' group, both of which oppose any fight to break the coalition.

The determination of this coalition to carry through a bourgeois programme and to hold the line against workers' struggles to improve living standards is undoubted. But the odds they must contend with are both class forces and the economic crises. A powerful working class, bitterly resen-

ful at the savage cuts in living standards inflicted over the last 2 years is moving into struggle over wages.

It was this resistance that first brought the defensive pro-capitalist political alignment of the Lib-Lab deal in March 1977. The main purpose of that coalition was to impose a rigid stage three of wage control on the working class. Despite every effort by a servile union bureaucracy they have failed to do so formally, though the TUC is exerting its whole energy to forcing it in by the back door. Union conference after union conference was forced during the summer to take a stand against a Phase 3, however vaguely worded and devious the motions brought by union leaders. Finally the TUC was forced to scramble for the 12 month rule as a means of isolating pay disputes in the coming year. Yet events since the beginning of the firemen's strike show that the TUC has now turned from a defensive stand on that rule to full-blooded support for the 10% policy. Proposals from NUM, Boilermakers, GMWU and NUPE leaders go further, and suggest new bargaining structures that would shackle millions of workers to centralised negotiations and clear the decks for Healey's publicly declared plans for *permanent* wage control.

Despite the fact that, in the private sector, Healey's pay ultimatum has been changed and even ignored by certain employers, wage control remains to be broken. No section of workers in the public sector has yet achieved a settlement of over 10%—and every manoeuvre by TUC leaders—particularly the NUM and NUPE leadership—is now focussed on ensuring that the firemen are isolated and the pay limit protected.

This is why we should avoid any tendency to overstress the political consciousness of workers or their spontaneous leaderships thrown up in current and coming pay battles. While we know from the experience of the miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974, and from the Leyland toolroom dispute this year, (1977) that certain pay disputes even under a completely reformist leadership *can* have the power to shake and remove governments, our responsibility remains the preparation of conscious leadership adequate to today's situation. We are not facing a repetition of the 1974 fight with the Tories. The breaking of the Lib-Lab coalition requires a more advanced political leadership, capable of fighting both government and the TUC bureaucracy. This is why we have put forward the call for more advanced organs of struggle, such as Councils of Action, to take this struggle forward.

Liberal leader Steel has remained silent on the widespread breaches in the pay policy in the private sector. The prospect of annihilation of the Liberal Party in a polarised General Election, plus the spectacle of the Callaghan regime using troops to break the firemen's strike clearly holds Steel to Callaghan at this point, just as a dedication to resolving the problems of capitalism holds Callaghan to Steel.

But should the TUC policemen lose their grip on the mass movement, and a massive wave of pay strikes break out, it is clear that Steel would come under immense bourgeois pressure to withdraw from the coalition. The Tories moved against Callaghan in March because they preferred to see the Labour government defeated ostensibly in Parliament and themselves take the reins of power than to see it defeated openly over its pay policy in which workers would learn tremendous political lessons. It is almost certain that such considerations would not be lost on the Liberal Party if industry were paralysed by escalating pay strikes in the coming period.

The March coalition, as we have analysed, represented

the outcome of both the strength and the political weakness of the working class. The strength—reflected in the toolroom strike—took the form of growing national strike action outside the immediate control of the official union bureaucracy. The weakness lay in the lack of an alternative leadership able to direct that strength and put an independent programme of action for the toolmakers, or to challenge the existing leadership within the labour movement. The Labourites—seeking a base of support outside of and against the working class—reached out to embrace the Liberals.

This coalition now determines every action of the Callaghan government. Not a single measure to benefit the working class is even envisaged in the programme for the present session of Parliament. Every policy is a concession to the deal with Britain's junior capitalist party. Even the boasted moves to legalise strikes by postal workers are to be subject to the agreement of the employer and of the Liberal Party. Meanwhile, under Liberal prompting, the bulk of parliamentary time is to be given over to tightening up the Common Market straitjacket and aid to small businesses.

In the event of direct elections to the EEC being held, our position would be one of boycott. The incoming NC must prepare a concrete policy around which to implement this position, and a general statement of our attitude to the EEC. This should spell out our orientation towards calling on the European workers' movement to act to dismantle the EEC, and the need to fight for the Socialist United States of Europe.

The only salvation for the coalition is through the continued slavish support they receive from the union bureaucracy. The lesson from Grunwick, Desoutters and the hotel strikes is clear: so desperate are officials to stifle widespread action by workers and to hold the line on wages that they are unable to win even the most simple demand of all—the right to union recognition. And the harsh lesson from recent betrayals is that even workers with the most devastating industrial strength are still subject to the influence of union bureaucrats (BOC). This crisis of working class leadership is decisive in preserving the Lib-Lab coalition.

Yet the strength of working class resistance is also indicated by the fact that—as Ford's manager Terry Beckett pointed out at the CBI conference—the numerical strength of the unions is increasing, despite the betrayals over wages and recognition struggles.

The fact that every serious dispute over pay now threatens the very existence of the Lib-Lab government sharpens still further the contradiction between bitter shop-floor resentment against wage controls and the union bureaucracy's defence of the 10% limit.

With this in view, the WSL has put forward the call for Councils of Action. The task of such Councils of Action is to spread and strengthen pay disputes, fight the witch-hunts and bring out other sections of workers on their own pay demands alongside those already in struggle.

Within such councils of action the job of the WSL as the conscious element would be to fight to establish them as an alternative pole of leadership capable of challenging the betrayals of the bureaucrats and confronting the coalition government. Developed in the course of struggle, such councils of action would provide the embryonic organs of dual power in an all-out confrontation between the classes.

The conditions surrounding the firemen's dispute have offered the clearest case so far for this call to be taken up in

each town as a counter to organised army strikebreaking and to the attempts by public sector union bureaucrats to isolate the firemen by holding back their members' claims.

In the public sector the policing of the 10% pay limit through cash limits is combined with the imposition of spending cuts. This means that implicit in every pay negotiation in the public sector is the threat of unemployment.

Public sector union leaders who have meekly accepted every installment of cuts 'under protest' have never intended to challenge on wages. But now the two issues merge inseparably. *With or without wage increases*, thousands of public sector workers are being forced out of work, and jobs abolished through wastage, by cash limits way below the increase in costs brought by inflation. And the emergence of pay struggle by firemen, power workers, airport engineers, NUM and steelworkers shows that public sector workers are determined to fight for wages.

Again it is the awareness of the potential for mass struggle on this front that has brought the union leaders to the level of desperation: no national action against either the cuts or cash limits has been called for a year since the massive 80,000 demonstration last November 17. Hospital closures, staff cuts, service cuts and speed-up have escalated while union leaders confined themselves to occasional bluster and arm-waving.

In confronting these betrayals in the public sector unions we must see the way that the cuts issue and the wages issue are related, and the part that both policies have in the strategy for raising the rate of profit.

The capitalist class however finds itself caught in a difficult situation. While it enthusiastically approves of wage cutting, it recognises that there is little prospect of maintaining production if a prolonged series of stoppages disrupt the flow of components, transport etc. And it recognises also that certain employers could find themselves sandwiched between a 'voluntary' government/TUC policy and its implementation through financial and other sanctions. Hence an ambivalent attitude to the 10% policy and the attempts by numbers of employers to dodge confrontation with the TUC by paying in excess of the 10%.

Tory Party.

This ambiguity in the employers' position finds its reflection in the confusion within the Tory leadership on wages policy, the closed shop etc.

While there is little doubt that the extreme right within the Tory Party is gathering strength—Heseltine, Boyson, Joseph, Thatcher—it is still necessary for the Tories to parade their 'moderate' spokesmen, Prior etc., in case they are unexpectedly forced into a premature confrontation with the unions.

The Tory right has increasingly moved into the all-out union-busting business, with backing for Grunwicks and THF organised through NAFF. This strategy is now rallying substantial business backing and is the strategy underlying the Westminster Press closed shop dispute and other anti-union struggles.

But while such a position can be developed with a blind eye turned by union bureaucrats under the wing of a Labour government, it could only be sustained under a Tory government if employers were willing to face damaging confrontations. The betrayals carried out by

Jackson etc. in retreating before the courts centred heavily on the fraudulent prospect of the government legislating the "right" for UPW members to strike. Such a position would be untenable under a Tory government—especially if that government was returned under conditions of mass struggle that had overturned a Labour-fronted coalition.

A main plank of Thatcher's election strategy is therefore to avoid being tied to a particular line of policy on key issues—and to arrive at a position only when the circumstances become clear.

Nationalism.

The drive towards protectionism by the national bourgeoisies under conditions of slump and the falling rate of profit makes itself felt also in the nationalist positions taken up within certain layers of the petty bourgeoisie and within the labour and Stalinist bureaucracy.

Perhaps most embarrassingly caught in this situation is international Stalinism. The CPs are caught fast in the contradiction between their notional 'defence of the Soviet Union' and their *practical* alliance with their "own" capitalist class. The stresses and strains this has created has led to the emergence of open splits on policy between the so-called "Euro" Stalinists and Moscow-line CPs. Both sides are of course *agreed* on the necessity to combat the political independence of the working class and to preserve capitalism as part of peaceful coexistence. But the "Euro" Stalinists have gone much further along the road to *permanent* collaboration with their "own" national bourgeoisie, to the extent where their willingness to defend the USSR against imperialism in case of war is now called into question.

The tensions within international Stalinism have erupted in a split in the British CP—a split in which it is hard to detect any practical policy difference between the two sides. Neither CP offers the slightest way forward for workers against wage control or the Lib-Lab coalition. And both sections of the CP, along with the Tribunites, have joined hands with right wing bureaucrats, MPs and certain sections of employers in the call for import controls.

This alliance sums up the class collaboration that is implicit in the demand to shore up one section of capitalists in competition with another section.

But while we have always struggled against the call for import controls, the WSL has always clearly also distinguished between this reactionary policy and the necessary fight for the blacking and boycott of all trade with dictatorial regimes such as the South African government and the military juntas of Latin America, wherever the fighting organisations of the oppressed have called for such assistance in their struggles.

It is conspicuous that the strongest advocates of import controls have been the most silent on the fight for solidarity action in the wretched betrayal by the TUC of the 'week of action' against South Africa this summer. The 'week of action', itself a pathetically puny protest at the barbarity of the Vorster regime, was sabotaged by the refusal of the TUC protectionists to challenge British bourgeois legality. And the link between their abandonment of international class obligations and class betrayal at home was clearly shown when Jackson's acceptance of the court ruling on the South African blacking led to acceptance of the ruling against blacking Grunwick mail, and acceptance by these bureaucrats that postal workers do not have the right to strike.

But if the call for import controls in the workers' movement is one side of the rise of nationalism, then the emergence of the Scottish nationalism has also worked to confuse and divide the working class. In the absence of any official labour movement programme to defend and create jobs and improve living standards, layers of workers in Scotland have been drawn towards the utopian and demagogic line put by bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalists. The formerly quiescent Scottish nationalist forces have sprung to life at this point, stimulated by the scent of North Sea Oil revenues and quick profits. Only the utter bankruptcy of the established labour movement leadership—reformist and Stalinist—in Scotland has allowed these reactionaries the leeway to reach sections of workers. And only the struggle for a revolutionary leadership can pose a serious challenge to this political current fed as it is on lies and confusion. While we recognise that Scotland is a nation and that as such it has the *right* to secede should a majority of its people so desire, we must stress at all points that *nothing* is to be gained by Scottish workers from such a secession, nor by the fake bourgeois "assemblies" and "elections" mooted under the Lib-Lab government's Devolution Bill. If Scottish workers genuinely want to see their independent interests represented, they should fight through union branches, stewards' committees and workers' political organisations for local *Councils of Action* to lead and direct their struggles, not seek a new bourgeois parliament. And we must continue to insist on united action by Scottish and English workers around a programme of transitional demands to defend jobs and living standards, break the 10% limit and restore social spending.

National Front

While nationalism finds its reflection in the labour bureaucracy and sections of petty bourgeois, it finds its most pernicious form in the emergence of outright racist and fascist groupings such as the National Front. The emergence of the NF is the most devastating answer to defenders of the reactionary policies of the Callaghan government. It is the cuts, unemployment and wage cuts that create a climate for racist and fascist propaganda.

While the Tories feel able to allow the Lib-Lab government to continue its work for a further period, the NF reflects the feelings of the most desperate, anti-union sections of the bourgeoisie and increasingly bankrupt petty bourgeoisie. Its strategy is clearly to build its forces in this period by shattering the 'peaceful coexistence' between the leaders of the workers' movement and the employers, and by expressing in the most violent manner the frustration of the middle class at the power of the organised labour movement, as well as the national chauvinism of the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen layers of workers.

This is the approach that underlies the NF's provocative acts against the labour movement, its violent attacks on immigrant communities and its attempt to mobilise the volatility of youth facing prolonged unemployment.

The strategy would be still-born if the National Front were confronted at each point by a working class movement mobilised to drive it from the streets. The criminal role of the Labour bureaucracy in the fight against racism is precisely its refusal at any point to allow the independent mobilisation of the working class on wages or basic demands, creating the frustration exploited by fascism.

In this sense our struggle must start out from this crisis of leadership, and direct towards these political

questions as well as towards mass mobilisation of workers against fascism, workers' defence squads, and the enforcement by the labour movement of 'no platform for fascists'. No confidence whatever must be placed in the ability or desire of the capitalist state machine to stop or restrict the actions of the fascists.

Break the Lib-Lab coalition !

Every aspect of the propaganda and practical work of the Workers Socialist League since March 1977 has centred on the political necessity for a break in the Lib-Lab coalition and to assert the political independence of the working class. We have taken this line into our work in the unions, into day-to-day struggles against wage controls, against the cuts and into the work of *Socialist Press* supporters in the Labour Party.

But the fact that the working class remains confused on the issues involved has meant that the fight has had to be carried on at all levels in the labour movement.

We have in our press exposed the way in which the Callaghan government is tied hand and foot to the bourgeoisie and its parties, and the ways in which the wishes of the labour movement are subordinated to those of the Liberal Party. We have fought at the same time to develop Councils of Action—most tangibly in the Firemen's strike—as the organisational basis for the new, independent working class leadership. *Socialist Press* supporters inside the Labour Party have fought to raise resolutions and to focus discussion on the need to break the coalition, and the complicity of the 'lefts' in their tacit acceptance of the Lib-Lab deal.

But at the same time, whenever these 'lefts' have been faced in Parliament with the question of whether or not to vote in favour of the coalition and its policies we have spelled out the necessity for them to vote *against* it, and for them to launch struggles against it throughout the labour and trade union movement. And whenever, predictably, these 'lefts' have trooped like sheep into the coalition lobbies we have drawn out the implications of their actions so as to ram home the point for those workers who might expect them to fight.

We have pursued *all* of these avenues of work seriously, since we understand that workers will not spontaneously develop to a political understanding of their leaders or of their own accord jump over decades of parliamentary illusions. Our movement has always stressed that workers learn political lessons like this not solely from books, theoretical magazines or even from leaflets.

Workers learn in the course of *practical* struggles in which their established leaders are put to the test. We have aimed at proving to workers *in practice* that the 'lefts', in voting confidence in this bourgeois coalition, are committing a class betrayal. And we have combined this agitation with propaganda for our programme and the need for a revolutionary leadership. However, it is necessary to further develop our demand for the breaking of the coalition in the light of the present situation.

The government, fearing working class resistance, is moving increasingly to reliance on the repressive machinery of the state to control the labour movement—using troops against strikes, riot police against pickets, courts against unions, etc. But as it does so, the 'lefts' who prior to March would utter a protest here or there at government 'excesses' have with one or two exceptions fallen stony silent. Last year's Labour Party Conference confirmed the complete absence of any 'left' challenge to the coalition.

Of the parliamentary 'lefts', only Denis Skinner is on record as publicly declaring his willingness to vote against the Lib-Lab deal—and he has done nothing to follow up these words. We can expect this silence to be transformed into a blather of words under pressure of the mass movement, with the 'lefts' moving to head off any prospect of working class independence (as with the firemen's strike), but we must reckon with the positions actually adopted by the 'lefts' whose role complements that of the TUC.

Any leader that refuses to challenge the coalition government must now be sucked in to defence of the 10% pay limit. We must ensure that those demands we place upon the 'lefts' are directed towards drawing from them a clear statement of position on this in front of the working class.

Indeed for all the bankruptcy of the Labour 'lefts', we are not yet at a stage where we can pose any credible *alternative* form of government and political organisation to workers. Our programme, in so far as it is adopted and fought for by workers, obviously leads towards the formation of independent working class bodies—open the books committees, workers defence squads and councils of action. But we must recognise that the fight for such bodies is only at an embryonic stage.

To demand at this point that workers turn from their official leaders 'left' and right alike and build such bodies; and to assert that this is a "governmental slogan" could at best be termed a vain gesture and at worst an ultra-left adventure. The technique of *counterposing* "higher", "more revolutionary" bodies *which do not yet exist*, to the

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actual trade unions and mass parties built in centuries of struggle by the working class is a hallmark of petty bourgeois "revolutionism" and a rejection of the method of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL must fight to raise the working class from today's conditions and today's consciousness to the understanding of the need to overthrow capitalism and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. And, as the Transitional Programme spells out, this involves the exposure of the existing reformist leaders:

"The central task of the Fourth International consists in freeing the proletariat from the old leadership, whose conservatism is in complete contradiction to the catastrophic eruptions of disintegrating capitalism and represents the chief obstacle to historical progress. The chief accusation which the Fourth International advances against the traditional organisations of the proletariat is the fact that they do not wish to tear themselves away from the political semi-corps of the bourgeoisie. Under these conditions the demand, systematically addressed to the old leadership, 'Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power!' is an extremely important weapon for exposing the treacherous character of the parties and organisations of the Second, Third, and Amsterdam Internationals. The slogan 'workers and farmers government' is thus acceptable to us only in the sense that it had in 1917 with the Bolsheviks, i.e. as an anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois slogan, but in no case in that 'democratic' sense which later the epigones gave it, transforming it from a bridge to the socialist revolution into the chief barrier upon its path".

Of course in today's context the anti-capitalist slogan "break from the bourgeoisie, take the power" must mean much more than simply calling on the Labour leaders to terminate the Lib-Lab coalition and take the power in their own name. This would amount to asking for no more than a return to the situation before March this year.

The complexity of the political situation demands a precise system of slogans and tactics which can lead workers to an understanding of the need for a government politically independent of the bourgeoisie. As communists we stress above all the need for the mobilisation of the working class.

Not one important question can be solved while the masses trust their fate to the antics of reformist parliamentarians and trade union bureaucrats.

The WSL must pose the need, at each stage of the struggle, for transitional and partial demands, for the proletariat to control its leaders and drive out those who betray. For the coming period the slogan 'Build Councils of Action' stands at the centre of our propaganda and agitation, as we have said, not only as the best means of immediately co-ordinating the struggles of the working class, but of preparing the apparatus through which the proletariat will be able to assert its power over the bourgeoisie.

The working class has the task of preventing the return of an unprecedentedly vicious Tory regime. The first step must be to break the undeclared coalition between Labour and the Liberals. The WSL pours scorn on the reformists' pitiful excuses for their anti-socialist 'Pact'. Labour could be assured of power if it was willing to mobilise the strength of the working class against the bourgeoisie—but instead the reformists prefer to cite their lack of a parliamentary majority, to manoeuvre with Steel, and to pave the way for Thatcher.

Thus, alongside our call for Councils of Action we say "Keep out the Tories! Break the Lib-Lab coalition!" But such a fight is unthinkable under the leadership of Labour's coalitionist traitors. Whilst constantly exposing the 'left' talkers of Labour's NEC and the Tribune group, the WSL specifically calls for the removal of Callaghan, Healey,

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Rees, Mason and the gang of cabinet coalitionists. The mobilisation of the labour movement to drive out these lackeys is at the same time the best means of compromising the fake 'lefts' by exposing their refusal to break with the right wing. The spectacle of the firemen, marching in London at the beginning of their strike, chanting 'Rees Out!' even while on their way to a rally addressed by Tribunes Wise and Allaun is something from which we must draw the correct lessons. Such situations indicate the importance, in the fight to end coalitionism, of the demand "Make the 'lefts' fight"—in conjunction with the demand "Kick out the Callaghan-Healey leadership".

Whenever 'left' MPs or trade union leaders bleat about the evils of the right wing or make 'left' gestures by supporting strikes or demonstrations the Workers Socialist League demands action, not words.

"Break with the Liberals! Break with the right wing! Vote and campaign against the Coalition and its supporters! Declare yourselves mandated by the labour movement and not by the Parliamentary Labour Party! We will critically support every action along those lines. But if you do not act, you are nothing but left fakers".

We can critically support the 'lefts' only insofar as they break with the right wing. Whilst they do no more than lend 'left' credentials to the Lib-Lab coalition, our task is to expose their prostration to the workers who retain illusions in them, and to demand their removal as we would with any other Coalitionist.

We must avoid any tendency to tie the fight against the coalition and for a Labour government to represent the working class to the whims and manoeuvres of the 'lefts' in Parliament or in the unions. We must concentrate on forcing the 'lefts' to take an open stand on the coalition issue. To those who show the slightest sign of fight we extend both critical support and the demand they press on further in the fight.

In this way we can demonstrate that they are *incapable* of seriously challenging the right wing reformist leaders. Careful use of demands on the 'lefts' can reveal to workers their complete lack of any perspective for the working class. While the mass of workers still adhere to the Labour Party we continue to call for a Labour government.

To advance the idea, in whatever form, that there is no difference between Tory and Labour (even Labour under Callaghan) is sectarian infantilism which serves only to assist the reformists, who would quite likely be strengthened by a period of Thatcher in power. The WSL follows the method of the Transitional Programme in finding concrete ways of expressing the need for a workers' government, given the political balance of forces in the working class as it is, not simply as we would like it to be.

"Of all the parties and organisations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers' and farmers' government. On this road we promise them full support against capitalist reaction. And at the same time, we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the programme of the 'workers' and farmers' government".

(Transitional Programme)

While the workers support Labour we will help them to put it in office independently of the openly capitalist parties. At the same time we encourage workers to demand and force measures on Labour in defence of their interests

and to break the resistance of the capitalists.

While the specific demands we place upon Labour will vary in particular class battles, the slogan 'Force Labour to implement a socialist programme' sums up our general orientation in the present situation.

In our general explanation of this position the WSL warns the working class *not to trust its leaders*; explains that a socialist programme *cannot* be implemented by parliamentary edict; and shows that the task posed is for the working class to impose its rule over the bourgeoisie, smash the existing state apparatus, and institute a planned economy.

In no sense does the fight to force Labour to implement a socialist programme "sow illusions", as the sectarians would have it. On the contrary, it is the best means through which the working class can *test out* its leaders and organisation and develop a new, revolutionary leadership for the task of seizing power. It is because we need to expose *all* the wings of the mass reformist party that we continue to call for a Labour vote in by-elections, while at the same time fighting for the adoption of anti-coalition candidates and the removal of coalitionists. We must struggle to bring union branches into this fight for the breaking of the coalition.

It is not sufficient to convince *ourselves* that the Lib-Lab coalition must be broken; we must convince the working class. In doing so a correct tactical orientation towards the Labour Party remains important. We must be clear that there is *no barrier in principle* to us continuing to give critical electoral support to Labour candidates so long as the Labour Party continues to stand in its own name in elections. The question is a *tactical* one—to be decided in the context of the fight to break workers from reformism. Trotsky spelled out his attitude to voting for a workers party in alliance with a bourgeois grouping when he discussed the Labour Party question in the USA. It then seemed likely that the Labour's Non-Partisan League would adopt an agreement with the bourgeois politician La Guardia. Trotsky declared that if he were in the LNPL he would get himself mandated to oppose support for bourgeois politicians:

"If you send me as your representative, I will fight for this programme in the LNPL, in the Labour Party. When the LNPL makes a decision to vote for La Guardia, I either resign with protest or protest and remain: 'I can't vote for La Guardia. I have my mandate'. We get large new possibilities for propaganda".

(Transitional Programme for Socialist Revolution, p.123)

In other words, Trotsky centres his position on *refusing to vote for bourgeois politicians*. For him it is then

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a tactical question whether or not to resign. And he does not say he would refuse to vote for the LNPL's own candidates.

We do not vote Labour through any agreement with its programme. Nor do we do so simply because workers traditionally vote for this party. We extend critical support to it in elections in order to expose its refusal to break from the policies—and now even the political parties—of the bourgeoisie.

We do so because the Labour Party represents a certain stage in the development of the consciousness of the working class and its struggle for political independence. It has historical roots in the trade unions. To break these roots, the Labour Party, 'left' and right wings alike, must be exposed in action to workers in struggle. In this way those who begin to break from reformism can be directed not towards syndicalism but towards the construction of a revolutionary party capable of leading the working class.

Fighting for the Programme

There is a direct relationship between our understanding of the political crisis and fighting in practice for the transitional programme.

In the rarefied atmosphere of sectarian discussion circles, the WSL is termed "workerist". This is because unlike them we have never seen the central question as abstractly "educating" the class, but as developing workers' consciousness in the course of action in which our own consciousness is also transformed. In this way we actively combat spontaneity and trade union consciousness within the wider labour movement and within our own ranks.

In their eagerness to avoid opportunism, sectarians find themselves scared to get into the water of the class struggle. At most they throw in an exploratory stone or two while sitting on the bank.

The WSL however has fought for its principled positions within the mass workers' organisations. And, though our successes have tended to be confined to one or two areas, we have developed our programme and perspective in this way.

For instance, during the period of Phases I and II of the Social Contract, the WSL was the only tendency that analysed correctly the processes taking place beneath the apparent quiescence of the class struggle. Our own experience, both in the Oxford trade union work and in the struggle against Trades Council Rule 14, made it clear that the working class was coming up against the barrier of the bureaucracy. We saw in practice the link between the fight for workers' democracy and the fight for our programme.

This strengthened our conviction that workers had not accepted the Social Contract, but had it imposed upon them by union officials.

We analysed that a wage explosion was developing. In the material for the second CDLM Conference, we referred to the events of France in 1968 and the need for Councils of Action. Our analysis of workers' rejection of the Social Contract was the inability of the TUC to force through a formal Phase III.

From this understanding, and particularly after the vote at the TGWU conference, we developed the slogan "Regain and Defend Living Standards", which was taken into the mass movement at Cowley. This received an immediate response, passing through a number of union bodies and section meetings. Workers responded to the call to recoup what had been taken from them and defend it against inflation.

Socialist Press has outlined the role of the 12-month

rule, of incentives schemes, of bureaucratic manoeuvres and of corporate bargaining in Leyland, in holding back pay struggles.

But our demands and perspectives must be upheld and developed further in the light of these events.

The practical work of the WSL nationally has taken a qualitative step forward over the past year, with comrades playing key roles in a number of disputes of national importance.

At the forefront of these struggles has, of course, been the fight to break the social contract and for the sliding scale of wages, on which the WSL has established a consistent record in every union in which we have members.

This struggle drew added strength from the WSL's record in fighting for support to those sections of workers who took action against Phase 2 pay limits — starting with the Seamen and leading up to the major confrontations at Heathrow and Port Talbot. And of course, while the Leyland Toolroom leadership continuously claimed that their struggle was not against the social contract, *Socialist Press* vigorously campaigned for support for this strike precisely because the toolmakers were objectively in conflict with Phase II.

The significance of our role in these disputes was not, of course, the scale of resources we were able to swing behind these pay disputes. It was far more the ability of the WSL to draw out the national political implications of these struggles, to the necessity for workers to support them. And against those that doubted their political importance, the impact of the right-wing led toolroom strike in felling the Labour government and creating the conditions that compelled the establishment of the Lib-Lab coalition was a heavy blow. Indeed had the toolroom leaders not collapsed under pressure the strike could have defeated the Lib-Lab deal itself.

As TUC leaders attempted to patch together the basis of a Phase III during the summer months, *Socialist Press* was able continuously to expose the double-talk and to direct towards the necessity of the sliding scale demand. And when AUEW President Scanlon in desperation broke the mandate of the union's national conference and announced he would vote for the 12-month rule, it was a WSL member in Sheffield who was able to come forward to the centre of the fight against this betrayal by local shop stewards.

At each point WSL intervention has begun from the understanding that workers in struggle face sabotage from different layers of the local and national union bureaucracy as well as government — each of which needs to be fought in its own way.

The consistent struggle for the sliding scale of wages has formed a solid basis for renewed efforts around this demand in the coming months. We must move now towards the establishment of at least one exemplary price committee. We reject the 'stages' concept of building price committees only after the demand for the sliding scale of wages has been accepted as a policy of the workers in a particular area. By directing workers towards action through which they can begin to see that the sliding scale of wages is the only realistic demand in the face of falling living standards, these committees would strengthen our arguments for this policy.

With at least one committee in existence our comrades in areas where we do not have the necessary base to build price committees would be in a much stronger position. They would point to the exemplary committee as a concrete example of what we are fighting for.

We have outlined the importance of the car industry on many occasions. Our base in that industry, however, remains in the Oxford area. As a matter of priority we need to find ways of showing workers in other parts of the country that our policies are the answer to their problems and to convince them of the need to join our fight.

We should establish a national cars fraction consisting of all car worker comrades and representatives of all branches where car factories exist. This fraction must draw up an analysis of the problems facing the employers and the likely solutions they will try to impose. We need to have a detailed picture of the different plants, the struggles taking place and the political forces at work. This will enable us to intervene more sharply to defend the interests of the workers in that industry.

The fraction will be responsible for the production of regular national leaflets and by the next WSL National Conference should have produced a substantial pamphlet on British Leyland.

Perhaps the most varied forms of struggle against the assorted obstacles to working class struggle have been in the WSL's work in support of unionisation struggles—in the hotel strikes, at Desoutters and at Grunwick, as well as the Darlington closed shop dispute. In each of these struggles it has been necessary not simply to fight for an awareness of the national importance of the disputes and their implications for other sections of workers, but also to mobilise strikers and supporters in successive lobbies of district, regional and national committees and officials in the fight to expose the role of the bureaucracy and to force them to give support to the strikes. In the hotel strikes, Jack Jones' office was invaded by workers who sat in overnight to await his arrival in order to demand support. And at Desoutters the fight reached its peak when the Stalinist-led North London District Committee was lobbied repeatedly with demands for a district levy and blacking action.

At the same time our struggle in the Grunwick dispute to keep the issue of blacking to the forefront as the only way the strike could be won has meant that we have been the only movement that has consistently confronted the main political question posed by the strike. Jackson, Chapple and the other national bureaucrats have refused throughout to challenge the ruling of the courts on blacking or strike action, and in this way surrendered the right of their members to take action in support of Grunwick or even on their own demands.

They do so, of course, at a time when they are grasping for any pretext to dampen down militancy on wages. And this connection has been another consistent strand in the WSL's work in support of the Grunwick struggle.

It is not enough for us to approach disputes as single issues; nor must we attempt simply to impose upon them our won external impressions and schemas. Only through intervening in these struggles with our perspectives, and fighting alongside these layers of workers in order to expose their leadership can the richness and complexities of such battles be understood and drawn out for the benefit of the class as a whole.

While many of the hotel strikes in which we have been involved have been defeated, these struggles have provided us with rich experience in the fight against the bureaucracy. Moreover, they have shown that our analysis of the importance of these unionisation struggles has been absolutely correct.

In similar fashion our intervention in struggles against the health and education cuts have drawn on the political

experience of the movement as a whole. The WSL played a key role in the fight to launch the EGA work-in, and confirmed that health workers are no exception to the rule that principled leadership can transform a situation and a clear perspective can build a solid base of support.

With this in mind, WSL members have been at the forefront of the fight to establish the Committee for London Area Stewards in the Health Service (CLASH), which is based on demands almost identical to those advocated by the WSL. CLASH is now at the centre of the struggle to stop the cuts in the London health service—and organised the wave of one-day strikes against the sacking of the Hounslow Hospital.

The same method of approach has been applied in the fight against cutbacks in teaching staff in Oxfordshire, where our members fought for the adoption of a policy of all-out strike action to stop the cuts, and met with considerable success in winning support for this policy—despite the sell-out of the movement by the NUT bureaucracy in exchange for a few 'concessions'.

Our policy of fighting both for immediate local action and for national strike action by all public service unions to stop the cuts and demand a sliding scale of social service spending has been the tool to expose every 'left' talking bureaucrat. And our fight to connect the cuts at each point with the existence of the coalition government provides a means of exposing the hollow rhetoric of the 'left' MPs, who verbally oppose the cuts while supporting the government that is imposing them.

The cuts and their impact on the fight for free abortion on demand have also been taken up in our fight on the question of women's rights. While every other left group separates off women's rights as a single issue, the WSL has fought to demonstrate that on every issue women's struggles are linked to those of the class as a whole. Equal pay is a part of the fight against low pay and wage control; and equal opportunity can only be achieved in the fight to end unemployment and to establish adequate child care facilities.

We have fought to bring women into the labour force of the Cowley factories, so that in the practice of the struggle against the employer the divisions between men and women are broken down. And we have played a leading role in developing campaigns around the demand for nursery facilities to be provided by local authorities in order to break the bond shackling women to the home.

In our work among youth we have in the last year produced a campaign booklet on unemployment, and have in several areas fought to establish Socialist Youth Leagues. A WSL comrade has been elected on to the National Committee of the NUSS, and from there has been able to fight for our policies on the cuts and, most recently, to mobilise school youth against fascist propaganda campaigns aimed at schools. We have also been active as a movement opposing police harassment of youth—in particular the Islington 18 and Lewisham 21 cases.

But while some gains have been made in this work we have been restricted by the amount of resources devoted to it. It is important that every branch discuss the question of consistent work among youth and draw up local proposals to develop it.

The struggles in which we have intervened have provided a number of important recruits to the movement and strengthened our relationship with an increased periphery of workers, helping to lay the basis on which we were able to launch the weekly paper.

Weaknesses undoubtedly remain in the practical work

of the League in fighting for our programme. These weaknesses must be tackled as they arise. But the overall pattern of development of our movement in the class struggle is one of qualitative strengthening in almost every area, and the consolidation of a Trotskyist cadre capable of understanding, explaining, exposing and fighting the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracy at every step.

The steps taken towards the construction of a principled grouping in the unions through the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement has been an important development for the WSL. This was especially clear in the campaign for the TGWU General Secretary election, and in fighting for support and extension of the Port Talbot pay strike.

Our intervention in CDLM campaigns and conferences has provided a useful tactical means of furthering the fight for our programme among a much wider periphery of workers than we would otherwise have reached. The programme adopted by the CDLM—after a sharp, bitter and successful political battle against the IMG—embodies the central points on which the WSL has been campaigning within the unions—the sliding scale of wages; work sharing on full pay; open the books; nationalisation; the fight for women's rights; opposition to immigration controls and the fight for workers' defence against racism; the call to break the Lib-Lab coalition; for councils of action; and the need for new leadership in the labour movement.

But despite the considerable political gains—particularly in the London area—and the recruitment that have flowed from the CDLM work undertaken by the WSL, this has remained for us a tactical orientation, subordinate to our main orientation towards the fight for our programme in the trade unions, and supplementary to it.

It is in this light that we must assess our future orientation to the CDLM. It is clearly not practicable at present viably to launch the CDLM as a 'rank and file' organisation based on individual membership.

Such an orientation, in the absence of a periphery of workers, would inevitably result in rump 'committees' in areas consisting simply of our members and the revisionists.

Yet as a tactical means of approaching political discussion with advanced layers of workers the CDLM retains its value. It is a body which—thanks to the dominance of the WSL—has a principled record of intervention into key struggles—particularly those on wage control—during the last two years. By calling conferences the CDLM can still provide the arena within which the WSL can fight to convince non-party workers of the necessity for our programme.

We should therefore continue to intervene tactically through the CDLM, while recognising that the need to defend and explain our full programme in the course of CDLM campaigns means that *each branch* of the WSL must play its role—both in mobilising solid forces to support our positions against the Pabloites, and also in intervening in conferences and meetings to spell out the positions of the WSL and attack our opponents.

While it would be wrong to pose every aspect of our programme as the precondition for a militant supporting the CDLM or attending its conferences, we must carefully draft a programme for the next CDLM conference based on our perspectives on the main tasks in the unions.

We must ensure that this includes an explicit statement of proletarian internationalism, opposition to import controls, and a commitment to active solidarity with workers in other countries. In particular the question of the imperialist army in Ireland and the struggles of workers in Southern Africa against racist regimes must be actively taken up in the unions.

The incoming NC will appoint a permanent commission for the purpose of planning in detail our work in the CDLM as a part of our overall trade union work.

The WSL's fight to Reconstruct the International

While substantial progress has been made in our work in Britain and in the work of the Turkish comrades (detailed in their own document) the most stubborn problem of all for the movement remains the development of our international work. Insufficient progress has been made in our efforts to establish an international, centralised tendency around our International Theses document adopted at our last conference. This is despite repeated attempts to clarify outstanding problems and develop working relationships.

While the visit of the US comrades to our summer school was a welcome step forward, it was also a way of revealing some of the difficulties and differences of method that have not yet been satisfactorily tackled.

Similarly the work of our movement on Ireland has been extremely slow and fraught with delays and a lack of urgency that runs as a sharp contrast to our work in many other fields. The result is that our movement—though we have maintained a principled stand for the withdrawal of British imperialist troops and for the right of the Irish people to self-determination—has not developed the kind of concrete programme on Ireland that would be consistent with our intervention in the British labour movement.

It is in spite of these weaknesses that the Turkish work, drawing on the strengths and experiences of the WSL, has recorded important gains.

The international work of the WSL is of fundamental importance and must be developed and transformed. The incoming NC must make all necessary arrangements, including the establishment of an international sub-committee able to meet at least once between NC meetings and to follow through in detail all work with other political groups and individual contacts internationally. Only in this way can we seriously prepare for the coming year to be one of progress in the fight to reconstruct the international.

A conscious turn towards international work must be linked to a decision that theoretical work within the movement needs to be developed. To assist this the new NC should form study groups to do research and fresh theoretical work in particular on the international economic crisis; on Stalinism; on the history of present day Trotskyism; and on Popular Fronts.

It is necessary for us to develop and deepen our analysis of a number of other countries, aiming at agreeing elements of *programme* for these countries beyond the routine critiques of Stalinism and reformism and calls for working class independence.

Following on our role as an element in the building of a world revolutionary party we must be able to show *concretely* how such a party must be built in other countries. Only in that way can we establish the organisational and individual contacts on which the reconstruction of the FI will depend. Only in this way will we be seen as a force to

be reckoned with by any elements in those countries who are fighting for the same objective.

In practical terms this must involve the setting up of commissions of comrades to do the necessary preparatory work for a number of key areas. This is already being done for Ireland, Turkey and S. Africa. The same should also be done for (at least) Spain and Portugal, Latin America, South Asia (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangla Desh), France and Italy, the USA, Greece, and the workers' states.

These groupings are suggested either because of their importance or because we have contacts or some record of work on this before, or because they are places where we should be able to make contacts. These commissions must be answerable to the NC's international subcommittee.

The development of a more concrete programme for such countries will also assist another part of our work—interventions into the various "solidarity" movements, etc. The politics of such movements (e.g. Anti-Apartheid, Zimbabwe Solidarity, CARI, Chile Solidarity etc.) is usually somewhere between the Tribune Group and the SWP—typically "Stalino-Pabloite". We are opposed to affiliating to such movements as an organisation for that reason. But it may be useful in some cases to intervene in such movements. That would mean fighting to direct the solidarity struggle away from moral pressure and towards independent action by the labour movement to implement demands for blacking of arms cargoes, export orders etc.

By intervening on a programme which relates demands for the countries concerned to demands for concrete solidarity actions by the British labour movement we can also expect to attract serious members of the "solidarity" campaigns to Trotskyism, including those from the countries concerned.

One tactic through which such interventions can be carried out is by supporting the affiliation of TU branches, student unions etc. to the campaigns. This is not a general policy however, and should be judged case by case.

In any event our intervention on international questions must in no way be dependent upon such solidarity movements. We should fight to bring concrete demands on international questions into all our trade union and Labour Party work.

Development of the WSL

The last year has seen two major advances for the movement: the successful launching of the weekly *Socialist Press*, and the emergence of the first magazine edition of *Trotskyism Today*.

These are indications of the increased political strength of the movement over the last period. However the problems in quantitatively developing the WSL through recruitment of new forces remains a basic stumbling block.

The tendency to allow the (real) difficulties of winning workers to a disciplined revolutionary movement to dominate the work of the branches takes different forms. One form is to descend to a programme of routine activism. The other main form is a relapse into discussion-group politics. In both cases it is the failure to confront the central task posed to the movement—the training of a Trotskyist cadre capable of fighting in every sector of the workers' movement—which lies at the root of the retreat.

The drive to establish *Socialist Press* as a weekly paper was designed to assist in fighting these tendencies. The weekly paper forces branches to organise on a more warlike footing; it draws our members into a much closer and more consistent political and organisational relationship both with the centre and with contacts. It continually brings the

sharpness of the political situation into the movement. And it indicates the seriousness of the WSL in its fight for a principled leadership in the working class.

But the weekly paper does not of itself solve the problem. It needs to be used aggressively and creatively as a tool in the fight for a deeper intervention into the working class. It needs to be used by every branch as a means of reflecting our policies as fought for in workers' struggles locally and nationally. It needs to reflect the life within the WSL and the battles and arguments we have with our readers and contacts.

And of course the paper needs to be backed up by a growing organisation. The failure to achieve the recruitment we have aimed for over the past year has reflected itself in a continuing financial problem for the movement, and a resultant heavy burden on our full-time workers. Our central resources are stretched—often beyond breaking point.

A sales drive with the weekly paper coupled to a turn to recruitment can help to tackle this problem of development. By breaking the sterile routine in many branches, recruitment of fresh forces has an impact on the movement far more wide-reaching than simple numerical growth. The fight to develop new members can highlight the weaknesses of method in branches—enabling them to be fought out—and can draw forward new forces into leadership in each area.

While an important part of our work lies in waging a struggle against the various revisionist groups that inhabit the British 'left' and such a struggle can bring important recruits to the movement, it is crucial to guard against any tendency to centre our work on this milieu or to place a higher priority on such work than on our own campaigns in the working class. The strength of our own movement to which the best of these forces will respond is our determination to take the Transitional Programme and its method beyond discussion groups and out into the fight for revolutionary leadership in the working class. This must remain the main focus of our branch work, with education programmes developed in order to provide essential training for new members.

The important success of our 1977 summer school marks a significant if belated development for the movement, and the NC must ensure that education, with further summer schools and weekend schools, is developed to further steel the movement that has such a serious task to fulfil in the fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The Poisoned Well

This discussion document, as amended and endorsed by the Second Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League, was drafted as a response to the invitation from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International for the WSL — as a non-member of the USFI — to submit material as part of the discussion prior to the USFI XIth World Congress, now scheduled for 1979.

It examines the merger of the two main political tendencies within the USFI — the current in solidarity with the US Socialist Workers Party, and the majority current grouped around the European secretariat, headed by Ernest Mandel. And it examines the motives for this change in the light of the post war crisis within the Fourth International.

WHAT COLOUR IS THE WATER TODAY?

"The history of a revolutionary organisation must be an active history. Lessons from the past must be absorbed for use in the future, otherwise each generation has to drink from a poisoned well".

Jack Barnes, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. XIV No. 5 p.11.

Even while he made this generally correct statement about history, Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Barnes was launching within the SWP a new policy which can only be designed to lead in the opposite direction — away from a serious study of historical problems; away from the lessons they hold for us today; and away from the new problems that such a reckoning would bring to the leadership of each faction within the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in particular and the world Trotskyist movement in general.

Seven months later the 29th Annual Convention of the SWP unanimously passed a resolution calling for the

dissolving of the two main factions within the USFI — the International Majority Tendency and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (whose line mainly followed that of the SWP though the SWP itself is prevented by reactionary US legislation from international affiliation).

At the end of that convention a meeting of LTF leaders voted by a large majority to dissolve the faction.

What has been the source of this dramatic internal change within the SWP camp of the USFI? It is openly stated that the impetus for the change came from a 'Self Criticism' document by the IMT leaders which in the view of both LTF and IMT leaders largely heals the political divisions that have marked the life of the USFI since the 'Ninth World Congress' in 1969. But a closer examination of that document and of the reply to it by Barnes shows at once that the most important questions are in no way tackled by either faction; indeed they are not even raised.

However the discussion on the 'Self Criticism' issue does have an important positive role in the fight for clarity

within the Trotskyist movement: it enables the questions of method and historical problems of the movement to be raised and to find a response since these issues now affect every member of the USFI internationally. This was certainly not the objective of the document's authors or of the SWP leaders, but its importance remains.

It is from this standpoint that we wish to develop the discussion and to draw out the points which we would consider vital in any serious reassessment of 1969. Indeed today's IMT clearly regard it as impossible to attempt to view the wrong positions adopted by the majority in 1969 in isolation. Their document includes references back to the Cuban revolution some ten years beforehand. In our view it is necessary to turn to history—though the IMT does so in an inadequate and largely involuntary way, and does not go far enough back in time. We would see the false method embodied in the 1969 resolution on Latin America tracing its roots back to the still unresolved political problems that formed the basis of the split in the Fourth International in 1953. And we will argue that only when these problems have been grasped and confronted can a genuine fight to prevent any repetition of the 1969 errors be carried through.

In this respect we see the hasty moves by the SWP to liquidate the LTF (which was ostensibly set up to fight the false method of the IMT leadership) as an attempt to avoid facing these issues. We will show that in our view this is because a similar method of analysis is shared by the SWP, and the SWP for various unclear reasons has a stronger reluctance to re-examine its own history and that of the post-war Trotskyist movement as a whole than even the IMT.

A pointer to this can be found in some of the questions that Jack Barnes conspicuously fails to raise in his response to the IMT 'Self Criticism'. He describes the document itself as:

"... a progressive and even historical document, whose publication serves the interests of the Fourth International".

The reservations that Barnes sets against this glowing recommendation are all but insignificant: the SWP leaders are hurt and offended by some harsh descriptions of them by the IMT and some inaccurate polemical points raised against them; there are niggling doubts in the SWP as to the latest IMT conception of the 'new mass vanguard'; and Barnes urges the IMT to go the whole hog and rescind the disastrously (and confessedly) wrong resolutions on Latin America. In exchange for this he offers to call for the winding up of the LTF.

But the most elementary questions are not asked. For instance the Self Criticism in its very first paragraph says in offhand fashion that a correction of the line 'has long been necessary'. Barnes himself says later that the USFI has had the wrong line 'for ten years'. But he does not ask the IMT *how long* they have insisted on maintaining a line they knew was wrong. How many years have USFI militants in Latin America and elsewhere laboured under a totally discredited policy, while factional considerations within the USFI prevented the leadership from correcting it?

Is the Trotskyist movement in being to provide a world wide debating society for its 'leading members' or to give programme and perspective to the working class in its daily and deadly serious struggles with the bourgeoisie in each country?

What kind of leadership places its factional interests before the class struggle? Barnes—with good reason, as we will show later—fails to ask these elementary questions.

And he also avoids asking the related question: why did the IMT suddenly decide *now* that a Self Criticism should be produced? Why did they not do so three years ago, or in three years' time? What events or experiences have shaped their decision? There is no clue in the Self Criticism itself. But Barnes dodges the issue, because it raises the problem that must haunt the SWP leadership: if factional considerations prompted the IMT to remain silent on its errors for a "long" time, could their ritual breast beating about them today not also be a factional manoeuvre?

More seriously, Barnes fails to ask another question of more lasting importance. What reason have we to believe that the IMT leaders will not repeat the blunders of 1969 or exactly similar errors at any point in the future? The Self Criticism catalogues and categorises the 'mistakes' that led it to adopt the guerrillaist line of 1969. But it fails to account for *why* those mistakes were made. Indeed the whole affair is alarmingly ascribed to a series of unfortunate quantitative errors, and the dashing of subjective 'hopes'. Nowhere is there even a hint that this series of apparently isolated errors bear any relationship to one another, or to anything else. And certainly there is no hint that there might have been any qualitative break from the Marxist method. The list of evasions on this is revealing:

"We exaggerated the degree of instability" ... "lacked a complete and correct view" ... "we did not adequately combat the idea" ... "we overestimated" ... "we thought" ... "our hopes were very much exaggerated" ... "led to an evolution opposite to the one we hoped for" ... "our estimation was false" ... "whose importance we had already under-estimated" ... "another error of analysis, this time in regard to the real state of our forces in Latin America" ... "presupposed as solved a number of problems that had not been solved and were even far from solved" ... "errors of appreciation of reality".

In our view this depressing list amounts a piecemeal admission that in 1969 the IMT leadership was completely *disoriented*, to the extent of not knowing the state of their own forces in Latin America, basing perspectives on 'hopes' and now the astounding confession of "errors of appreciation of reality". These are not single errors. A *method* of analysis is involved, which the IMT document does not even begin to confront. It is a method alien to Marxism; and it is a method not challenged by Barnes in his reply. Unless this is recognised, and the alien method fought, then the USFI will remain in the grip of leaders who will in the future regard it as sufficient once a policy has proven itself empirically to be an unmitigated disaster, simply to apologise and to list a series of instances in which the false method manifested itself, while discarding the embarrassing old policy.

In our view such attempts—which the Self Criticism is the latest in a line going back through Argentina to the Ceylon debacle—to retrospectively patch over the symptoms of the disease while the disease itself is left to flourish—carries with it grave dangers, and stands as the number one obstacle to a fight to reconstruct a united Fourth International. Learning from history does not mean simply and belatedly throwing aside policies long ago proven bankrupt. It means taking steps to analyse the source of these false policies; the class content of the method that produces them; the unsolved problems around which they revolve, and the reasons such policies were not fought adequately at the time they first emerged. And it means arming a reconstructed Fourth International not only with a new leadership but also with the Marxist

method of dialectical materialism.

We have often been told that the USec is opposed to any notion of deciding on history by 'voting'. Yet in the Self Criticism and in the SWP reply we see instead an attempt to deal with history by a mutual hiding of sins—an agreed silence on the fundamental question. We are convinced that now is the time to draw the lessons of the past as a basis for a reaffirmation of the method and principles of Trotsky's Transitional Programme—both in theory and in practice—which is for us the only principled basis for the reconstruction of the world Trotskyist movement as a democratic centralist International.

THE POISON OF PABLOISM

Since it is a term commonly abused and wilfully misinterpreted, we should begin our analysis of the problem of method within today's Trotskyist movement by outlining in general terms our understanding of the term 'Pabloism'—its content and its material basis as an alien liquidationist method that emerged within the Trotskyist movement.

Firstly we must stress that in our view Pabloism cannot be understood as either a fixed set of ideas, or as a developed 'theory'. Nor was it the invention of Pablo as such. Rather we should see its origins as analogous to the material origins of Stalin's "theory" of socialism in one country—which at first was far from a theory but rather a reflection of the material situation in the isolated backward workers' state in which a parasitic bureaucracy was in the process of consolidating an unstable base of support while resting on the most conservative and nationalist elements of the population, and thriving on the international defeats inflicted on the working class.

In the case of Pabloism we would assess it as a method which has also had an objective material source. It reflects the ideological approach of the petty bourgeoisie. Pabloism in its initial stages drew its strength from the material and political weakness of leadership in the post war Fourth International (after the destructive impact of Nazi, Stalinist and bourgeois repression) and the isolation of most Trotskyist forces from the mass organisations and daily struggles of the working class. It was under these conditions that until 1951-53 Pablo's method was almost unquestioningly adopted by the majority of the postwar leadership of the Fourth International. The danger of such a method emerging remains acute wherever (for whatever reasons) Trotskyism becomes dependent for its existence upon middle class and intellectual forces with little experience and few links to the working class—forced to contemplate the class struggle from the *outside*, and more than ever dependent upon analysis which finds it difficult to penetrate beneath the surface of events.

And while the empirical theories, concepts and rationalisations that jeopardise the programme may be devised in the first instance by petty bourgeois intellectuals, as they are taken up in the movement they find corresponding echoes in very different quarters. Workers seeking an opportunist retreat from the fight for principle in the unions and a shortcut around the isolation of Trotskyist forces can easily succumb to pressure from the Stalinist or reformist bureaucracy, or to the superficial plausibility of the empirical schemas created elsewhere. This took place among certain worker cadres within the SWP and later in the Ceylonese LSSP. But the fact remains that the Transitional Programme's demands and principles have only been thrown aside by those elements that have already for one reason or another begun to stand aloof from the fight for revolutionary leadership within the day-to-day struggles of the working class.

From this weakness flows the objective possibility of an opportunist pull-back from the central political thrust of the Transitional Programme—the fight for the complete political independence of the working class through the building of independent revolutionary parties based on an active programme of intervention into daily struggles in conflict with existing mass leaderships. Only when an isolated Trotskyist group begins to stand in a certain respect aloof from the day-to-day political problems and struggles of the working class can these questions be seen as anything other than fundamental and the very starting point of any policy adopted.

Even if objective factors such as the decimation of Trotskyist forces in World War II, isolate Trotskyists from the working class, it is essential that the leadership of a national section orientate the forces available continuously into the working class if the movements, strengths and weakness of that class is to be properly understood, and a correct estimation made of the overall balance of class forces. If this is not done then additional traps open, and the way is cleared for the emergence of empirical and impressionist methods of analysis.

"One of the psychological sources of opportunism is superficial impatience, the lack of confidence, in the gradual growth of the party's influence, the desire to win the masses with the aid of an organisational manoeuvre or personal diplomacy. Out of this springs the policy of combinations behind the scenes, the policy of silence, of hushing up, of self-renunciation, of adaptation to the ideas and slogans of others; and finally the complete passage to the positions of opportunism." (Trotsky: *Marxism and the Trade Unions*, "Communism and Syndicalism", New Park, 1972, p.4)

Impatience at the small, inadequate forces of Trotskyism contrasted with the scale of the tasks posed can spur on particularly middle class elements to a readiness to abandon long-held and hard-defended principles in a frantic search for apparently ready-made "mass" leaderships spontaneously emerging. Without the immediate test of experience in struggles within the working class to refute such notions, the very worst and most dilettante traits of the petty bourgeoisie will receive full rein and can swing the movement from one direction to another with great rapidity.

Another side of the same coin is shown by those who from the sidelines draw pessimistic conclusions as to the revolutionary strength of the working class, and who look instead for bureaucratic or other non-proletarian forces that seem to offer a "revolutionary" substitute for the seemingly unwinable working class. Either way the outcome is to direct even further away from the necessary training of cadres in the working class, and to isolate the movement still further from the mass movement. This in turn can only result in the leadership becoming still more dependent upon surface impressions as the basis for analysis.

At the same time we must stress that the abandonment of the Transitional Programme and the method embodied in the transitional demands does not necessarily take place in an openly *right wing* direction—though this is the most common approach of the Pabloites. It is equally possible—if surface appearances seem to indicate a heightening of the struggle—for the transitional demands to be discarded in the course of an impressionistic *ultra-left* turn and a sectarian standpoint—in which the situation is seen as having "gone beyond" that as sketched by Trotsky in the

Transitional Programme and in which only *maximum* measures (maximum demands or armed struggle) have any relevance. And in either case the wrong conclusions draw strength by being separated from any thorough going and scientifically analysed work in the working class. Neither the 'left' nor the 'right' variants of Pabloism (which can of course be combined in a single movement or impressionist leader) offer any possibility of training serious forces in the working class or even of maintaining a principled political line in situations of rapid change. The impact of this method on the practice of those that succumb to it is in effect to liquidate the political independence and programme of the Trotskyist vanguard into the latest spontaneously-emerging "revolutionary current" from the petty bourgeoisie or the bureaucracy. It attacks the principled foundations and threatens the very organisational existence of Trotskyist forces, and abandons the central concept of the Transitional Programme that "the world political situation is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat". The forces that have espoused such a method of analysis have therefore acted continuously as a liquidationist current within the world Trotskyist movement, and remain so to this day.

In all these respects Pabloism as a method can be seen as the ideological reflection of material problems and pressures upon post-war Trotskyism. We do not forget that not only were Trotskyist forces broken up in the war period, but also that the very contradictory and long drawn out process of the post-war expansion of Stalinism into Eastern Europe and the apparent strength conferred on Stalinism during this period—contributed to the problems faced by an inexperienced FI leadership.

In our view Pabloism can only be fought by those who combine a continuous fight to orientate the Trotskyist movement towards intervention and the fight to give leadership in the actual daily struggles of the working class with a serious, open and honest struggle to grasp both theoretically and in practice the context in which that fight takes place both internationally and nationally. This means a fight to probe to the roots of the complex process of change within which Trotskyists are forced to fight for programme. The method of Marxism is a *scientific* method, and has to be fought for in *conflict* with spontaneity and surface impressions. As soon as this combined struggle slackens, it is inevitable that forms of bourgeois ideology and bourgeois method of analysis must begin to appear within the movement.

Philosophically, Pabloism is a form of empiricism. Its abrupt and complete lurches from one tack to another are based on the apparent changes which take place on the surface—not on the deeper-going processes which produce these changes. As an empirical method, Pabloism deals with phenomena at random. In general, a Pabloite views events singly and a-historically; he splits up processes that must be viewed as a whole; but at the same time he lumps together aspects of reality that need to be distinguished as opposites. The refusal of Pabloites to analyse their own history honestly and their continuous attempts to shape the facts to fit their pre-formulated theories are both clear symptoms indicating that here is a completely *idealist* method which founders as soon as it is brought into contact with material reality. The Pabloites exemplify all of the weaknesses of empiricism spelled out by Engels:

"In the contemplation of individual things it forgets the connection between them; in the contemplation of their existence it forgets the beginning and end of that

existence; of their repose, it forgets their motion. It cannot see the wood for the trees". (Engels, *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, Pathfinder, p.41).

Lenin, in dealing with departures from the dialectical method, also anticipated the methodological mutations of the Pabloites when he described the relationship of idealism to the development of the objective world itself:

"Human knowledge is not (or does not follow) a straight line, but a curve, which endlessly approximates a series of circles, a spiral. Any fragment, segment, section of this curve can be transformed (transformed one-sidedly) into an independent, complete, straight line, which then (if one does not see the wood for the trees) leads into the quagmire, into clerical obscurantism (where it is anchored by the class interests of the ruling classes)." (*CW*, Vol. 38, p.363.)

It is in this respect—the latching on to one aspect of a contradictory whole—that Pabloism shows most clearly that it is the twin brother of that other perversion of Marxism which has beset the post-war Trotskyist movement, state capitalism. Neither the state-capitalist nor the Pabloite is able to grapple with living contradiction. While the state capitalist latches as a result onto the reactionary, bourgeois aspects of the bureaucracy in the Kremlin and in Eastern Europe, and christens it one-sidedly a "ruling class", the Pabloite on the other hand seizes on the 'left' cosmetic appearance of statements by this or that wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy or even petty bourgeois nationalists, seeing only their apparent strength, and holding out deluded hopes for the self-reform of the bureaucracy or for the spontaneous emergence of political revolution or a Marxist leadership. As a result neither Pabloism nor state capitalism offers any means of understanding Stalinism and in practice both find themselves unable to fight it.

In the course of examining the emergence of the Pabloite method within the FI and the forms it takes today, we are not attempting in any way to divert attention from the fundamental political and theoretical problems for which Pabloism claimed (falsely) to have found the answer. In particular, while we will show how Pablo devised a completely false schema to explain the post-war overturn of capitalism under Stalinist leadership in Yugoslavia, we will not in this document elaborate in full an alternative analysis. This task remains one to be undertaken in the course of the fight to reconstruct the FI. But it seems unlikely that any serious progress towards it can be achieved while the various groupings today professing adherence to Trotskyism at the same time cling avidly and with factional motives to inadequate and superficial notions as to the processes involved in the post-war evolution of Stalinism. The WSL, for its part, has published a series of articles examining the post-war development of Stalinism, and will shortly be publishing the *Theory of Structural Assimilation* with a critical introduction, as the basis of further detailed work.

In our view the poisonous method of Pabloism has spread widely throughout the world Trotskyist movement. In purging it we must ensure that we do not seize merely upon its individual advocates or the symptoms it has produced. It is not enough to seek an organisational 'break' with Pabloism. And in prescribing the antidote we must seek a reaffirmation above all in the *practice* of the parties adhering to a reconstructed FI of the analytical method and the political principles of the Transitional Programme.

HOW THE WELL WAS POISONED

On November 16, 1953 the US Socialist Workers Party suddenly published the 'Open Letter' which split the Fourth International into public factions. One week later, representatives of Trotskyist groups in Britain, France, New Zealand and Switzerland signed a resolution forming the International Committee (IC) in solidarity with the line of the SWP's appeal.

In 1954, the remaining sections under the leadership of Michel Pablo and Ernest Germain held what they termed the 'Fourth World Congress', which excluded the IC faction and effectively expelled it from the International.

The political basis for this split lay implicitly in the revisionist political line that had from early 1950 through to mid 1953 been commonly accepted by the FI leadership, and which had been endorsed at the 1951 Third World Congress.

The political line was first formulated by Pablo at the end of 1949, when he began to draw a number of conclusions based on the surface appearances of events in Yugoslavia since the Stalin-Tito split of 1948. Where Pablo found real events inadequate to support his line on the 'centrist' evolution of the Yugoslav CP, he did not hesitate to go back and *rewrite* the FI's version of these events. The result was a theory that Stalinist parties like the YCP could be forced by 'mass pressure' in 'exceptional circumstances' to play a revolutionary role. And as the notion gathered strength, so the events in China were also rewritten to provide a further instance of this 'process'.

The FI's analysis of the complex and contradictory transformation process taking place in Eastern Europe certainly left much to be desired. The general consensus to begin with was that the Buffer Zone was undergoing a state capitalist stage of development. But Pablo had to ride roughshod over such theoretical work as had been done, using the obvious inconsistencies and inadequacies of the state capitalist analysis as further justification for his own line. In particular Pablo had to discard the careful analysis made of Russia and the Buffer Zone in 1947 by Germain. Germain pointed out that in Yugoslavia:

"... the relations of forces are such that the bourgeoisie finds itself for the moment at the mercy of an action by the proletariat. It is only the bureaucracy's fear both of the proletariat and of imperialism which restrains it from dealing the native capitalists a death blow".

Pablo also had to jettison the April 1949 IEC resolution which stated that there was "an undeniable existence of a police regime in Yugoslavia".

That this was a *conscious* change was shown most clearly in the 1951 Third World Congress resolution which explicitly rewrote the previously adopted positions of the FI starting from the appearance of events after 1958:

"It is the duty of the FI to critically re-examine in the light of events which have occurred since 1948, its past analysis of the Yugoslav revolution and the dynamics of this revolution which events have placed in a new light".

Perhaps most important of all, Pablo had to get around the fact that at the height of the mass movement in Yugoslavia and at the point where the native capitalist class was in full-scale retreat, Tito's Stalinist-led partisan forces had set out *not* to consolidate workers' power, but to set up a coalition with imported remnants of a terrified and pro-Nazi national bourgeoisie. This was the 1944-5 Tito-Subasich agreement. In this, as in every respect up to the point of the 1948 split with Stalin, Stalinist policy in Yugoslavia was identical in content, though slightly different in tempo, with the policy throughout the Buffer

states. Indeed the first priority of Stalinist parties internationally in the postwar period was the suppression of possible upsurges—most notably in France and Italy, where Stalinist parties had also entered bourgeois coalition governments while the armed masses looked to struggle for power. As 'evidence' for ignoring this development in Yugoslavia, Pablo accepted and used the contemptible arguments of the Titoites themselves!

"They (the Titoites) insist that none of the political and social conquests of their struggle was endangered by the coalition for the simple reason that reaction had no real base among the masses and that the coalition was reached at the top between representatives of the masses and the impotent shadows of the bourgeoisie".

Pablo claimed that the masses were 'continuously active' from 1941 to 1948, and that 'a revolution of a special development had actually taken place' leading 'up to a seizure of power, to a radical transformation of capitalist property relations and to the destruction of the old capitalist state and the reconstruction of a new state apparatus'. "The transformation of property relations" and the "construction of a new state apparatus" were both in fact already taking place throughout the whole of the Buffer Zone in anything but a revolutionary way in the years 1944-50, under the watchful eyes and guns of the Soviet Red Army. What attracted Pablo's attention in Yugoslavia was Tito's demagogic 'left' speeches and bureaucratic establishment of 'workers' councils' as part of his bid to solidify a popular base of support while carrying through his interbureaucratic dispute with Stalin. Pablo saw the whole process of transformation (largely complete by 1948) as condensed into a short period, which then became confused with the Titoites' own propaganda and 'mass mobilisation' manoeuvres. Under these conditions Pablo undertook the revision of the Trotskyist programme.

Tito's leadership, correctly characterised by the FI in 1947 as a bureaucracy afraid of both working class and imperialism, and in 1948 as running a 'police regime', was suddenly described by Pablo as 'partly bureaucratic' while he claimed that the Yugoslav revolution "raises itself to new heights, becomes constantly more democratic, etc., etc.", and from the very outset these illusions in Yugoslavia were linked to a general revision of the Trotskyist stand on Stalinism:

"Certain Communist Parties in a favourable conjuncture, when they are linked to the real revolutionary movement of the masses, can detach themselves from the yoke of the Kremlin and begin to act on their own".

This concept of course challenges the very foundation of the FI—the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism and the impossibility of reforming Stalinist parties. While Pablo began to do this by way of 'exceptional' cases, the method involved left the door wide open to further similar blunders.

These lines of 1950 were developed much further in the pre-conference material for the Third World Congress. Pablo, with the full backing of Cannon and Healy led the way with his notorious document "Where Are We Going?"

In this document Pablo completely excluded from his analysis any conception of the political independence of the working class in its struggles against imperialism or the Stalinist bureaucracies. This, taken together with the surface appearances of the Cold War period, combined to create the basis for the Pabloite concept of a Third World War between the 'two camps'—'imperialism' and 'Stalinism' which would, he claimed, amount to a "War-Revolution".

This provided a *global* 'exceptional circumstance' which Pablo claimed would have the effect of forcing the Stalinist bureaucracies to drop their counter-revolutionary role and to mobilise the working class in a revolutionary way. In other words, here, it was claimed, was a period so new that the most basic tenets of the Transitional Programme could no longer be applied, and all the evidence of the thoroughly counter-revolutionary behaviour of the Stalinist parties, before, during and after the war, could be abandoned.

"The Communist Parties retain the possibility in certain circumstances of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation, that is to say of finding themselves compelled to engage in a struggle for power".

The Yugoslav events had thus been transformed from an 'exception' into a general rule. And at the same time Pablo drew a generalisation which extended to the bureaucratised, monolithic, power-wielding CP's of Eastern Europe, claiming that there was:

"... the possibility, and in the long run the inevitability of an opposition arising to the Soviet bureaucracy to the degree that these CP's have a mass base of their own which has enabled them to conquer power by and large through their own means".

Pablo was *not* here brilliantly anticipating the current splits in Stalinism, but clearly looking for a section of the bureaucracy to break from Stalinism and move *leftwards!*

In the event, the Third World Congress adopted a document on *Orientation and Perspectives* which included a number of distortions of the Transitional Programme:

"It would be anti-Marxist... to affirm that the weight of the bureaucratic apparatus will prove more decisive under all conditions than the pressure of the movement of the masses".

In this way the formulation of the Transitional Programme on the 'laws of history' which will bring the masses to recognise that the crisis of leadership "can be resolved only by the Fourth International" is stripped of its political content—the struggle for independent revolutionary leadership. The result of omitting any reference to the Trotskyist movement in this half-quote is a complete capitulation to spontaneity, leaving it to the masses to resolve their crisis of leadership and brings, inevitably, a simultaneous capitulation to the bureaucracy.

The document went on to spell out even more clearly the abandonment of the very starting point of the struggles of Lenin and Trotsky—the paramount importance of revolutionary leadership, the *subjective* factor:

"In the long run, objective conditions determine the character and dynamics of the movement of the masses which, raised to a certain level, can overcome all subjective obstacles on the road to revolution... It is not excluded that certain Communist Parties with the bulk of their forces can be pushed out of the strict orbit of the Soviet bureaucracy and can project a revolutionary orientation... The developments in Yugoslavia and China are only a prefiguration of the events to come".

Here was nothing more than a recipe for winding up the struggle for independent Trotskyist parties. Indeed in Eastern Europe Trotskyist forces were actually called upon to do so, and to:

"... try to integrate themselves into the CP's and remain there, in order to take advantage of the revolutionary possibilities which will develop".

For all we know, they may still be there, still waiting.

Two distinct resolutions on Eastern Europe were passed—one on Yugoslavia and one on the Buffer Zone excluding Yugoslavia.

The opposition to Pablo was muted and confused; Germain in a document entitled *Ten Theses* took issue with some of Pablo's positions, but left intact the central assertion that the Yugoslav and Chinese CP's had broken from Stalinism. Mandel actually *named* the European CP's he thought likely to break from Stalinism under mass pressure:

"In the coming revolutionary upsurge in Western Europe during the period of preparation and unleashing of war, the growing pressure of the masses is liable to force the French and Italian CP's to modify their pacifist course of 'neutralising' the bourgeoisie. These parties could then... project a revolutionary orientation and see themselves forced to undertake a struggle for power..."

Germain in other words attempted to straddle an imaginary fence between 'orthodox' Trotskyism and Pablo's revisionism. In reality he came down firmly on the side of Pablo.

Cannon and Healy also were firmly behind Pablo during and after the Third World Congress, and both lent their support—(Healy being actively involved) to Pablo's moves to expel the majority of the French section who in 1952 refused to carry out Pablo's directive that entry work in the French CP can be made the main axis of their work, with independent work subordinate to it.

But even the French leadership that did fight Pablo failed to challenge his views on Yugoslavia and China. The well of Trotskyism had been thoroughly poisoned by Pabloite revisionism.

It is of course easy for us and for even the Pabloites of 1977 to reject the revisionist policies of 1951. We can see quite easily from experience that they were based on false premises and that they proved wrong in almost every respect. In just the same way it is easy for the IMT and LTF to agree today that the 1969 policies were wrong. What is harder however is to analyse *why* they were wrong and to draw from those errors lessons that can strengthen our analysis today.

In doing so it is important to see what formed the driving force behind the 1953 split. It was in fact a sharpening of the class struggle internationally, which produced a crisis for Stalinism and led to a rapid and thorough exposure of the impotence of Pablo's policies in fighting Stalinism.

In March 1953, the death of Stalin created an immediate problem for the Kremlin bureaucracy. In the manoeuvres to decide Stalin's successor, various minimal concessions were made to head off any possible forward movement of the Soviet working class, while the bureaucracy was careful to hold on to all the reins of real political power.

In June of 1953, the workers of East Berlin rose in revolt against increased production targets and demanding democratic rights in the first onset of political revolution in Eastern Europe. The Pabloites who had looked simply to the bureaucratised Eastern European CP's to throw up leftward-moving 'leaders' for such uprisings were left with no independent policy, and abandoned the 1947 call of the FI for the withdrawal of the Red Army which was savagely repressing the rising.

In September 1953 a general strike broke out in France only to be derailed and betrayed by the Communist Party—precisely that Stalinist party which was supposedly about to 'project a revolutionary orientation' according to Pablo and Germain.

Under these conditions Pablo's line became increasing-

ly hard to defend. At the same time experiences of cadre-building in the working class prompted Healy in particular to highlight the fact that the Pabloites always ignored the question of building Trotskyist parties:

"Take this talk about Stalinism. Impatient comrades, thinking in terms of China, East Europe and now even the USSR, see the impact of the post-war revolutionary forces upon these countries, but fail to recognise one vital thing, that, as far as we know, we have not one single organised cadre group in those areas".

But it was when Pablo-sponsored factions began to work away *within* the parties existing in the USA and Britain that the abrupt turn took place. Between May and September 1953, Healy swung from sympathetic defence of Pablo to bitter hostility and in the same short space of time the SWP leaders switched from virtual indifference to the point of publishing the Open Letter.

The Workers Socialist League has always defended the actions of the signatories of the Open Letter, while pointing out the inadequacies of the political fight they carried out against Pabloism. The very history of the IC has proved that it is *not sufficient* to present a formal defence of the Transitional Programme if there is no corresponding development of a method through which that Programme can be translated into the practice of Trotskyist parties in the rapidly-changing class struggle both in their own countries and internationally. The danger of adaptation under pressure of events must remain, and can only be combatted by a living, dialectical method of analysis and a rigorous development and testing of the programme in the practice of the fight against reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies.

There was a need to break from Pablo's line—but it took place only on an empirical level and without political clarity. They recognised that their party-building work was politically threatened by Pablo's line. But even as they carried through the break from Pablo, both Healy and Cannon clung tenaciously to the false positions adopted at the Third World Congress. The Open Letter itself conspicuously only challenges Pablo in issues that had arisen *after* the 1951 Congress:

- (1) Pablo's failure to call for political revolution and his concessions to the 'liberalisation' measures in the USSR after Stalin's death.
- (2) A similar failure to present independent programme in East Germany.
- (3) The failure to oppose the Stalinist sell-out of the French general strike.
- (4) 'Stalinist' organisational methods and the promotion of secret factions to enforce Pablo's line.

All of these charges were well-founded. But none penetrated to the essence of the problem or attempted to correct the FI analysis of the evolution of post-war Stalinism. As a result we find that the 1954 so-called 'Fourth World Congress' held by the Pabloite faction felt able to trace (correctly) a clear continuity of line back to the common decisions of the Third World Congress—just as Mandel to this very day traces the ancestry of his latest World Perspectives document back to that same Third World Congress.

The IC grouping, however, was an uneasy coalition which did not press for clarity on these questions—as the WRP itself admits today:

"The coalition of groups opposing Pablo was not politically and doctrinally homogeneous. They were united by a common desire to prevent the bureaucratic strangulation of the FI by the creation of a Byzantine cult of

infallibility around Pablo and—most importantly—to prevent the liquidation of the FI into a Stalinist milieu. Behind this conditional and transitory unity there remained a disparateness of method . . ."

Indeed it was not until 1957 that very much in the way of clarification on the question of the Third World Congress took place. In that year the SWP began to show signs of moving back towards an accommodation with Pabloism, and were challenged by the leadership of the British group.

The SWP had expressed some agreement with the document at the Pabloite "Fifth World Congress". Entitled 'The Decline and Fall of Stalinism', the document clung on to all the old eulogies of the Yugoslav CP (which had since reunited with the Kremlin and backed the Hungarian invasion) and gave a favourable view of the 'left' leadership of the Polish CP (which had been restored to office by Moscow in exchange for their tacit support for the crushing of the Hungarian workers). The document drew no serious political lessons from the Hungarian events and issued no call anywhere for the building of Trotskyist parties in Eastern Europe if political revolution was to be carried through.

However the SWP response to this appalling document was summed up by Cannon:

"The political pronouncements of the two sides (IC and IS) appear to come closer together than was the case in the period prior to the formal split . . . If the thinking of the two sides should continue to evolve in the same way, then they would both have to consider the question of unity . . ."

In this statement by Cannon in 1957 we can see the ancestral link to the latest stampede by the SWP some 20 years later to wind up any fight against the IMT.

From 1957 onwards, the SWP leadership began increasingly to draw political conclusions close to those of



James P. Cannon: right in 1953, wrong in 1963 on role of Marxist party.

the Pabloite International Secretariat. The upheaval of the Cuban revolution, combined with the unresolved problem of method in the SWP leadership to produce impressionist confusion every bit as bad as that of the Pabloites—while from the 'orthodox' Socialist Labour League in Britain came a stubborn refusal to grapple with the real events taking place in Cuba itself.

1969: THE USFI TAKES A FRESH DRINK

There are distinct political and methodological similarities between the 1969 guerrilla line and the line of Pablo from 1950 on. We will examine them in order to show why in our view the method in each case involves a definite *break* from Marxism and from the principles of the Transitional Programme.

The 1969 "turn" by the Pabloite forces was demonstrably a turn away from the central question of the building of revolutionary parties based on the proletariat in each country. In the wake of the momentous class battles of the 10 million strong General Strike of May-June 1968 in France, the 1968-69 battles in Italy and the escalation of workers' struggles in Mexico, the Pabloite "Ninth World Congress" adopted a resolution on Latin America which drew heavily on the appearances of events in Cuba. While Pablo had taken his impressions from the apparent 'centrist' evolution of the Yugoslav CP and based on spontaneously outlining a "revolutionary orientation", the USFI majority in 1969 started instead from their impressions of events in Cuba, expecting a natural evolution of the Castroite forces towards 'revolutionary Marxism'. The USFI majority nurtured the highest of hopes for the future political development of the petty bourgeois and peasant-based guerrilla movements then active in Latin America in the wake of the Cuban struggles. Tito's place as the hoped-for centre of a new, mass, spontaneously emerging 'revolutionary international' was taken by the Stalinist-backed petty bourgeois Fidel Castro.

It is important to note that both in 1953 and 1969 it was a *non-proletarian* even anti-proletarian force that was seen as leading future social revolutions.

The IMT now admits that their document of 1969 was wrong to characterise the situation in every Latin American country from the overall continental assessment that:

"... not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale".

Such a view of course excludes from the very outset the approach of the Transitional Programme, which starts from the *contradiction* between the undoubted ripeness of the objective conditions for revolution and the crisis of working class leadership:

"The strategic task of the *next period*—a pre-revolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organisation—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard..." (p.8)

Trotsky's characterisation of the period as "pre-revolutionary" is *not* tied purely to the specific period of 1938. As is the case consistently in his writings, Trotsky is characterising the period from a *political* standpoint. The "pre-revolutionary" period is one in which the essential prerequisite for revolution—a revolutionary leadership—is absent:

"The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the

pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership..." (p.6).

The Transitional Programme goes on to deal with the application of this analysis to a wide range of situations of struggle—*up to and including* armed struggle and the fight for soviets. Each of these situations, if there is not a broadly-based revolutionary leadership (Trotskyist Party) developed, remains in Trotsky's assessment *pre-revolutionary*.

The USFI majority by adopting the Latin American document threw this once more out of the window in 1969. Pablo had been the first to do so, claiming that an impending 'Third World War' meant that there was a world-wide revolutionary situation in which Stalinist parties could become revolutionary and none of the fundamentals of the Transitional Programme would apply. The USFI devised a new and global "exceptional circumstance" based on their assessment that the situation throughout the whole of Latin America was one of immediate civil war, in which petty bourgeois guerrilla forces could be regarded as revolutionary and the central tenets of the Transitional Programme were irrelevant:

"... it is necessary to reject the schematic and paralyzing conception according to which everything hinges on the preliminary existence of a genuine party with all its traditional structures (and the Cuban experience has unquestionably shown that under certain conditions it is possible for the political organisation to develop and reinforce itself as the armed struggle unfolds)..."

The transitional demands are referred to solely as a device to mobilise the working class in a few decoy actions designed to divert the armed forces and the state apparatus away from the areas of guerrilla struggle. In this way they advocate the use of:

"... transitional demands able to mobilise and raise the political consciousness of the worker, petty bourgeois and plebeian masses as well as the student masses and thus create growing tensions threatening the system (this would also make it more difficult for the government to concentrate their repressive forces exclusively in the zones of armed struggle)."

In the main the document is pessimistic as to the potential of the working class, the broadest layers of which are described as "still immobilised or neutralised, and subject to momentary prostration". The petty bourgeoisie, however, is seen as offering a rapid means of substituting for the working class, since they are "not tied by any umbilical cord to the traditions of the workers' movement or the traditional national-revolutionary movement". The document spells out the majority's reliance on the petty bourgeoisie:

"In fact, in most of the countries the most probable variant is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the main weight of the struggle and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in considerable measure will provide the cadres of the movement".

In 1950 Pablo had begun to advocate a turn towards 'left' currents in Stalinist parties and splits in the Eastern European Stalinist bureaucracies as the source of future revolutionary developments. The independent work of Trotskyist parties was subordinated to entry work in mass CPs. The 1969 USFI document spelled out a turn instead into the Castroite forces and the "integration" of USFI cadres into the Castroite ranks:

"Integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS, which

involves, regardless of the forms, working as an integral part of OLAS."

Because the 1969 document saw only a subordinate role for the proletariat in Latin American struggles, it could see only a subordinate role for the party whose task it is to fight for the political independence of that class. This notion was not restricted to Latin America. It was taken up and applied energetically in Europe and elsewhere, where the petty bourgeoisie, and students in particular, were seen as the new "vanguard", and the USFI worked away at adapting themselves completely to those middle class forces that responded to the Cuban revolution. The result could only be to deepen the isolation of the already largely petty bourgeois ranks of the USFI from the organised working class. As this increased, so did the rationalisations for their isolation. Theories were elaborated spelling out exactly why the working class was apparently no more than an inert mass in contrast with the vigorous 'revolutionary' zeal of the student vanguard.

And of course just as in 1953 the line of Pablo had crippled the FI sections by denying them a political stand independent of Stalinism, so the 1969 guerrilla line of the USFI liquidated the independent voice of their sections in Latin America which began or completed wholesale adaptation to the Castroite forces.

A contrast emerges however between the kind of fight waged by the IC forces against Pablo in 1953 and the argument against guerrillaism by the Pabloite Minority in 1969. For all the weaknesses and inadequacies and despite the fact that all the signatories of the Open Letter had been compromised by the decisions of the Third World Congress, a significant fight had taken place in 1953 in defence of the central core of the Transitional Programme against Pablo's liquidationism. The SWP had not hesitated to carry this fight through to an open split—even though that split can be seen in retrospect to have been ill-prepared.

But in 1969 when Hansen spoke on behalf of the SWP in denouncing the guerrilla strategy—of which the SWP had been among the keenest advocates in 1963—he did so with no intention of taking the fight to a principled conclusion. While the arguments Hansen advanced were in most cases "orthodox" points related to party-building, they concealed the fact that the SWP had reversed course in the USA itself and turned from adaptation to guerrillaism towards an equally Pabloite adaptation to pacifist anti-war and civil rights movements. Because of this so many topics became untouchable that Hansen's 'polemic' was reduced to the most superficial level, criticising a policy that he knew full well flowed directly from the reunification platform jointly agreed in 1963.

In this sense neither side in the 1969 polemic could be right. And neither side was prepared to take the polemic sufficiently seriously to probe into its historical context. Diplomacy ruled even at the most apparently heated points of the debate, and nobody raised the question of method with any enthusiasm.

Jack Barnes today must know how ludicrous it is for him to compare the partial and largely dishonest 'debate' on the Latin American document to the struggle against the Burnham-Shachtman opposition in 1939-40. In that struggle Trotsky took up the struggle for dialectical materialism on the side of the SWP majority, and set out constantly to deepen the discussion precisely on the question of method so studiously avoided by the SWP from 1969 to today.

In contrast let us look at Barnes' response to the current IMT Self Criticism. He accepts the critique almost entirely at face value. As we have shown he fails to ask the most obvious questions which the Self Criticism fails to answer.

This cannot be because the questions have not occurred to Barnes, or because he believes them answered. On the contrary, Barnes and the SWP leadership are worried that the discussion might actually get started, and having started might go too far. In doing so it might disturb the skeleton of 1963 jammed in a now dusty cupboard. Should the IMT actually pursue their Self Criticism further, and seek to re-examine the analysis of the Cuban revolution that brought the SWP back into the fold, then this could make life very uncomfortable for the SWP leaders.

"Once you begin revising a correct theory, then you have to revise an accurate account of events, because correspondence with reality is demanded of theory". . . "I sat here yesterday and the Fourth International has apparently revised, in their own minds, the common programmatic understanding of the Cuban revolution that constituted part of the principled basis on which the Fourth International was reunited in 1963".

Thus, Barnes in his conclusion warns the IMT to approach history cautiously, slowly—if at all. This method is the very opposite of Trotsky's searching, probing, testing method of polemic against Burnham and Shachtman in *In Defence of Marxism*.

We need to look at the 1963 deal in order to see why this is the case.

AN OLD FAMILIAR TASTE

The 1963 'Reunification' and its political documents formed the bridge between 1953 and the 1969 guerrilla turn. In the resolution *Dynamics of World Revolution Today* can be found elements of both the original Pablo revisions of 1950-53 (in particular the failure to call for the building of Trotskyist parties in Eastern Europe) and the 'new' Pabloite revisions on the post-Cuba era (most notably the failure to call for a Trotskyist party to be built in Cuba). But it would be wrong to blame the Pabloites for all of these points.

Indeed the first plank in the bridge was laid by the SWP in its March 1963 resolution 'For Early Reunification' in which the SWP proposed to exclude any discussion of the 'secondary' matters involved in the 1953-54 split. This of course stands opposed to the verbal line adopted now by Barnes on the need for the history of revolutionary organisations to be a living history. The SWP in 1963 recognised that history was still very much alive—and attempted to seal it off from the movement. Hansen spelled out the thinking behind this in 1969:

"... at the Reunification Congress we reached an agreement to leave the assessment of the differences of 1953 to a time in the future when we could discuss them in an educational way without any heat . . . we thought it best to leave that discussion to a period when it could be viewed in the proper, historic perspective. . . All of us agreed on that."

Hoping that in a few years the issues would be dead beyond recall, the SWP proposed to set them aside. Unfortunately for them the issues were far from dead. They sprang back to life most forcibly in 1969. How many of the Latin American comrades who had to implement the disastrous turn of 1969 can now agree with Hansen that it is easy to discuss these questions of method—a method that

can actually mean life or death—"without any heat"? Hansen's position reeks of a completely sectarian and cynical disregard for the living problems of the workers' movement—which can only be tackled if there is a continuous struggle for the Marxist method and an honest appraisal of the experiences and lessons of the past.

At the same time as shelving the most important issues for discussion the SWP went enthusiastically along with the 1963 phase of the eternal Pabloite search for a non-proletarian "newly emerging vanguard". This concept has been redefined from time to time and from country to country. Today it has been re-christened the "new mass vanguard"—a concept with which the SWP now profess to disagree. In 1963 however the theory was that the "newly emerging vanguard" was in fact the forces (almost exclusively petty bourgeois in composition) thrown forward spontaneously in various countries in response to the Cuban revolution.

It was also the old 'anti-Pabloites' of the SWP who proposed the formulation that Castro's July 26 Movement in Cuba "set a pattern that now stands as an example for a number of other countries"—deceptively claiming that the Cuban revolution was carried out under a leadership completely independent from the school of Stalinism". Whereas the Castroites certainly did not emerge on the scene as Stalinists, it is dishonest to simply characterise them as progressive on that count alone—especially when their petty bourgeois and bureaucratic opposition to Trotskyism was by 1963 becoming clearly exposed.

Yet the reunification resolution goes even further and approvingly quotes "an astute American radical journalist" who apparently "observed" that the Cuban leadership were "unconscious" Trotskyists. The resolution did not attempt to elaborate on the *advantages* the USFI saw in an unconscious leadership. But at the same time an explicit parallel was drawn between Castro and Lenin and Trotsky in a manner echoing Pablo's praises for Tito:

"The attack Fidel Castro launched against the Annibal Escalantes of Cuba sounded like a repetition of Leninist and Trotskyist speeches heard in the Soviet Union almost forty years ago".

In a particularly clear parallel with Pablo's orientation towards Stalinism in 1950-53 and a clear anticipation of the 1969 document, the resolution sees Trotskyism as a pressure grouping subordinate to the Castroite guerrillas:

"The infusion of Trotskyist concepts (!) in this new Castroite current will also influence the development of a conscious revolutionary leadership, particularly in the workers' states, will help prevent 'Titoist' deviations and better assure the evolution of mass pressure and direct action into the cleansing force of political revolution."

And in the clearest anticipation of 1969, we should note that it was the SWP's call for reunification which proposed the incorporation of the policy of armed guerrilla warfare into the *strategy* of building revolutionary parties in colonial countries. The section of the document on 'Political Revolution' significantly failed to call for the building of Trotskyist parties to lead such a revolution, but instead looked for leftward moving splits in the bureaucratised East European CPs, describing:

"... the possibility of real mass opposition tendencies developing within some of these parties, the increased possibility of mergers between the revolutionary Marxist vanguard and the leftward moving mass of militants in some of these parties, and the rapid disappearance of anti-Trotskyist prejudices inside many Communist Parties as a result of the decisions of the Twentieth and Twenty-second Congresses."

Pablo's world schema of 1953 had divided up the class struggle into the 'imperialist' and 'Stalinist' camps without regard to the independent role of the working class. The 1963 document divided it into *three* component parts—the Colonial Revolution, the Political Revolution and the struggle in the Imperialist Countries. A pessimistic view was taken in 1963 of the prospect of the working class moving into action. Rather USFI declared that the "most probable variant" was:

"the colonial revolution will continue, involving new countries and deepening its social character as more workers states appear (!). It will not lead directly to the overthrow of capitalism in the imperialist centres but it will play a powerful role in building a new world revolutionary leadership as is already clear from the emergence of Castroite currents. The pressure of the masses in the workers' states will continue with a tendency towards increasing mass action and the possible beginning of political revolution in several workers' states. Both these developments will favourably influence the resurgence of mass militancy among the proletariat in the imperialist countries..."

This spells out the way in which the Reunification resolution saw the organised proletariat as a largely passive force, requiring to be mobilised *externally* by national wars of independence and spontaneously emerging political revolutions. Under these conditions it was inevitable that the USFI saw only a secondary importance in the fight for independent political leadership in the working class.

But the 1963 deal went one step further than Pablo had been prepared to go openly by implicitly stating the view that it is better to be opportunist than sectarian:

"A revolutionist isolated by circumstances over which he has no control can fall into sectarianism quite unconsciously. It is therefore a more insidious danger for a small organisation than opportunism, which is generally easier to recognise."

Following this extraordinary political line, the Ceylonese section of the USFI plumped for this "lesser evil" of opportunism only a year later when it signed up to the Bandaranaike coalition government. Only belatedly did the 'United' secretariat step in to expel those responsible and in this way set an ad hoc limit beyond which opportunism was not to be tolerated.

So when for instance today's IMT Self Criticism refers to the political errors made by the Majority in 1969 in making a complete compromise on programme in an effort to keep the Argentinian PRT in membership of the USFI, they are doing no more than detailing the way that the 1963 deal lived on in 1969. The IMT and SWP are both tactfully silent however about the opportunist practice of the much bigger Argentinian PST, which made wholesale adaptations to 'left' Peronist forces in Argentina prior to the Videla coup. The IMT remain silent hoping that the Bolshevik tendency led by the PST will swing in their support, while the SWP leaders are only too pleased to stay silent on the revisionist positions adopted by the party that until recently was the biggest single supporter of the LTF. The rotten "non-aggression pact" embodied in the reunification thus continues to act as a varrier to the slightest political clarification within the USFI. And while Barnes and the SWP hastily accept the Self Criticism as good coin while at the same time pursuing the SWP minimum programme of democratic and reformist demands in the USA they indicate that they too have implemented this aspect of the 1963 policy and that opportunism is far from

the monopoly of the IMT.

It is hardly surprising that various shades of opportunism have been the only offspring of a "United Secretariat" which itself was born out of a compromise with the empirical waverings of Pabloism and nurtured on an agreement that neither side would discuss the past. As a political method which directs Trotskyists to discard principles and programme and adapt, "fuse" and "integrate" themselves into the latest prevailing form of "newly emerging vanguard", it must be said that Pabloism must inevitably drive its followers willy-nilly into the arms of opportunism.

But the flip side of opportunism is of course sectarianism. The method of Pabloism also ensures that a promiscuous longing for fusion with each and every spontaneous movement and acceptance of every 'left' posture by bureaucrats and petty bourgeois demagogues is combined with a sectarian disregard for the problems of the organised ranks of the working class itself—the workers that actually face the need to *fight* the bureaucrats; the workers who need to assert political independence from the petty bourgeois nationalists, and who need political leadership. Abandoning the fight for the Transitional Programme means abandoning those workers to existing political leaderships.

Perhaps the most cynical expression of such a sectarian abstention from the struggles of the working class ever documented appears in Jack Barnes' response to the Self Criticism. Astonishingly he reveals that the SWP leadership see the resolving of their factional squabble with the IMT as more important and pressing than the problems of revolutionary programme in Spain:

"It seems to me that we need a little time in Spain. I hope that a crisis is not precipitated right away as the Francoist regime comes apart, that would deny the Fourth International time to sort out these political questions."

The sight of Barnes holding up his hand to delay the revolutionary process in Spain so that a backstairs deal can be struck with Mandel and the IMT must be a revolting one for the reported thousands of USFI militants even now engaged in struggles against the Francoist regime. And the request comes from the very same leadership that *refused* to carry out a political discussion at the time of the reunification in 1963. This in our view amply sums up the rotten nature of the compromises on which the whole edifice of the USFI has been so flimsily constructed. If any real strides forward are to be taken as a result of the Self Criticism discussion then the first step must be to reject Barnes' response out of hand, and to reapproach the central questions of method which must arise.

WHO ELSE HAS BEEN POISONED ?

While we have detailed the continuity of the Pabloite method through the post-1953 International Secretariat, the 1963 reunification and the 1969 guerrilla turn, up to the present, this does not mean to say that it has an organisational rather than a political continuity.

On the contrary, experience shows that it has often been those that have most vehemently denounced and organisationally 'broken' with Pabloism who have come to be its most crass exponents.

Cannon in *Speeches to the Party* in 1953 for instance correctly defined the way in which Pabloism strikes at the very heart of the revolutionary movement—at the Leninist concept of the party:

"That is written into the Transitional Programme, that Leninist concept of the decisive role of the revolutionary

party. And it is what the Pabloites are throwing overboard in favour of the conception that the ideas will somehow filter into the treacherous bureaucracy, the Stalinists or reformists, and in some way or another "In the Day of the Comet" the socialist revolution will be realised and carried to conclusion without a revolutionary Marxist, that is, a Leninist-Trotskyist party. That is the essence of Pabloism. Pabloism is the substitution of a cult and a revelation for a party and a programme." (p.182)

Yet from 1957 onwards it was Cannon who gave approval to the SWP drift back to Pabloism after the Hungary events, it was Cannon who in 1962 led the pack in justifying not only Castro and the Castroites, but also even the actions of the Kremlin in the Cuban missiles crisis.

"What else could he (Kruschev) have done under the given circumstances? . . . In our opinion Kruschev sensibly backed away from such a showdown, thus saving the world from war and the Cuban revolution from attack by overwhelming forces for a time. . . The retreat was unavoidable . . ." (Letter to Dobbs, Oct. 1962)

and it was Cannon who backed the unprincipled 'reunification' of which the Pabloites were already boasting that:

"Starting from the XXth Congress of the CPSU, some organisations affiliated with the International Committee or in sympathy with its political views as in the case of the SWP, corrected this evaluation of the world situation and of the evolution within the Soviet Union, and arrived at an estimation of events very close to that of the Fourth International. From that time on, reunification became not only desirable but possible." (Declaration of Reunification, 23rd plenum of IEC).

The fact that Healy and the British SLL, along with Lambert and the OCI, refused to go along with such an opportunist 'reunification' did not mean that they took completely correct positions. While straining to destroy the notion that the Castroites were 'natural Marxists' and to insist upon the continued need for independent revolutionary parties, neither SLL nor OCI themselves went any further than surface events.

There was no real difference in overall *method* of analysis of the Cuban question. The SWP and the Pabloites seized upon those aspects of surface events that 'proved' the spontaneous emergence of a revolutionary leadership and the undeformed nature of Cuba as a new workers' state—and discarded or ignored any other evidence.

The SLL and the French on the other hand sifted through surface appearances for arguments to 'prove' that Cuba was still a *capitalist state*, and that Castro was no more than a 'left' petty bourgeois nationalist—while ignoring all contrary evidence.

Neither side penetrated to the processes that were taking place in Cuba—because neither side had grasped the real importance of the differences of 1953 or re-examined the method of analysis of the FI prior to that split.

But it must be said that in 1963, by defending, however inadequately, the Leninist concept of the party against the spontaneist concepts of the Pabloites and the SWP, and in maintaining an orientation into the main forces of the organised proletariat, the SLL in particular played an important role in the preservation of the Marxist method and the central feature of the Transitional Programme.

The positive role played by Healy and Lambert in 1963, like that of the IC forces in 1953 was largely reflexive and intermingled with damaging weaknesses. The failure of the remaining IC forces after 1963 to probe the *real* theoretical problems posed by Cuba, the resort instead to increasingly abstract 'philosophical' analysis, the failure either to press new initiatives for international discussion or to attempt any serious reorganisation of the International Committee along the lines of democratic centralism, meant that the way was open in 1966 for the International Committee itself to attempt permanently to shelve the questions of the past by retitling itself the IC of the FI and by adopting an 'agree to disagree' formula on whether or not Pabloism had destroyed the FI in 1953.

The question of method, however, would not lie down. In 1967 major differences erupted again between Healy and Lambert over conflicting analysis of the Middle East War—only to be opportunistically left aside. Meanwhile in Britain M. Banda stirred a hornets nest by publishing a lengthy article eulogising Mao and the Vietnam Stalinist leadership.

Also in Britain the SLL was becoming increasingly influenced by surface *impressions* of the developing situation and in particular by the conviction that workers had fully grasped the treachery of the Wilson government. This was combined with considerable organisational successes for the SLL itself—substantial interventions were led behind the banner of Lambeth Trades Council in the fight against Wilson's first pay laws, and by 1969 an SLL initiated strike against anti-union laws on May Day mobilised 900,000 workers. Under these conditions and in the wake of the French events of May-June 1968 the Healy leadership began to hope that after years of isolation and propaganda work the hour had struck for the SLL to step into the leadership of the British working class. The

agitational demands of the Transitional Programme were increasingly set aside in favour of a maximum programme and "the need to build the SLL". By October 1969 a major PC statement by the SLL was issued containing *no* demands whatever other than the call to join the SLL.

The impressions from the spontaneous strike wave of last 1969 became the focus for an abstract call for "every worker" to join the SLL. And when working class hostility to Wilson brought mass abstentions and the election of a Tory government, the SLL's maximum programme—though coupled to the correct slogan of 'Bring down the Tory Government'—remained, not to be put to the test until the re-election of the Labour government in February 1974. By this point the leadership's inability to analyse the objective situation had reached crisis point.

An understanding of the SLL's turn away from the Transitional Programme in this period is thus inseparable from an assessment of its growing inability to assess the fundamental process of political development in the British working class in the very late 1960's and early 1970's. The false method underlying this also served to exacerbate Healy's Anglocentric notion of internationalism, and was therefore reflected in the relations with the French COI.

This developing inability correctly to assess and connect the movement to developments within the working class was not a constant factor, but overall it meant that though the WRP continued to expand numerically after 1971, its leadership never succeeded in developing new workers into national leadership. The only new forces brought into leadership were from the petty bourgeoisie—organisationally and technically capable people, but without the ability to orientate the movement within the working class. Precious worker cadres were lost and the movement began to lose its bearings—becoming increasingly dependent upon fixed schemas and surface impressions every bit as crude as those taken by the Pabloite forces.

This process of degeneration—which brought about the split from which the WSL traces its roots—has now reached the extent of the defence of flagrantly Pabloite positions by Healy in particular the WRP's uncritical eulogies of the Vietnamese Stalinist Party, Gaddafi's reactionary bonapartist dictatorship in Libya, and the PLO leadership. The most hysterical 'anti-Pabloite' of yesteryear has now become perhaps the most tenacious Pabloite of all.

Meanwhile the OCI's international grouping, claiming to represent an internationalist alternative to Healy, has swung to political and organisational liquidation into social democracy.

The OCI itself, even while proclaiming venomous home truths about Pabloism has attempted over the last few years a series of backstage manoeuvres aimed at unprincipled reunification with the USFI avoiding fundamental discussion on the central problems of the world movement. And the USFI, the biggest international grouping claiming the name 'Trotskyist' remains, as we have shown, in the grip of a centrist leadership whose method and programme are not those of Trotskyism but that post-war perversion of Trotskyism that we have analysed as Pabloism. As a result the USFI as it stands today—for all its pretensions—represents in our view neither the political nor the organisational continuity of Trotskyism. Rather, through its obstruction of any serious international discussion on the historical problems of the Fourth International, it stands as a block to the reconstruction of the FI.

In our view the time has come to take objective stock of the current state of the Trotskyist movement internationally and to confront the problems that must be resolved

if the FI is to be reconstructed on a basis of principles.

No tendency internationally can claim to represent an organisational or political continuity of Trotsky's method and principles. Every tendency has to begin from the standpoint that fundamental issues long ago dismissed or explained away must be re-examined; the evolution of post-war Stalinism; the role of petty-bourgeois forces; and the method of orientating Trotskyist forces to build cadres root rooted in the working class all stand as questions to be answered in a discussion which must extend beyond statements to include a thorough examination of the *practice* of each national grouping in the class struggle of its own country.

Such a discussion in our view must include not simply our international tendency and the USFI and its sections but must begin by bringing every possible pressure to bear on the OCRFI and the IC to participate.

THE ANTIDOTE

In our view it is essential that the Trotskyist movement be reconstructed by a *practical* and a theoretical reaffirmation of the basic tenets on which the movement was founded. They can in our view be summarised in the following eight points:

1. Daily confirmation that this is the epoch of imperialist decay is to be found in the profound political and economic crises convulsing the capitalist states, the colonial and ex-colonial regimes, and the degenerate workers' states of Europe and Asia. In this period the betrayal of both Stalinist and Social Democratic parties internationally—each finding new depths of class collaboration in the face of the growing movement of workers and peasants against imperialism—highlights the vital necessity for the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the organising centre of the world party of the socialist revolution.

2. Founded in 1938 on the inseparable principles of proletarian internationalism and the defence of the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie and all its agencies within the workers' movement, the task of the Fourth International was and remains that of preparing the human, material and political resources necessary to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership in the international struggle for socialism.

But the International was from the beginning faced by huge objective and internal difficulties. The Trotskyist movement today confronts a crisis in which its whole post-war history must be re-examined in order to probe the political reasons behind its prolonged disorientation. Only from such a basis can a principled way forward be found for its reconstruction.

3. Trotskyism, the present-day continuity of revolutionary Marxism, stands alone in seeing the need for the working class to take the lead in the struggle for social revolution. For this reason it is only Trotskyists who *reject on principle* political blocs or partnerships with other classes in which the revolutionary strength of the working class is subordinated to the interests of the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, 'progressive' military juntas, or sections of the bureaucracy parasitic upon the workers movement itself.

Because of the fundamental importance of this principle, it is necessary to re-examine those episodes in the post-war history of Trotskyism in which that position was abandoned in practice, and the method on which it rests was thrown into question.

In particular, it is necessary to analyse anew and break

from the method involved in the orientation of the movement towards Stalinism under the leadership of Michel Pablo—both prior to and after the 1953 split. It is essential to link this to an examination of the orientation of Trotskyist tendencies towards the Castroite leadership in Cuba and to petty bourgeois nationalist forces in Latin America and Algeria in the years following 1959, and to an analysis of present attitudes to the latest changes in post-war Stalinism—so called 'Euro-Communism' in the capitalist states, and the nature of the Vietnamese CP.

And such an analysis must also involve a searching examination of the attitude of the various tendencies of the world Trotskyist movement to 'progressive' military juntas such as the post 1974 AFM regime in Portugal, and 'progressive' bonapartist regimes such as that of Gaddafi in Libya.

Above all we must establish the basis to positively reaffirm both in our current *programme* and in the practice of each section, as well as by drawing the lessons of the past, the basic starting point of revolutionary Marxism: that the proletariat, the propertyless class exploited by the bourgeoisie as the living instrument of capitalist production and the source of value, is the *only* consistently revolutionary class in society.

4. Yet in capitalist or colonial countries where peasants and small farmers represent a sizeable section of the population—even its majority—it is necessary for the workers to be equipped with a programme around which an alliance can be made with those oppressed small property-holders against the bourgeoisie and big landowners. Such a programme, basing itself on the theoretical gains embodied in Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, must contain a system of *transitional demands* in combination where appropriate with democratic demands, capable of mobilising the broadest layers of mass support in struggle against feudal relations, national oppression, Bonapartist or fascist dictatorship and leading over to the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. Such a programme is the indispensable basis for common struggle, and the bridge between the democratic and the socialist revolution, ensuring that the reactionary separation of these struggles, advocated by the Mensheviks and now adopted by all sections of Stalinists, is opposed and defeated in practice.

5. In the struggle to mobilise the working class itself, the key is likewise a programme of transitional demands which can form a bridge between the daily spontaneous and trade union struggle carried on by the working class, and the necessary *conscious* struggle for the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The fight *in practice* for such a programme to form the basis of the actions of the working class is the material way in which Marxists must today undertake the task described by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*

"... to combat spontaneity, to divert the working class movement from this spontaneous, trade unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social Democracy... all worship of the spontaneity of the working class movement, all belittling of the role of the Social Democracy, means, quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers".

For this reason, also, therefore, any abstention from this fight for leadership within the working class movement is a retreat from the task of Marxists today. It is a matter of *principle* therefore for Trotskyists to undertake systematic and serious work, propagandising and agitating for the demands of the transitional programme, within the labour

movement and the mass organisations of the working class as a whole. Without taking the fight into this arena the programme becomes simply words.

6. In the ideological arming of the working class and the intervention of Marxists into the labour movement is enshrined also the need for parties and a reconstructed international constructed on the Bolshevik pattern, based on the political and organisational principle of *democratic centralism*—complete democracy within the movement in arriving at decisions, combined with strict adherence by all members to centralised discipline in carrying out the decisions of the majority.

The fight for this internal regime brings to a high point the fight against the petty bourgeois tendencies to individualism, propagandism, opportunism and careerism which beset the bankrupt ranks and leading echelons of the reformist, Stalinist and centrist movements. At the same time it challenges syndicalist positions brought into the movement by trade union comrades.

And by bringing the practice of the movement into open discussion enabling the theoretically established perspectives and the daily developing practice of the party to be brought into sharp conflict, democratic centralism plays a crucial role in the fight against schematism and dogmatism, together with all forms of idealist retreat from the Marxist method of dialectical materialism.

Similarly on an international level democratic centralism must be upheld as the essential organisational principle of the reconstructed Fourth International. The Workers Socialist League will not be a party to any repetition of the "moratoria" and unspoken "non-aggression pacts" that have characterised the opportunist organisational relationships within the IS, the USFI, the IC and the OCRFI.

We are fundamentally opposed to the concept of an "international" in which the discipline is so loose and the programmatic agreement so weak that public warfare can take place between its factions in different countries around the world. We insist on the fullest internal discussion and examination of the practice of the sections, combined with a strict adherence by all sections to the line of the majority.

7. The Trotskyist Fourth International traces its independent origins and its reason for existence from the pronouncement by Trotsky and the Left Opposition in 1933 that the Comintern, totally dominated by the Stalinist bureaucracy, was *dead* for the purposes of revolution and a thoroughly *counter-revolutionary* force within the international workers' movement. At the same time Stalinism was seen as a fundamentally unstable, bonapartist form of rule, balancing between the nationalised property relations established in the October Revolution and the international pressures of imperialism. Trotsky established a clear position of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union as a workers' state against imperialism, coupled to the fight to prepare *political revolution* for the conscious overthrow of the bureaucracy and restoration of soviet power.

This analysis still has to be defended both against tendencies that have attempted to see the Stalinist bureaucracy as a *permanent* and *progressive* force in the workers' movement (pre-war centrists, and Pablo in the post-war period) or as a permanent, reactionary force—a new ruling class in the Soviet Union (Schachtmanites and state capitalists today).

In defending the Trotskyist perspective, the most important starting point is the question of the *political*

independence of the working class from the Stalinist bureaucracy in the struggle for state power. It is this, along with an analysis of the counter-revolutionary *world* strategy of Stalinism in the post-war period which most clearly refutes the Pabloite notion of a 'left centrist' evolution of Stalinism in the Eastern European buffer zone or in Asia, and which shows most clearly the reactionary nature of 'Eurocommunist' criticism of the regimes in Eastern Europe. It is this position also that confirms the need for the building of Trotskyist parties for political revolution in Cuba, Vietnam, China and Yugoslavia as well as the USSR and Eastern Europe.

It is necessary for the world Trotskyist movement to re-examine these issues bearing on the post-war role of Stalinism in order to clarify and correct the wrong positions that have been adopted. For this purpose the USFI, the IC and OCRFI leadership and sections—for all their false positions—cannot be regarded in advance as having placed themselves outside the world Trotskyist movement.

8. It is impossible to reconstruct the Fourth International without a conscious break from the method of impressionism and empiricism to take up a struggle for the dialectical method as fought for by Trotsky in *In Defence of Marxism*. Such a break means also a break from attempts to substitute petty bourgeois propaganda groupings for serious Marxist cadres developed in the mass organisations of the working class. Only when such a change is made can the fight for the transitional programme on an international scale take on real meaning and life at the centre of the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

9. Should agreement be reached on these general political principles, the way would be opened up for steps to organisationally reconstruct the Fourth International.

The WSL, as part of an international tendency, is flexible in regard to the *organisational* aspects of discussions towards this reconstruction. We insist only that these must involve parity arrangements acceptable to all parties, and that *both* the history of the movement as a whole, *and* the present practice of each part of it must be open to examination.

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The Spartacist School of Invention

By Adam Westoby and Bob Sutcliffe

"... all the causes, human and divine, that influence and disturb the counsels of a theological faction, introduced among the sectaries a spirit of discord and inconstancy, which in the course of a few years erected eighteen different models of religion, and avenged the violated dignity of the Church."

(Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*)

The main purpose of this note is to correct a distortion, and to underline, thereby, the importance of an honest and objective approach to the history of the Trotskyist movement. A secondary purpose, in so doing, is to sketch some of the important tactical electoral experience gained by Trotskyists in the struggle against 'Popular Front'-type blocs.

A fundamental principle, underlying the tactics of revolutionary politics, is the need to draw a clear political division between the interests of the working class and the bureaucrats within the labour movement who trample on those interests. For long periods the bureaucrats hold considerable sway within the labour movement, and succeed in tying a great many workers within the mass organisations with the politics of class compromise. As Marx put it, the ruling ideas in society are largely ideas of the ruling class. Thus the struggle to draw political divisions which can show clearly, to masses of workers, the independent interests of their class is a difficult, complex, uphill and material task. Faced with its difficulties, there is a strong and persistent temptation to look for a short cut to avoid them. The main pressure this exerts on revolutionaries is towards *centrism*—that is, vacillation which adapts to the politics of the bureaucrats and the ruling class. Insofar as centrism becomes a hardened tendency it strangles independent revolutionary politics and renders its practitioners part—a 'left' part—of the political net with

which the bureaucracy tries to control workers.

But the pressure to look for short cuts can lead in another direction. There is also a temptation, especially for organisations struggling on the periphery of the working class, to seek solutions merely in forms of words. Devising simple, 'principled' formulae, of universal application, it is possible to solve the problems of independent class politics on paper while leaving the bureaucrats, in reality, unscathed. Often such formulae assume a very 'left' form, as though to compensate for their content—which is, of course, just the opposite.

Such formulae are not infrequently thought up by sectarian groups—that is, those for whom theory exists not as a guide to action in the mass movement but simply to prove, on paper, the exemplary 'revolutionary' intransigence of one particular clique. For such groups, the more untenable such a formula is, the better. The less support they can gather for it, the wider their scope for issuing 'principled' excommunications of those who disagree with them.

This article is not concerned with the general principle of independent working-class politics, but only with electoral aspects of it, and with one attempt to reduce it to a simplified 'formula'—the position taken by the International Spartacist Tendency (IST) on voting in elections. It is *always* unprincipled, the IST say, to vote for workers parties who contest elections in a 'Popular Front'

or similar coalition bloc with bourgeois parties. *Workers' Vanguard* pronounces:

"The fundamental line of Marxist politics is the struggle for working-class independence from the bourgeoisie. When the revolutionary forces are small, they can seek to gain a hearing from the workers who follow the mass reformist parties by giving critical support to the latter's candidates running in opposition to the capitalist parties. But when the bourgeois workers parties are part and parcel of a popular front, such as the Union of the Left, the class contradiction within them is suppressed; the reformists' socialist pretensions and claims to represent the working class are nullified by allying with a section of the bourgeoisie. . . . Under such circumstances it is unprincipled to call for votes to the bourgeois popular front, even to those candidates who are members of reformist or centrist workers' parties. The same is true in the case of informal or disguised "corridor coalitions" when the reformists prop up bourgeois governments in parliament without formally being a member of a coalition." (Lead article on French municipal elections, *Workers Vanguard*, 11 March 1977).

This 'principle' clearly requires revolutionaries to call for no vote to the mass parties in *all* such situations—for example, in France in the recent elections, in 1945-46 and in the 1935 Popular Front; in Italy in 1976, when the CP tied themselves to the Christian Democratic government; and in Britain's present coalition. And on the basis of this 'principle' the iSt has not hesitated—at least as far as present-day policies are concerned—to issue the appropriate excommunications.

The paragraph we have quoted contains as many misconceptions as it does sentences. We shall return to it, since it states a 'principle' which the iSt has repeatedly insisted upon. But two points must be made here:

Firstly, it hangs everything on the formal, overt side in claiming that the key question is a coalition electoral pact. The fact is that, electoral coalition or not, all the mass Stalinist and reformist parties are *walking coalitions*, whose leaderships are thick with purely capitalist politicians. A coalition deal merely gives this fact a particular, explicit and dangerous expression. They do not have to change their class characteristics to enter a coalition. It is not true that with the signature of an electoral pact 'the class contradiction within them is suppressed', any more than it is when they have Prentice, Mayhew and their ilk in their leaderships. The position that everything turns on electoral deals is a sort of inverted 'parliamentary cretinism', consonant with the iSt's view that at the moment the working class's political horizons are virtually limited to parliamentary ones.

Secondly, in refusing to allow a vote under any circumstances this position cuts revolutionaries off from political fights against coalitions. The reformists and Stalinists often give, as one of the main justifications for coalition, that without the support of some bourgeois parliamentarians, they couldn't have sufficient strength. They thereby seek to tie the masses to class collaboration through parliamentarism and arithmetic. Under these circumstances, revolutionaries can, often, powerfully combine their demand that the bureaucrats fight to release the strength of the working class and break from the bourgeois parties, with electoral tactics aimed at precisely this—by calling on workers to vote for the reformist candidates, but to *defy* their instructions to vote for bourgeois politicians, and thus to drive a wedge into their electoral plans.

Such a policy was, in fact, adopted by Trotskyists from the very first days of the 1935 Popular Front. The French section—in whose work Trotsky was then closely involved—faced just such a situation, and had just such a policy. They had similar tactics in the elections of 1945 and 1946, when the Communist Party was in (rather than just supporting) the government.

The iSt however is obliged to pass over the facts about the French section, together with the electoral experience they gained, since they cannot be made to conform to the thesis of their no-vote 'principle'. What is more serious is that the iSt do this not through ignorance, but as a deliberate concealment of the history of the Trotskyist movement. It is necessary to put the record straight.

Let us look at the French Popular Front which was formed in 1935. To a large extent it was here the Trotskyists first hammered out tactics towards Stalinist parties standing as part of an electoral pact with the bourgeoisie. In French electoral law in 1935 the (male) voters of each constituency elected one member, by two rounds of voting a week apart. On the first round, candidates were only elected if they had an absolute majority of *all votes cast*. Often, however, the result was decided on the second round, when the candidate with most votes was elected. Candidates could stand in the second round without standing in the first. Obviously such a system encouraged a large number of candidates, and of minor parties, especially at the first round. Also it bred many agreements, local and national, between candidates and parties, to withdraw in one another's favour at the second round.

In its purely electoral aspect, the 1935 Popular Front was just such an agreement—between the Socialists, Communists and Radicals. Each party was free to stand candidates in the first round, but for the second round only the candidate with the highest vote in the first round stood, and the others directed their supporters to vote for him. The electoral agreement (the 'cartel') in fact preceded a common programme—it came into full operation with the municipal elections (which were run on essentially the same principles) in May 1935, while the common programme was only finalised in July.

One of the main purposes of the Popular Front, from the point of view of the French bourgeoisie and the Stalinists, was to tie the working class to parliamentary—not revolutionary—policies. And this was the main danger at which the French Trotskyists aimed their fire—even though, during most of 1935, they were acting as a faction within the Socialist Party and its youth organisation. Their propaganda was continuously directed at the inadequacy of parliamentary means and the need for revolutionary mobilisation, especially in the fight against fascism. Through the Socialist youth, for example, the Trotskyists gave a lead in forming and training workers' defence bodies.

They did not, however, turn their backs on elections. On the contrary, they had definite tactics. As a general rule they called on workers to vote for the Communist or Socialist candidates on both the first and (if one of them stood) the second round, but to refuse to vote for a radical on the second round, even where he was in the lead and the Socialist and Communist withdrew in his favour. This general line was, of course, consistent with the Trotskyists running their own propaganda candidates in certain constituencies.

The electoral tactics of the French Trotskyists are well

documented (1). There is no doubt that Trotsky followed them and agreed with their essentials (2). The tactics were first used in the municipal elections of May 1935. In the April-May 1936 general election, which brought the Popular Front government to office, they ran several of their own candidates on the first round, especially in the 'red belt' around Paris. But in other constituencies and in the second round they called for votes to the CP or SP where they stood.

They regarded these policies as an obvious element in their struggle to break the masses from their leaders. Such tactics flowed directly from those of the Comintern in its early years, which gave electoral support to social democratic parties, whether or not headed for coalition, where that would help win the rank-and-file from the leaders. One of the Trotskyist candidates, Fred Zeller, recalls it as a matter of course in the constituency where he stood: "On the second round, naturally, we gave our votes to Grenier, candidate of the CP" (3).

The iSt however prefer to bury such facts. From the point of view of their 'principle' of no vote, ever, for mass parties in an electoral pact, they are highly inconvenient. For they mean that, in terms of such a 'principle', both the entire French Trotskyist movement in 1935-1936, plus Trotsky, must be judged thoroughly 'unprincipled'. It is an unavoidable implication of the iSt's 'principle' that the Fourth International, at its foundation, had built into its basis a record of persistent opportunism on 'the fundamental line of Marxist politics'.

What is more, the iSt appear to have concealed, for almost two years, a formal protest made to them on precisely this point. In June 1976 the then Italian 'Bolshevik-Leninist Group' (GBL) wrote to the iSt, protesting at their attacks on the GBL's line of voting for the Italian CP, and pointing out the iSt's 'principle' is flatly inconsistent with the conduct of Trotsky and the French Trotskyists in the 1930s. The GBL cited various items of evidence, including a passage from *Revolution*, the Trotskyist paper based on the forces won from the Socialist Party youth organisations which Trotsky regarded as the most hopeful and forthright

current within the French movement (4). The passage comes from *Revolution* of February 28th, 1936, two months before the elections which brought Blum to office. The Trotskyists, it explains:

"... summon their constituents to divert their votes to SFIO (Socialist Party) and SFIC (Communist Party) candidates. ... excluding any vote for radical, republican or other candidates participating in the PF. While calling for a vote for SFIO and SFIC candidates, we shall explain that workers themselves will experience the treachery and wavering of such candidates" (5).

The GBL's letter concluded (reasonably enough, as we shall see) that the Spartacists' "position is clearly opposed to Trotsky's. Indeed, according to your statements on this problem, Trotsky himself would have been excluded from



Trotsky

1. On their electoral tactics in the May 1935 municipal elections (held just as Soviet diplomacy was reaping the first fruits of the popular front by negotiating a pact with France) see the Trotskyists' paper *La Verite* of 19th and 31st May 1935, plus discussion below. On their line in the 1936 general elections, see Craipeaux, Yvan *Le Mouvement Trotskyiste en France* (Paris, 1971) p. 157.

Zeller, Fred *Trois Points c'est Tout*. ... (Paris 1976), pp138 et seq., plus discussion and additional sources below. If there is any difficulty in finding direct testimony that the Trotskyists supported votes for the Socialists and Communists in the Popular Front, the reason lies in the fact that they all took the position so much for granted that they seldom spelt it out.

2. See discussion below.

3. See Zeller, op. cit. p. 139. Zeller later became a leading freemason.

4. See, for example, his *Critical Remarks on Revolution* (9th Dec. 1935) in *The Crisis of the French Section* (1935-36). (NY, 1977), pp. 110-113. The French movement was split in this period. In December 1935 the

centrist group round Molinier broke away and published *La Commune*. The main forces which Trotsky sought to develop as the basis of the French section were in the Bolshevik-Leninist Group (GBL) and in the Revolutionary Socialist Youth (JSR), a distinct organisation based on the forces won by the GBL, mainly from work in the Seine federation of the (Social Democratic) Young Socialists. The GBL and JSR together ran candidates in the April-May 1936 general elections; the Molinierists also ran candidates. In late May 1936 the GBL and JSR formally fused, then (with the international leadership's support) reunited with the Molinier group to form the Internationalist Workers' Party (POI). Molinier himself, though, was expelled in July 1936 for trying to exert financial pressure on the party, and his followers went with him.

5. See letter from GBL to iSt of 29 June 1976, published in *Socialist Appeal* (USA), Jan. 1978. We have not been able to consult the issue of *Revolution* quoted and have therefore not been able to check the passage or its translation. The expression 'summon their constituents to divert their votes' clearly refers to second round voting where the Trotskyists ran candidates in the first.

the iSt." (6)

It does not appear that the iSt published this letter or took account of the elementary points of fact contained in it. On the contrary they appear to have made attempts—amateurish and inconsistent—to circumvent the evidence, and to continue to deny the fact that the actual conduct of the Trotskyists in the 1930s drove a coach-and-horses through their 'principle'.

For example, in October 1977 they wrote attacking groups in France (the Ligue Communiste Revolutionaire, section of the USFI, and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI)) for favouring general election votes to the Communist and Socialist Parties: "... in both cases what we have is a veiled call for the election of a popular front government. This is hardly a new political orientation in France. For a brief period in the mid-1930s it was taken up by the French Trotskyists under the slogan of a "Fighting Popular Front", later abandoned under Trotsky's sharp criticisms." (7)

The *Workers' Vanguard* article offers no details of when, how, or in favour of what the Trotskyists abandoned their electoral policies. Nor does it say where Trotsky's 'sharp criticism', which caused them to do so, may be found. Behind the air of historical omniscience, all is left conveniently vague.

The explanation of this vagueness was inadvertently provided by a more recent issue of *Workers' Vanguard*, one of whose articles attacked USFI leader Ernest Mandel on precisely this issue: "Mandel then said the USec called only for votes for workers' parties in popular fronts which, he said, was Trotsky's policy, a claim frequently made by the USec and other ex-Trotskyist revisionists but never substantiated." (8)

The iSt, we have noticed, is not given to reticence in polemic. If *Workers' Vanguard* actually possessed any evidence of 'sharp criticism' of these positions by Trotsky, they would, we feel sure, have produced it against Mandel with gusto, rather than contenting themselves with the much more modest rebuke that his claim is 'not substantiated'. The reasonable inference is that they possess no evidence of such 'sharp criticisms', and are simply bluffing.

In fact it is easy to 'substantiate' beyond any reasonable doubt that Trotsky both knew of and agreed with the

French Trotskyists' line of votes for the workers' parties. Throughout 1935 and 1936 he followed both national French politics and the work of the French Trotskyists, producing a considerable volume of writing on both topics (9). During the first half of 1935, he was in France. His *Diary in Exile* of May 1935 shows him analysing the significance of the municipal elections for the 'left' Radicals and their bloc with the CP and SP (10). The international leadership issued a special press release on these elections, asking the SP and CP leaders, "What will you do with these victories? How will you utilise this great force which has fallen into your lap in the form of so powerful a network of municipalities?" (11)

During 1935, the Trotskyist press in America, for example, carried more regular reports on French politics and the work of the French section than on any other country (12)

It is thus inconceivable that Trotsky and the international leadership were not familiar with the electoral tactics in France from their first adoption. And we have found no indication whatsoever (in either materials published at the time or those that were then internal) that they criticised the line of votes for the workers' parties.

When Trotsky *did* comment on electoral tactics in France, he did so in terms that clearly assume agreement with such votes. Commenting on the May 1936 general elections he criticises the failure to run more candidates against the Radicals on the second round, in constituencies where the Communists and Socialists have withdrawn. Such a criticism would be meaningless (and such a tactic inconceivable) except on the basis of electoral support for the Communists and Socialists where they *did* stand (13).

The claim that Trotsky made 'sharp criticisms' of these tactics therefore lies in the face of the available evidence, and the iSt must at this stage be asked to produce its evidence—or, alternatively, to withdraw the claim and to apologise for bolstering its 'principle' with baseless assertions.

In fact the French Trotskyists did run into 'sharp criticisms' of their tactics—but from the Stalinists, who greatly feared it might disrupt their control over their supporters. On the eve of the second round of the May 1935 municipal elections, the Trotskyist paper *La Verite* spelt out, as its first 'immediate objective', its key electoral difference with the Stalinists: "On the electoral terrain itself, to oppose any

6. Letter cited above.

7. Lead article on French Popular Front, *Workers' Vanguard*, 7th October 1977.

8. 'Mandel Weasels on Popular Front', in *Workers' Vanguard*, 12 May 1978, p. 10.

9. On France in general, see Trotsky: *Writings, 1935-36, Le Mouvement Communiste en France, 1919-1939* (Paris, 1967, ed. Broue) and *Whither France?* (London, 1974); on the French Trotskyists: *The Crisis of the French section (1935-36)* (New York, 1977).

10. *Diary in Exile* (ed. van Heijenoort, 1976), p.100 et seq. 17 May 1935.

11. International Communist League press release, 17 May 1935, printed in *New Militant* (New York), 1st June 1935.

12. See most issues of the (weekly) *New Militant* (NY).

13. "Had revolutionary working class candidates been run on the second ballot in all the electoral districts in which the Socialists and the Communists withdrew in favour of the Radicals, they would, no doubt, have obtained a very considerable number of votes. It is unfortunate that not a single organisation was to be found capable of such initiative." (*Whither France?*, p.126) (French electoral law then made it easy to mount candidacies even on the second round only. The Molinier group, which reunified in June 1936, with Trotsky's cautious approval, with the French section, had run second round campaigns against bourgeois candidates, obtaining a modest success (see Craipeaux, *op.cit.* p.157 and *Le Temps*, 26 April and 3rd May 1936)).



CP leader Thorez.

withdrawal in favour of a Radical... (14). The CP, at that time chary of getting into public debate with the Trotskyists, was nonetheless stung into a swift reaction—a front page article in *l'Humanité* by no less a figure than Jacques Duclos (15). *La Verité* replied immediately to Duclos, in a front-page lead which rammed home the point that he relied on all “the arguments of an old-style democrat, for whom everything is decided by a ballot-paper” (16).

In the 1936 general elections, too, the CP were worried that the line of refusing to vote for the Radicals would find a big echo in the working class and might disrupt the Popular Front. The day after the first round results, which showed a huge increase in the CP vote, *l'Humanité*'s front-page banner-slogan was “Discipline (i.e. Communist voters must vote Socialist or Radical) on the second round for the victory of the Popular Front!” (17). That message was the main line of CP propaganda right through the week.

A decade later, during and after the war, the French Trotskyists were faced with similar situations, with the difference that CP ministers were now in the government. In the three national elections held during 1945 and 1946, the Trotskyists (reorganised in 1944 as the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI), forerunner of the OCI) stood their own candidates. But, where they were not standing, they called on workers to vote CP or SP, demanding that their leaders break with the bourgeois politicians (18). In this period the PCI developed a firm and expanding basis of support, revealed in the votes for their candidates, which rose to 60,000 in 1946. It was strikes led by Trotskyist car workers, starting in the

Renault plants, that finally forced the CP leaders to break step with Ramadier's government, and led to their ousting from the cabinet, in the spring of 1947.

During 1945-1947, the French CP had even more reactionary policies than in the 1930s, including production drives, speed-ups and government strike-breaking, and the armed restoration of the French empire. But the PCI, determined to exploit the hopes which the masses placed in Thorez and the CP leadership, combined electoral support with trenchant, active opposition to their policies. Their record is clearly documented.

It is therefore dishonest of the iSt to represent matters (as they have done during 1977, in articles (19) attacking the OCI's present policies) as though it was only after 1956 that the French Trotskyists abandoned the ‘principle’ of no vote for the CP in any electoral pact with bourgeois parties. Their claim, that standing on this ‘principle’, the Spartacists in 1977 “like the PCI in the 1950s... represent the programmatic continuity of Lenin and Trotsky” (20) is wholly false. It misrepresents the tactical character of the PCI's electoral positions and conceals the fact that, during a long time before that, the Trotskyists and Trotsky never recognised any such ‘principle’. This distortion on the part of the iSt is, of course, a natural corollary of their line that the crucial political degeneration of the International Committee of the Fourth International took place only in the mid-1960s—i.e. at the time when the iSt came into separate existence.

It goes (or should go) without saying that none of the points we have made above about the polemics of the iSt on behalf of their ‘principle’ should be interpreted as a defence of the groups attacked by them.

That is a different matter. The essential point is that it is not possible to fight centrism by distorting the history of the Trotskyist movement or by inventing ‘principles’ which have no basis in its record or experience. Real principles must, in any case, be more than simple rules of thumb. Delineating the independent interests of the working class, opposing these, in practice, to the class collaboration of the bureaucracy, is a scientific task. It requires a real study of the mass movement and of the tentacles ideological and organisational—with which the bureaucrats seek to tie it to capitalism. It is not possible to draw one simple, universal line—and still less a purely electoral one—which will neatly divide the working class from the bureaucracy. They are opposites; for this reason, they interpenetrate. Policies are needed which can engage with the day-to-day struggles of workers and, in these struggles, act as a ‘catalyst’ in the organic reactions through which the class can gather behind its own, new leadership. That is what the Transitional Programme is about.

It is a schoolmasterish delusion to imagine—as do the iSt—that because the bureaucratic leaders of mass parties

14. 10th May 1935.

15. ‘Deux Tactiques’ in *l'Humanité*, 21st May 1935. Note that Duclos attacks them only for refusing to support a vote for Radicals. Had they been at all equivocal on voting for the CP and SP, it is inconceivable that Duclos would not have attacked them on this rather than on the Radicals.

16. ‘Tout le pouvoir aux travailleurs par la révolution!’ (sic—the iSt may at least draw some consolation from their punctuation!), in *La Verité*, 31 May 1935.

17. 27 April 1936.

18. For details of the PCI's electoral policies in 1945 and

1946 see the relevant issues of *The Militant* (SWP, New York), whose accounts are mainly based on *La Verité*. On the November 1946 election, the position put by *La Verité* was: “In those sections where the PCI does not present its own candidates it calls upon the workers to vote for the workers' parties” (Quoted in *The Militant*, 9th Nov. 1946). At the same time, the Trotskyists had similar tactics in Belgium (*The Militant*, 23 Nov. 1946).

19. See *Le Bolshevik*, May 1977, and supplement to *Le Bolshevik*, 16 Nov. 1977.

20. *Le Bolshevik* supplement, 16 Nov. 1977.

sign electoral pacts "the class contradiction within them is suppressed, the reformists' socialist pretensions and claims to represent the working class are nullified by allying with a section of the bourgeoisie" (21). Would it were so! In reality it is only because their 'claims and pretensions' are *not* nullified, because millions of workers continue to look to them, that the bourgeoisie consents to ally with them at all. Only one whose sight is seriously impaired by chalk-dust could think otherwise. And only those who prefer to preach than to practice could devise a 'principle' that causes them to turn their backs on the problems of creating tactics to explode the 'claims and pretensions' that still act as a ball-and-chain on the working class.

This is not to say, of course, that the opposite principle holds, either: that it is *always* correct to vote for the bureaucratised mass parties. Such a position would tie Trotskyists to the coat-tails of the bureaucrats. But it is worth recalling that the founding cadres of the Fourth International broke from the Comintern over the disastrously sectarian 'third period', which brought Hitler to power and fractured the back of the European working class. And one of the splitting policies for which the Trotskyists most vehemently attacked the Stalinists was their refusal to give electoral support to social democrats—even though the reformists were in a pact with capitalist politicians (22). In electoral tactics, as in other matters, Trotskyism stands for objectively revolutionary policies—which are not necessarily the same as positions that appear to be furthest to the left.

So far we have spoken of the past electoral policies of the Trotskyist movement in an abstract fashion. To put flesh on these bones, take the French elections of November 1945, when the CP was in government. The PCI both ran its own candidates in selected constituencies and called for workers to vote CP elsewhere. One of the PCI candidates was a comrade Filiatre. His life, sketched in the SWP's *The Militant* (23) is instructive:

"An electrical worker, he has had long experience in the class struggle. Joined the Young Socialists in 1913. As a socialist he supported the Zimmerwald conference. Participated in the founding of the Communist Party in 1920. Joined the Trotskyists in 1933. A prisoner of war in 1940, he escaped in 1942 to join the underground work against the Nazis. Helped Hic and Widelin carry on revolutionary propaganda among the ranks of the German army. Arrested in 1943, he was tortured by the Gestapo for 17 days and then sent to Buchenwald concentration camp."

Possibly it is 'guilty workerism', as the iSt would have it, to admire such a comrade. If so we must plead guilty. It is, of course, possible to think he was wrong in the 1945 elections (though we do not). It is even permissible to argue that he suddenly succumbed to opportunist pressures. But what is not permissible is blandly to pass over his record and the positions he fought for. The simple fact is that, six months after leaving Buchenwald, comrade Filiatre, with a record that contained in one person the revolutionary traditions of three internationals, was busy urging a vote for

the CP in a popular front. If the Spartacists think this was unprincipled politics, they have a duty to say why.

Most sectarians, cutting themselves off from the problems of the workers' movement, have something of the Jesuit about them. The absolute 'principle' proclaimed by the Spartacists has no basis in the experience or record of the Trotskyist movement. But it *does* serve obvious factional purposes. Since it does not exist, they have found it necessary to invent it.

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21. *Workers' Vanguard*, 11 March 1977, quoted above.

22. For the positions of the French Trotskyists in 1931, for example, see the leadership statement quoted in Craipeaux op.cit. pp.72-73.

23. Report on PCI electoral campaign, in issue of 3rd Nov. 1945.

TURKEY:

The background to today's crisis

The following written report — which formed the preface to a report of the work carried out by our comrades in the class struggle in Turkey — was endorsed by the 2nd Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League.

The Economic and Political Crisis in Turkey

The modern state of Turkey was set up in 1923 on the ruins of an enormous imperialist power whose influence had stretched throughout North Africa, the Balkans and the Arab world. Traditions of imperialist exploitation are continued today Kurdistan and Cyprus and can be seen in the degenerate racialism of the fascist National Action Party. The national bourgeoisie under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk, which established this new state on the ruins of the old, was able for a time even to come into alliance with the new Soviet Union, and inspired generations of bourgeois revolutionaries up to and including Nasser.

Today this tradition is represented in Turkey by Bulent Ecevit's Republican People's Party, but it is no longer capable of playing the progressive role of the past. It expresses the desires of the native bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie. But they cannot operate independently without imperialism, without the forces of repression or without the increasing exploitation of the working class.

Capitalism in Turkey developed from outside by imperialist intervention and has had a combined character of development. Its economic dependence has brought political dependence upon imperialism. After the Second World War, increasing dependence on US imperialism, through Marshall Aid, held Turkey as an important member of the Southern wing of NATO. And imperialism rather than native capitalism has played the chief role in the recent political and economic life of the country.

The national bourgeoisie has continuously sought support from the working class in its bid to step up the rate of exploitation. But because Turkey remains a neglected

economy chained to the west the national bourgeoisie has been driven more and more to seek alliances with imperialism. Its one-time progressive role (continuously referred to by the Stalinists as their pretext for subordinating working class interests to the national bourgeoisie) is over. Bourgeois democracy has never fully functioned in this economically backward environment. The first 23 years of the 54-year old Turkish republic were under a Bonapartist one-party regime, and since then there have been two military regimes (May 1960-March 1971).

This background is important for an analysis of the present political and economic crisis in Turkey. Today the interrelationship between the imperialist powers, the world capitalist crisis and the IMF with the Turkish national bourgeoisie is central to that crisis.

Imperialism exploits the world proletariat on an international level. For this reason the fall in the rate of profit and the desperate attempts by imperialist nations to raise profitability makes itself felt on two fronts. Firstly the imperialist nations increase the exploitation of their own working class—slashing living standards. And secondly, since the colonial and semi-colonial countries are the source of raw materials and surplus value for imperialism, the exploitation in these countries is also intensified.

The general economic and political crisis of world capitalism is reflected with particular intensity in the semi-colonial and colonial countries today, with capitalism needing to impose particularly sharp forms of repression including Bonapartist rule in conflict with workers and

peasants moving to forms of action which will not stop short at insurrection. Such developments have been seen within the last two or three years not only in Turkey, but also in Pakistan, Thailand, Egypt, Portugal and Spain.

The rising prices of commodities imported from the imperialist countries severely disrupts the economy of backward states, prompting balance of payments deficits, foreign currency crises and an attendant destruction of native industry. These countries have no option but to beg the IMF for loans to get through the crisis.

The main conditions laid down by the IMF are a reduction in the rate of growth, a cut in domestic investment programmes, price increases, currency devaluation and further attacks on the working classes of these countries.

Since the main imports to these countries are manufactured goods and investment materials, the destruction of local industries is one way the IMF proposes to reduce the balance of payments deficits. In other words, the economic crisis means more and more dependence upon the West. The Turkish economic crisis is deepened by the added costs of the war in Cyprus, followed by the economic and arms embargo by the USA which has cut 30% of the Turkish budget.

The latest figures tell the story. The *Financial Times* on December 8th revealed:

'The central bank of Turkey is now over \$3.2 billion behind in transfer for imports. With 97% of Turkish imports being of semi-manufactures and investment goods, the problems with imports affects the whole economy. . . These also create further problems in unemployment which now totals 2.4 million—16% of the labour force.'

The balance of payments deficit is around \$3.2 billion for 10 months of 1977. The average rate of inflation is 30%.

The National Front coalition government until its fall was negotiating with the IMF for a \$1 billion loan to tackle the crisis. The IMF demanded a 31% devaluation of the lira; more price increases; abandonment of the entire heavy industry programme and a halving of the rate of growth; and a wage freeze.

Already the NF coalition has imposed a 15% devaluation and increased the price of state-produced goods by 140%. These measures produced a mere \$5 million credit by the IMF. The rest of the conditions were scheduled to be implemented after the 11th December local elections.

Economic bankruptcy reflects itself also in the political arena. The coalition government prior to its fall was split from within. The ultra-Islamic right wing National Salvation Party of Erbakan was opposed to devaluation and to the dropping of the heavy industry programme for which they had campaigned. They also opposed any concessions on Cyprus as a precondition for the lifting of the US arms embargo.

But far more than any internal divisions, the Turkish bourgeois parties are concerned at the prospect of a possible massive offensive by the working class against further attacks of living standards already at starvation level.

Before we analyse the present development of the class struggle and the crisis of revolutionary leadership, we should look back briefly at the history of class struggle in Turkey.

Class Struggle in the 1960s and 1970s

The international offensive of the working class and the development of national liberation struggles found their reflection in Turkey in the 1960s. The growing strength of

the working class could be traced back to the period of the May 1960 military intervention against the US-backed Menderes government, which ended after 3 leaders of the Democratic Party (the predecessor of Demirel's Justice Party) were hanged. Massive demonstrations took place and there was a rapid growth in trade unionism after the coup.

Growing militancy inside the trade unions and the need to develop this fight politically led to the formation of the Turkish Labour Party by trade unionists. The TLP found an immediate response in the working class and won 300,000 votes in the 1965 elections, with 15 MPs elected. In 1967 this was followed by a split in the Turk-İS (the yellow trade union confederation set up under the Marshall Plan's reorganisation of trade unions). The Revolutionary Workers Confederation, DISK, was formed in this split.

The bourgeoisie replied to this growing strength by changing the legislation on trade unions and strikes. Workers provided a sharp answer. In June 1970 thousands of workers joined an uprising which also attracted petty-bourgeois layers from the student movement and the peasantry. A pre-revolutionary situation developed as factories were occupied and workers engaged in armed battles with police. But the Stalinist and reformist leaders were the main enemy of these struggles. The TCP, TLP and DISK all acted to hold back the struggles by democratic demagoguery. This betrayal was followed sharply by a military crackdown with curfews—first of all in the industrial cities, and then, in March 1971, complete military rule. Political parties and all democratic rights including the right to strike were suppressed. Hundreds were arrested by the bonapartist military dictatorship.

After the balance of class forces had been shifted in favour of the bourgeoisie the military regime voluntarily left office and elections took place in 1973. The TLP had been outlawed. The old leader of the RPP, İnönü, was replaced by Ecevit, whose new 'democratic left' policies got a big response from the workers. During the ensuing RPP-National Salvation coalition the military courts remained in operation in 11 cities—controlling disputes and strikes.

The betrayals by Stalinist and reformist leaders continued during the next elections, with those leaders backing Ecevit's RPP and supporting the extension of the curfew and the 1974 Cyprus invasion. They voluntarily banned all strikes and raised funds from the working class to back the war effort.

The escalating international economic crisis and the cost of the arms bill after the US embargo again forced the pace. Workers moved into struggle to improve living standards slashed by the 1971-75 wage freeze. In 1975 the RPP-NSP coalition collapsed as a result of divisions on the Cyprus question. The National Front coalition, which included the fascist party, took office.

Repression against the workers' movement increased, along with fascist attacks. The government attempted to introduce laws to continue the state security courts, only to be confronted by a 400,000-strong General Strike organised by DISK, which lasted for six days. The Stalinists set out from the beginning to confine this action to a 'democratic' protest gesture to back up parliamentary manoeuvres—but despite their efforts to block the action it succeeded in preventing the legislation passing through parliament. The NF government however remained in office and thousands of strikers were victimised after the return to work.

The big bourgeoisie had taken this lesson and that of 1970 very seriously. They began to rely more and more on

the development of fascist forces and terror to smash the emergence of mass struggles. In two years of the first NF coalition more than 300 workers, students and left wingers were killed, and thousands were wounded and arrested. Thousands of teachers, civil servants and students were victimised as the fascists moved in to control the state apparatus, the universities and the factories. Strikes and factory occupations were smashed by fascist thugs, and whole sections of workers forced to join the fascist 'trade union' confederation (MISK) as a precondition for keeping their jobs. Behind this fascist civilian army of the big employers stood the state military and police forces.

But both political and economic crises of the NF coalition were deepening, splitting it from within, while the class struggle reached virtually the point of civil war. The Stalinists, did nothing against the developing fascist terror, but simply called upon the President and parliament to act in defence of 'democracy' while advising workers not to be provoked. Their policy was to bring down the NF coalition 'by democratic means' and the establishment of a 'progressive democratic regime'. This meant effectively a coalition of RPP and TCP, with the Stalinists subordinating the working class to the RPP as the main force of 'democracy'. Even after the May Day massacre of 1977 where 40 workers were killed, the Stalinists insisted that 'we are not going to call demonstrations before Ecevit's RPP comes into office'.

Such Popular Frontist policies have of course done nothing to stop the fascists but on the contrary are responsible for their growth. With the working class held physically paralysed the fascists have extended their base in the petty bourgeoisie. And as the bourgeoisie sensed its weakness it has shifted resources behind the fascists. Meanwhile Ecevit, backed by the union leaders, struck a deal with the NF agreeing an early election in June 1977.

DISK, along with the TCP and other organisations decided to support the RPP in the election. They were joined in this decision by Turkish USFI supporters, who from a different starting point also ended up abandoning the fight for working class political independence. The election results brought a major gain for the fascists who took more than one million votes. The RPP vote also increased—a measure of the mass hostility to the NF coalition, which had been denied an independent expression. The TLP, reluctantly participating in its own name after failing to reach a deal with Ecevit won only 30,000 votes.

After the election Ecevit's minority government showed its true colours as his government programme was shown to exclude even the most elementary democratic rights. Instead, assured of reformist and Stalinist backing, he set out to win the support of the big bourgeoisie. Even his anti-communist propaganda did not bring the opportunist leaders of the workers' movement to withdraw support.

The fact that Ecevit lost the vote of confidence moved by the right wing indicated the uncertainty of the big capitalists in his ability to control the working class. They wanted more repression rather than collaboration. And that required another NF coalition. The second NF coalition intensified the attacks on working class living standards and democratic rights. As Turkish capitalism lurched further into extreme crisis so the regime has stepped up repression. The big bourgeoisie is consciously preparing the fascist card for such a situation. The defeat of Demirel's coalition in the

period after the municipal elections has solved nothing. The bourgeoisie do not want an RPP-JP coalition, nor do they want a government based on working class support. There is no capitalist solution to the Turkish economic crisis without smashing the organised strength of the working class in the drive for profit. This critical weakness of the Turkish bourgeoisie coupled with the treachery of working class leadership is the reason for the growth of the fascists.

Meanwhile the determination of workers to fight is demonstrated by the marathon eight month strike by 40,000 metal workers. But workers confront a complete bankruptcy of leadership.

The call by the TCP and parties of Stalinist origin for the building of a 'National Democratic Front' against fascism is a continuation of the class collaboration of the Popular Front. The first policy put forward by this Front is that the RPP should join it. But the RPP as a bourgeois party in power requires more right wing policies and Ecevit must persuade the big bourgeoisie that he can suppress workers' struggles. This requires not bloc politics but a sharp move to the right. So once he had rejected the NDF appeal, Ecevit launched an attack on TCP supporters in DISK—prompting the expulsion of nine full-time officials, and taking an RPP majority on both EC and General Council at the special congress. This is a blow not simply against the Stalinists but at the working class independence of the unions.

'Democratic Front' policies are counter-revolutionary in three crucial respects:

- 1) They subordinate the working class to the 'democratic' bourgeoisie.
- 2) They deny the leading role of the working class in alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie.
- 3) They promote pacifist, 'democratic' politics, leaving workers disarmed in the face of fascist attack, and offering no direction to radicalised petty-bourgeois and peasant forces.

The Stalinists of course argue that in order to have an alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie it is necessary to have an alliance with the party they support—the RPP. Such anti-Marxist logic leaves out an analysis of the petty-bourgeoisie, as a force wavering between the two fundamentally opposed social classes—bourgeoisie and proletariat.

History has shown that only the independent revolutionary mobilisation of the working class can offer a clear lead which can outweigh the petty bourgeois' conservative attachment to the big capitalists. For this reason it is essential that the fight is taken up inside the Turkish trade union confederations to demonstrate to workers in struggle on jobs and wages that their demands can only be met through a clear political break from Ecevit and the bourgeois RPP government. The essential demand for the arming of workers' militia—the only genuine defence against fascist attacks on the organised labour movement—will be opposed as much by Ecevit as by any other capitalist government.

This means that the fight for wage increases linked to a sliding scale of wages and for work sharing on full pay and for a crash programme of public works are inseparable from the fight to break the trade unions from their bloc with the RPP, and the demand that the workers' parties themselves break from Ecevit and form a workers' and peasants' government.

This demand, because of the present scale of the

workers' parties begins largely as a propaganda slogan. But as the Ecevit government is driven by the force of the crisis to vicious new attacks on the working class and workers look to their organisations for a lead such an orientation could rapidly win mass support.

This same political line must be the central thrust of the fight for local united front bodies from workers' parties and the trade unions to form the first elements of workers militia and to coordinate and spread strikes on wages and in defence of jobs. And while such a direction is developed for the working class in the cities, the programme must be extended to draw in and mobilise the poor peasantry alongside the workers against capitalist reaction.

Such a programme in Turkey would of course include the expropriation of the big landowners, and measures to provide cheap credit, improved transport and guaranteed prices to peasant farmers through the establishment of workers control through joint committees of workers, peasants, and agricultural workers.

The plight of those thousands of farm workers exploited as casual labour at harvest time and unemployed for the rest of the year must be challenged through the fight for the guaranteed employment and a minimum wage for farm workers. This demand leads into the demand for the creation of new jobs through a programme of public works. Peasant delegates must be drawn into united struggles with workers in the fight to open the books of the big monopolies, the banks and import-export agencies to enable the drawing up of a workers' plan of production, and to demonstrate the necessity for the expropriation of Turkish and foreign capital.

Every one of these demands leads worker and peasant alike to the necessity for their organisations to break with the bourgeois republicanism of Ecevit, to establish their own independent united organisations, and to force the workers parties to take power in their hands. In such a struggle workers and peasants would come into conflict with the conscious Popular Frontism of the TCP and union bureaucrats, and the best elements would come to recognise the need for a qualitatively new, revolutionary leadership.

Only in this way can our comrades' propaganda and agitational work in Turkey be directed in a living way along the lines laid down in the Transitional Programme and the way opened up for a workers' government which could only represent, in the words of the Transitional Programme 'a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat'.

National Question - Kurdistan.

The Kurdish national liberation struggle is a major issue for the class struggle in Turkey. A majority of Kurds—some 10 million in number—live in Turkey, and the Kurds have a history of struggle for their independence. Although the main battles have taken place in Iran and Iraq the Kurds of Turkey played an important role in these struggles.

The question cannot be discussed in detail in this document—a separate document should be prepared on it. But because of immediate tasks we must briefly outline the key political questions.

The main all-Turkish parties active and having some influence in Turkey-Kurdistan are the TCP and the RPP.

The RPP buys off the petty bourgeois layers of the Kurdish people and assimilates them into the state apparatus while the Stalinists oppose independent mobilisation for national independence. The chauvinist and opportunist policies of the TCP propose a fight for a 'progressive democratic regime' in Turkey as a solution to the Kurdish question!

The constitution of the Turkish parliament institutionalises the national oppression of the Kurds—so the Popular Frontist policies of the TCP recognise and tacitly support the direct oppression of Kurdistan.

The problem of the Kurdish liberation struggle is thus mainly the political problem of leadership. Bourgeois nationalist leaders such as Barzania Talabani of the Kurdistan Democratic Party are incapable of conducting consistent armed struggle to achieve independence. In 1975 Barzani and the KDP sold out the struggle to American imperialism and established alliances with Iran. The consequences of this betrayal was a great defeat, which has brought some changes in the ranks of the KDP.

But this is only the most recent betrayal in a series that includes Stalin's decision to cut off aid to the already established first Kurdish Republic (Mehabab Kurdish Republic) in 1946 as part of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements.

The political task of Trotskyists in Kurdistan must consist of the fight for an independent party and fight to gain and preserve working class political independence from the bourgeois nationalists. But so long as the bourgeois leaders continue to wage armed struggle against imperialist occupation we must give them material support while putting forward a socialist programme.

Such a programme will focus on democratic demands (national independence, a constituent assembly, the right to speak Kurdish, etc) but must also point out the permanent character of the revolution. The future of the Kurdish labouring masses will be in the future united soviet republics of the Middle East.

For this reason the sharpest struggle must be waged against the Stalinist concept of 'organisational unity' of Kurds with Iranian, Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian 'progressive' forces. As a nation which is already divided into four by the imperialist policies of these countries, the burning issue for the Kurds is to unify in a single organisation independent of the bourgeoisie in the struggle for national liberation.

The 'unity' of the working masses of the occupying countries with the Kurds must be on the basis of active struggle against their own bourgeoisie. Organisational unity must mean unity in an international revolutionary organisation—the reconstructed Fourth International.

As Trotsky pointed out:

"For the backward colonial and semi-colonial countries the struggle for democracy, including the struggle for national independence, represents a necessary and progressive stage of historical development. It is for this reason that we deem it not only the right but also the duty of workers in these countries actively to participate in the 'defence of the fatherland' against imperialism, on condition, to be sure, that they preserve the complete independence of their class organisations and conduct a ruthless struggle against the poison of chauvinism".

(Trotsky, *Writings 1938-9*, p.64)

And again in *Perspectives and Tasks in the East*:

"The struggle for the independence of India is a profoundly progressive movement; but you and I know at the same time that this struggle is confined to national-bourgeois tasks. The struggle for the liberation of China, the ideology of Sun Yat-sen, is a democratic struggle and a progressive ideology, but bourgeois. We stand for communists supporting the Kuomintang in China by driving it forward". (p.8).

Left in the Limelight

In this regular feature in 'Trotskyism Today' we aim to bring together material from a wide range of sources on the left internationally, to make available to our readers information and views they may well otherwise miss, or which we feel should be savoured anew. We invite readers to submit suggested material for this feature — with or without their own comments.

State caps expose Spartacist chauvinism

The individual arrogance and political philistinism of the international Spartacist tendency is well known to anyone who has encountered their interventions into left wing public meetings.

Impervious to facts or to reason, unmoved by the class struggle, and uninterested in practical action, the iSt has largely distinguished itself by its pro-imperialist positions in relation to the national struggle in Ireland and in Palestine, and by its Healyite insistence upon a full maximum programme in place of agitation around transitional demands.

But another side of the Spartacists' sectarianism is their defence of *immigration controls* under capitalism, as proudly proclaimed in the second issue of *Spartacist Britain*.

They recoil in horror from imaginary 'large scale immigration flows', which, they fear, could 'wipe out the national identity of recipient countries'. The echo of Thatcher is not lessened by the fact that the 'small' countries that concern the iSt the most are imperialist Holland and imperialist Belgium!

But, as shown in the following extract from an article in last Spring's *Socialist Voice* — journal of the 'state capitalist' US League for a Revolutionary Party — the Spartacists' position extends to out-

right racialism.

We obviously disagree with the LRP's political analysis of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: but, despite their 'state capitalist theories, their assessment of the iSt hits some correct and some interesting points.

The Spartacist League (SL) is one of several centrist groups that claim to represent the continuity of the Fourth International. The SL boasts that it (unlike the other Pabloite movements) is building a genuinely principled international tendency. James Robertson, the Spartacists' founder and a member of its Central Committee, recently returned from an international tour and reported on his findings at a public meeting held in New York City on January 29 of this year. It is this forum to which we draw the reader's attention. It exploded the Spartacist League's

phony claim to internationalism. Unfortunately, the performance was of such a character that it added a new, ugly, and damaging stain on the reputation of Trotskyism which Robertson falsely identifies with himself.

Robertson spoke for ninety minutes, giving what was heralded as an analysis of the world conjunctural situation. It was somewhat incredible that the leader of a group which characterizes Russia, China and similar societies as 'workers' states' had nothing at all to say about most of them—with one exception. But that political oversight quickly faded into insignificance. In the course of his meandering travelogue, Robertson delivered a series of chauvinist epithets that insulted the revolutionary capacities of the working classes everywhere and denigrated almost every non-white, non-American and non-English speaking people that got in his way. His theme was to blame the working masses for the weak state of the revolutionary movement.

Robertson warmed up with the sneering comment that the Vietnamese victory over imperialism was a 'big deal' and was 'not really as important as the defeat of the workers in Indonesia' because 'not many people live in Indochina'. After this cavalier dismissal of 56 million Indochinese people and a struggle which has had enormous consequences for imperialism, he really got going.

'The Greek population exists by selling its children or selling Swiss watches to one another'.

Albania, the only 'workers state' Robertson saw fit to mention, was a nation of 'goat-fuckers'.

'Northern Europe is dripping with fat,' so the workers of this region can be 'bought off with slight adjustments'. Similarly, the foreign workers in these countries can also be bought off and when deported would 'only end up supporting popular fronts'.

Canada was not worth considering (although the Spartacist tendency has a group in that country) because it is only the 'fringe on the surrey extending fifty miles north of the US border'. Non-English speaking North America (Mexico and Quebec, with the most advanced class struggles on the continent) was specifically ignored in this talk, which was supposed to deal with the world revolutionary setting.

As for the US, the one country where Robertson believes that

Trotskyism has an "unbroken tradition", it too "is a jaded country" which, like Northern Europe, "drips with fat if you exclude the Negro [sic] from the statistics". But Robertson saved his vilest spleen for the American blacks: "The black population burned down the ghettos and it's now waiting for the Jews to come back and open up the drug stores". High prices charged by storekeepers in the ghetto were attributed to the fact that "black kids rip them off". And that was his entire analysis on this subject, from beginning to end.

Robertson's remarks would have been disgusting from anyone, but coming in a public presentation from the leader of a "revolutionary" organisation based in the world's foremost imperialist country, they were nothing short of a scandal. Even more scandalous was the Spartacists' justification of Robertson's vicious cynicism—in the name of Marx and Lenin!

Lenin was absolutely unequivocal on the question:

"That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or 'great' nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view".

Robertson's comments were put forward seriously. They were not even meant as remarkably bad jokes, and the SL in its cynical defence never claimed them to be. Even had that been the case, such insensitivity would have been impossible for a revolutionary leader, for as Lenin went on to say:

"... Nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice; 'offended' nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violence of this equality, if only through negligence or jest—to the violation of that

equality by their proletarian comrades".

("On the Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'," December 31, 1922; in *National Liberation, Socialism and Imperialism*, International Publishers, pp.168-9)

There is, as Lenin's warning suggests, a political explanation for Robertson's behaviour. The Spartacist League is Pabloite: that is, it holds that the dozen countries where state power was conquered by Communist Parties since World War II are ("deformed") workers' states—which means that the socialist revolution was made under the leadership of petty-bourgeois Stalinists or nationalists. Such a notion abandons the Marxist understanding that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class in this epoch.

Pabloism by its nature is a capitulation to the petty bourgeoisie in theory and practice. It leads its followers to a petty-bourgeois outlook rather than to champion the historical interests of the working class. Given the variety of layers of the petty bourgeoisie, pulverised by capitalism into an asteroid belt between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the different branches of Pabloism (and of centrism generally) make their capitulations in different ways. Some, like the United Secretariat majority led by Ernest Mandel and Pierre Frank, defer primarily to the petty-bourgeois leaderships of the nationalist and "third world" struggles. Others, like the American SWP, make their foremost obeisance to the labor bureaucracy, the petty-bourgeois leadership of the working class in the imperialist countries. (The SWP has become the cheerleaders and torch bearers for the mild-left bureaucrats, the most recent of which is Ed Sadlowski of the United Steelworkers). Most centrists manage to submit to both of these petty bourgeois tendencies at once.

The uniqueness of the Spartacist League, what many leftists mistakenly regard as its "sectarianism", is that it does not capitulate to the nationalism of the oppressed nations—because it directly reflects the attitudes of the privileged sections of the American working class. The SL provides a left cover for the labor aristocracy's contempt for and fear of the oppressed workers.

The Spartacists appear very left only because there does not exist a real left current in the union bureaucracy of the United States. A rising class struggle in the future will undoubtedly cast up, as in the past, such a left bureaucratic centrism presenting itself as a battling revolutionary force. . . . This is what the Spartacists are a foretaste of, what they are laying the propaganda basis for now: a real militant reformism with, as they say, at least one demand from the Transitional Programme. Therefore they don't buy the milquetoast Sadlowskis. One look at the British left Labourites today on racism, or the left bureaucracy in the American past, will show that national chauvinism is just as virulent a disease on the "left" as among the right reformists. And Robertson presents it to us now.

The singlemindedness of the SL points to a specific political conception within the general line of Pabloism. Pablo's abandonment of Trotskyism in favour of petty-bourgeois capitulation was predated by the Shachtmanites' break from the Fourth International in 1940. In giving up on the revolutionary gains made by the workers through the Bolshevik Revolution, Shachtman was originally a left centrist reflection of the cynical retreat of the left reformist labor bureaucracy and intelligentsia. Shachtman's "Third Camp" was not equivalent to the later "third world" politics. While it subsequently stood for the support of pro-Western ex-colonial leaderships, it placed its original and long-term faith in the left sections of the trade union leaderships of the democratic (imperialist) countries; these were the "advanced" sectors to be won to the "socialist" cause.

Shachtmanism differed from the broader development of Pabloism only in the direction of its capitulation. The Pabloites of various lands used their pro-Stalinism to reflect adaptations made to other petty-bourgeois currents. The historic links between Pabloite and Shachtmanite groupings were not accidental; the method was the same.

The Spartacist League is a Pabloite-Shachtmanite hybrid. It cloaks its quite direct acceptance of the outlook of the labor aristocracy in the so-called advanced cultures with the veneer of Trotskyist orthodoxy on the "workers' states". In fact, as

we showed in the article "Permanent Revolution in Southern Africa" (*Socialist Voice* No. 1), it was only the Spartacists' support of Russian imperialism that permitted them to come to the delayed support of the anti-US imperialism struggle in Angola.

The uniqueness of the SL also lies in its clarity. Other Pabloites waver over exactly what class forces created the "deformed workers states". Not so the Spartacists, who boldly state that the petty-bourgeoisie (in "exceptional circumstances," but the exception has been the inevitable rule) can make the socialist revolution. Similarly, very few if any other Pabloites (or Shachtmanites) would express their chauvinism so baldly as does Robertson. In fact, they would recoil in anger—to their credit.

Robertson is certainly not a racist in the Hitlerian sense; it is not at all a question of genetic inheritance. Nor do the Stalinists in the USSR wish to physically exterminate the Jews; they merely want to eliminate them as an identifiable cultural entity different from the Great Russians. Such is the SL's view. Let the Albanians and the Greeks learn civilised behaviour. Let the blacks give up their unproductive rage ("nothing much happened after the ghetto riots," said Robertson). Let them all act like his image of good socialistic white American trade unionists who are the offspring of advanced technological culture and Robertson will welcome them all into the fold.

If the SL's preference for the labor aristocracy had not been made sufficiently clear by Robertson's presentation, his (and other Spartacists') defence of his performance and of the SL's long-standing positions during the discussion period proved the point. The Spartacists' first defence against attacks from the League for the Revolutionary Party (and also from the Communist Cadre organisation) was that we were "moralists" for objecting to Robertson's invective.

SL speakers, Robertson in the lead, denounced the "lumpen rage" of the black ghettos—as if anger against oppression is reprehensible and confined only to the lumpen-proletariat. We are far from moralists however, in identifying with the rage of black workers. The SL's effort to lump outraged masses with the lumpen, and to separate them from

more solidly employed blacks, is precisely the present political strategy of the left liberals. The unemployed and marginally employed workers for whom capitalism can no longer provide jobs are tossed on the scrap-heap, and their fury is equated with that of the criminal elements.

Similarly, the SL continued to defend its opposition to free immigration from the oppressed countries into the imperialist heartlands on the grounds that it would threaten the "national identity of the recipient countries" (*Workers Vanguard*, 18 January, 1974). This position is a sophisticated left cover for the favourite remedy of the labour bureaucracy for unemployment, crime and the other ills of capitalism: blame them on foreign workers. The SL does not support the bureaucracy's present course, but again it serves notice of its future course in a more left setting.

LRP speakers charged that the SL had reneged on the revolutionary obligation to give military tactical support in the anti-imperialist struggle in Angola and in the Palestinian fight in Lebanon when they were under attack by the US-backed right wing and the Syrian army. The SL replied that Lebanon was a "tribal puzzle" whose pieces, apparently, have no relation to world imperialism. Warming to the subject of the Middle East, the SL repeated the familiar Zionist slogan that the Arabs really wanted to "drive the Jews into the sea".

As for Africa, the Spartacists again stressed the importance of the South African whites for the anti-apartheid struggle because of their "privileged access to culture and technology" (*Workers Vanguard*, 14 January, 1977); the blacks would be "wiped out" without whites on their side. In perhaps the most outrageous remark of the evening, Robertson affirmed the SL's support for the "right of the Boers to self-determination"—against a black republic, not the British Empire of 1900! This was a direct appeal to the bourgeoisie's most corrupted allies in the working class.

Responding to angry criticism from the audience, the Spartacists alleged that they, like Lenin and the Bolsheviks, supported the right of self-determination for "all" nations.

What a travesty! It would never have occurred to Lenin, nor to any other leftist until the Spartacists, that the "great" imperialist oppressor nations were in need of self-determination. The right of self-determination means the right to secede from an oppressor. The South African whites already have their independence, and use it to enslave the blacks. To guarantee such rights to an oppressor can only mean equating the rights of oppressor and oppressed—and that always comes down to denying the rights of the oppressed. If the South African whites demand "self-determination" on the verge of a black victory in that country, whose side will the South African Spartacists be on?

The equation of the rights to national self-determination of the oppressor and the oppressed is a constant theme of the Spartacists, not only in South Africa but in Palestine and Northern Ireland as well. The equal right of the rich and poor to sleep in the cold is a notorious watchword of the bourgeois democrats, not of proletarian revolutionists who recognise such "equal rights" as a cynical defence of capitalist inequality.

The Spartacists' other repeated defences against our attacks were 1) that we were wrong to criticise Robertson's words rather than the SL programme, and 2) that Karl Marx was also famous for using strong language in describing various nationalities. The LRP, in fact, said a good deal about the SL's programme in our intervention. Not surprisingly however, Robertson and the SLers who followed his lead chose not to answer our politics but instead tried to cover up the impact of Robertson's "great nation" bullying. The Spartacists overlook the fact that programme is not just a list of positions—it is everything a party stands for. In this case Robertson's words spoke louder than his purported political message. One who claims to be an internationalist yet breathes contempt for every people but his own, is no internationalist.

As for Marx's language, an LRP speaker pointed out that Marx lived before the epoch of imperialism, before the holocaust of Nazism had painted in bloody colours the depths to which decaying capitalism can descend. Marx raged at those groups who had come to personify

capitalism and its oppression, as well as at the petty nationalisms of his epoch which were stalking horses for Czarist Russian reaction, the main threat against the oppressed and the progressive forces of his day. Robertson, in contrast, aimed his barbs against the nationalism of the oppressed and thereby proved that, in Lenin's words, he "has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view". To be a Leninist is to be an anti-nationalist, but one cannot be a Leninist without distinguishing between the nationalisms of the oppressed and the oppressors.

(...)

We note the fact that the Spartacists' own account of the forum in the February 4 *Workers Vanguard* did not quote any of the reprehensible comments which we had attacked, although it summarized the speech at great length. Nor did it deal honestly with the SL's opponents; the article referred to our criticisms only as a "glorification of lumpen rage." The citations from Robertson's speech, however, are proof that our outrage was based on quite different considerations.

The remarks that we cite here were taken down by *Socialist Voice* reporters at the forum. After the forum, a Spartacist official agreed that we could listen to their tape recording of the talk in order to verify our notes. Several days later, however we were told that "the tapes will not be made available externally." As we replied to the Spartacist League in a letter challenging their refusal:

"Comrade Robertson's talk was public, and it would seem that you would, under normal circumstances, want to have the contents of such a talk widely disseminated. However, we can well understand why you have decided to suppress such a frank admission of your chauvinist politics. Your cowardly account in *Workers Vanguard* No. 143 testifies to your intent to disguise the content of Robertson's remarks and the real nature of the attack made upon it by the L.R.P."

We again repeated our challenge to the SL to make the tapes of this public talk available to the left public and the workers' movement.

Since our quotations come from notes taken by several comrades and

were checked with those of non-members of our organization who were present, we believe them to be reasonably accurate. If the Spartacists wish to challenge the accuracy of the quoted material, if they wish to argue that Robertson did not make such chauvinist and racist remarks, there is a simple recourse. Make the tapes available. If access to the tapes is given to us (and to others like the Communist Cadre who have requested it) we will publish any necessary corrections. We frankly doubt that the SL will yield the tapes if only because they contain even more insults and outrages than those listed here.

The Spartacists' international tendency will die aborning. Its implicit orientation to the labor aristocracy

spells its doom. For the most oppressed sectors of the workers are where the revolutionary parties must sink their roots. These layers have no stake in maintaining the capitalist system and will inevitably make up disproportionate numbers of the leading cadres of the reconstructed Fourth International. The struggle to forge the International will have to sweep aside the chauvinist conceptions of the Spartacist League, for internationalism abhors the slightest concession to the ideology of imperialism. It will reject capitulation to capitalism in any form—statified, monopolized, or petty—and thereby learn the necessary lessons from the tragic degeneration of the Fourth International.

WRP turns to women's liberation - in Iraq !

The Workers Revolutionary Party, led by Gerry Healy, has for years been notorious for its failure to take up even the slightest struggle for women's rights.

The WRP has stood implacably on the sidelines with folded arms while campaigns on abortion rights and equal pay have come and gone. The daily *Newslane* sees fit to mention women's rights only as part of its general vituperation against revisionist groups, and its columns are not infrequently graced with backward jibes at the women's and gay movements.

The WRP nowadays however clearly values its opportunist links with the Middle East despotisms of Libya and Iraq more than its neutral stand on the woman question.

Imagine the delight of *Newslane* editor Alex Mitchell, therefore when presented with an article by an anonymous interviewer which managed to combine both positions under the heading "New Role for Women in Iraq" (March 22):

Last week the editor of Iraq's biggest women's magazine, 'Woman', was in London to give a lecture at the Iraqi Cultural Centre about the position of women in Iraq.

Amal al-Sharqi explained, in an interview with *News Line*, how

women in Iraq enjoy a freedom almost unique in the Arab world.

"We entered the modern era in Iraq very late, you know, not until the beginning of this century. It was an agricultural society, very backward, with no kind of state organisation.

And of course in a peasant agriculture the woman is very important—as a matter of fact in the Arab world they do more work than the men! The men are responsible for the irrigation, and also the ploughing is done by men. But the women do all the sowing, tending of crops and harvesting. These all depend on women.

So in that way our society was quite used to the idea of women working. When we began to have a state as you know it, with government offices, with departments, with the people building townships, then in the 1920s, women started to work and become educated.

But which women? Only the women who came from richer families, in the towns—not at all the rural population, who were 75% of the people".

Mrs Al-Sharqi explained that in Iraq middle-class women who are educated, go to work when they have

finished their studies. This is still unusual. In many Arab countries, the wealthy still send their daughters to study, and then when they have completed their studies they marry, and never use what they have learned. Amal Al-Sharqi went on:

"When the first women went to university in 1937, they went to study law and medicine. These women, before they went, wore the 'abaya' (head-dress).

But when they went to university they started to wear the veil also. They wanted people to think they were even more strict than the others. They were not, you know, but they wanted others to know they were there to learn, and they were not 'easy'.

The first women to enter the professions were journalists. The first editor of a women's magazine which came out in the 1920s was one of these women...

... Anyway, from that time onwards, in the towns, there was not a separate role for women. But I would remind you that all the progress of women up until the revolution was on an individual basis. If a woman wanted to get on in a particular field, she could do it, but nobody welcomed her or encouraged her.

But since the revolution the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party has taken it as its responsibility to change the status of women. Not for the good of women only, you understand, but for the good of society. You cannot develop a country when half the population do work!"

The idea of importing immigrant labour, as many of the other Arab regimes do, was rejected, and instead women were encouraged to work, she explained. And this has transformed the lives of all women, in all classes.

"The women who now work in the factories, have some education. They are encouraged to go out and find work. This is the real radical change. You see, for a wealthy woman, not working does not make that much difference. She can still read, travel. But by having women working, that is how we will change the attitude to the role of women.

These women would never have had the chance of an education or the chance to develop themselves.

Once they are at work, they have the opportunity to develop themselves, things are open to them. They can go out, have financial independence, have a respected position in their families.

Now we have a law that primary education is compulsory for women. This is a great advance.

Women at work take a big part in their trade unions; some of the executives of the unions for the different trades have women members. That proves they are active on the shop floor, since their colleagues would not have elected them otherwise.

And the law in Iraq demands

Spanish groups call for General Strike

We reprint below the text of a leaflet published jointly by the Liga Comunista of Spain — a group which claims adherence to the USFI, but which refused to engage in a fusion with the official section, the LCR — and the Proletarian Faction — a group which split from the PORE, a sectarian Vargaite grouping based in Barcelona.

While the leaflet omits the important demand for the opening of the books of the employers as part of its call for nationalisation, it nevertheless provides a generally correct political line for the struggles against the collaborationist Moncloa Pact.

On Thursday 18 May the trade union federations (UGT and the Workers Commissions) are calling out the workers in engineering, construction, textiles and hotels on a 24-hour strike to put pressure on the employers to negotiate their various agreements.

The employers, in spite of the strong mobilisation in engineering, on May 9, after the partial stoppages in construction, after the state wide general strike in textiles on April 12, continue with their hard and intransigent position in relation to the workers demands.

The bosses are relying on the agreements signed under the Moncloa Pact by the Communist Party and

that firms who employ women must provide creches. There are nursery schools, although not enough as yet, and kindergartens for the four and five-year olds.

Women are active too, in politics, but so is everyone. Every person in Iraq is interested in politics. It affects everything so closely. If you can't find a house, who is to blame? There are no property developers.

If the thing you want is not in the shops, who is to blame? If something is good, if creches are provided for your children who has done that? It is politics, it is the revolution".

the PSOE which control the leaderships of the Workers Commissions and the UGT. They are relying on the support which these parties are giving in practice to the Suarez government and to the monarchy, with their participation in the continuist Cortes.

What is more, they know that if they give in on the agreements in Catalonia, extremely important because of the number of workers affected, it is going to be very difficult for them to impose rotten agreements in the rest of the state.

Even more when their intentions far from conceding anything are to draw up plans for restructuring and crisis measures in engineering and textiles while construction and the hotels and restaurants are sectors deeply affected by the crisis.

All of this implies an increase in unemployment. The employers want to continue their profitable negotiations at the expense of the workers!!

Against this unanimous attitude of the bosses, the workers movement has to be equally unanimous.

A general strike of all workers must be organised against the bosses and their state!

It is not enough to have many strikes at the same time. It is not enough to have mobilisations or work stoppages in the factory without any preparation.

A united and centralised mobilisation of all sectors must be organised.

The May 18 strike should be the

beginning of this necessary mobilisation. It is necessary for the engineering sector, construction, textiles and the hotels:

- *To organise massive joint pickets at the level of each zone and area to paralyse all the factories and workshops.

- *To go to the factories of other sectors, (chemicals, the banks) to propose the united strike as was done in Polinya on 9 April.

- *To call demonstrations in the zones and areas of all the strikers. To organise there joint mass meetings to decide how to carry the strike forward. To elect delegates from every sector in struggle, recallable at any time by the mass meetings, which would coordinate among themselves and with the trade union confederations the setting up of a central strike committee of Catalonia.

- *To put forward a united platform of demands, common to all sectors. Forging unity is not only concerned with common action and organisation, but with common objectives which can be actively fought for in the big factories, among the unemployed, and in all other sectors.

- Withdrawal of threats, sanctions and redundancies.

- Minimum wage for all industries of 33,000 pesetas a month after tax (£226). No discrimination against women and youth.

- Across the board increase of 8,500 pesetas for all workers (£58).

- No to unemployment. A job for all. Division of the hours of work among those available to work.

- No to the crisis measures in the factories. Nationalisation of factories in crisis under workers control.

- Full trade union rights.

- All the demands which are pending.

- Down with the Moncloa Pact! Resignation of workers deputies from the Cortes! To the General Strike! A CP-PSOE government.

- *In reply to the possible intervention of the repressive forces (armed police, civil guard, special police) pickets must be organised to protect our actions.

The central strike committee has to be the organising and coordinating centre of all the actions and mass meetings. The necessary measures must be put forward for the incorporation into the strike of those sectors still not in struggle: chemical, wood industries, teaching,

the banks, printing.

The central strike committee must take on the tasks of negotiating the agreements, submitting themselves to the decisions of the mass meetings.

This organisation of us all has nothing to do with the so-called 'delegates assemblies' which exist in the engineering industry.

The leadership of the Workers Commissions in accordance with their 'trade union of a new type' and with the 'tacit' support of the UGT, which has said nothing on the question, use these assemblies, which only meet at times when selected delegates can attend, to put forward the view that they are not decision-making meetings but informative ones.

Thus the members of these assemblies are made to play the role of the old workers' representatives in the Francoist 'unions' of holding back the right of workers to make decisions in their own mass meetings.

We Trotskyists believe that if the bosses are to be forced to concede then the strikers—through their own mass meetings—must take the management of affairs into their own hands.

Their delegates must not submit to any decree from above. They are spokesmen of the mass meetings, the only decision-making organs.

The trade unions have to be at the head of this mobilisation:

- It is necessary for the federal committees of the various sectors on strike to act in coordination with each other since their struggle is the same. The same applies to trade union sections at the level of each zone and district.

- The remaining committees and sections of the other sectors must organise mass meetings and strikes in their sectors in order to join up with the struggle. It is the only form for acting as authentic fighting organisations.

However the latest agreements and struggles show that the leaders of these unions, linked to the Moncloa Pact, are more disposed to make agreements with the bosses on our backs (as in printing) than to push forward the struggle to gain the demands.

It is as part of this line of agreement with the bosses that they put forward intermittent stoppages, short term strikes inside the factories etc., refusing to organise mass meetings.

The members must take control and demand of the leaderships that they act in accordance with the decisions of the membership as a whole and not on their own account. That, along with the other union federations, they take forward the effective organisation of the General Strike not only in Catalonia but at the level of the whole state, forming a state-wide Workers Alliance Committee, and one in every nation, region, etc., putting an end to the Moncloa Pact, to this Cortes, to the Suarez government, finishing with this regime and setting up a workers' government capable of taking the appropriate measures (expropriation, nationalisation, etc) which will permit the needs of the working class and the oppressed people to be met. This government must be formed by the CP and PSOE as majority parties, based on the trade unions and elected workers delegates, supported by mass mobilisations.

For this it is necessary that the workers' leaders withdraw their signatures from the Moncloa Pact and that the workers' leaders resign from the Cortes, supporting instead the Workers Alliance.

Barcelona, May 16, 1978
National Committee of the
Communist League
Fourth International.
Young Communist League.
Proletarian Faction in
Defence of the Fourth
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