

Marxist Bulletin

No. 1.

Summer 1975

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TROTSKY:
On Press Freedom
Editorials
Trotskyists and The
Entry Tactic
Revolution in Portugal

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*Signed articles do not necessarily
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Introducing Marxist Bulletin

This first issue of the 'Marxist Bulletin' marks a step forward in the struggle to defend the continuity of Trotskyism and for the re-building of the Fourth International destroyed by the Pabloites. The 'Marxist Bulletin' is the theoretical organ of a group of Trotskyists, the 'Bulletin Group', ex-members of the SLL and the WRP who, because of the conditions in the WRP were forced for the past 18 months, to carry out what should have been an internal struggle, from outside the WRP itself.

This struggle was and is based on the principles of the 'Transitional Programme adopted at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938 and its application in Britain.

The 'Bulletin Group' is now a section of the O.C.R. F.I. (Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International). It will put forward the positions of the Organising Committee, having as its task the building of a Trotskyist Organisation in Britain. This task begins through the application of the 'Entry tactic' in the Labour Party, a perspective abandoned by the SLL in 1964.

The 'Marxist Bulletin' will continue the work undertaken by the 'Bulletin group', of discussions and

clarification and around the WRP and its fragmenting elements, and will extend this work to tendencies and individuals who are breaking from Centrism and coming towards Trotskyism.

The 'Marxist Bulletin' will continue discussions on the 'entry' tactic in this country and internationally, as well as other key problems of the class struggle such as the 'United Front', the 'National Question', the fight for a 'workers' government', transitional demands as they arise and a general approach to the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International as a whole.

It will take up all questions of Marxist theory, and in particular answer the attacks of 'revisionists' and would-be exponents of 'Marxist philosophy'.

By defending the 'continuity of Trotskyism' we do not mean a 'counting of heads' who have survived a number of splits over a number of years (although some of us have over 40 years experience in the Trotskyist movement), but the continuity of the struggle for international socialism based on the thesis adopted at the First Four Congresses of the Third International and the Transitional Programme adopted at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

EDITORIAL

This issue of the Bulletin marks its necessary transition to an open journal fighting for the re-building of the Fourth International and the construction of the revolutionary party in Britain. Since January of 1974, the *Bulletin* has appeared as a factional organ oriented almost exclusively towards the crisis-wracked Workers Revolutionary Party (formerly the Socialist Labour League). Important events both within the WRP, and the British and world class struggle, have dictated a changed orientation for the *Bulletin*. The WRP leadership not only failed to heed the repeated warnings of the Bulletin that Healy was fast liquidating all that had been gained for British and world Trotskyism over the previous four decades; the Healy-Banda leadership took the unprecedented step of driving out of the WRP more than 100 of its leading industrial cadres on trumped-up charges, in order to prevent their criticisms of the party's sectarian policies being discussed in the ranks.

The subsequent evolution of this, the Thornett Group (now the Workers Socialist League) lies outside the scope of an Editorial. Of the split itself however, it must be said that it marked a qualitatively new stage in the degeneration of the WRP. The hounding out of the Thornett group represents a partial victory for the petty bourgeois and bourgeois radical adventurers in the WRP, who now serve as Healy's main support in his struggle against the party's worker elements and on the level of policies, against the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Not only is the WRP now hearing its death throes as a Trotskyist organisation, but also in the main liquidationist centre, the Unified Secretariat of the Fourth Interna-

tional, we can in its sections and leadership detect similar though by no means identical, factional convulsions and crisis.

The Mandel innovation of non-proletarian 'new vanguards', which blossomed in the wake of the May/June 1968 upheavals in France has now begun to wither as throughout Europe, the working class moves into action against capitalism *through its traditional mass organisations*, political and trade union. Mandel's 'new vanguard' conception rested on the false assumption that the radicalised petty-bourgeoisie would serve as pole of revolutionary attraction for the proletariat, dragging it away from its allegiance to its traditional organisations with which, so the Pabloite theory claimed, the workers were severing their last links. (It is significant once again to note the similarity with the conceptions of the SLL/WRP, whose leaders also from 1968 onwards, claimed that reformism in Britain was 'dead' and that no section of workers would 'ever again' look to the Labour Party for leadership.) On the strength of this essentially opportunistic theory, the former Pabloite Liquidationist line of 'deep entry' was temporarily abandoned, and an ultra left, sectarian policy adopted towards the mass movement.

In due course, the adventurist strategy of minority armed struggle was transposed from the semi-colonial countries, where the Socialist Workers Party were among its keenest advocates, to the advanced countries of Western Europe, where it supplemented the already anti-proletarian Mandel line of 'new vanguards'.

At this point, the SWP recoiled from the conclusions the Mandelists had drawn from the mutually agreed

first premise; i.e. that in certain cases, the liberation of the proletariat need not be the task of the proletariat itself. Thus we can see that as in the recent WRP split, the crisis in the Unified Secretariat has its fundamental basis in the clash of opposed class forces. In both instances, the radical, but hopelessly disoriented petty-bourgeoisie, nurtured and encouraged by Healy-Mandel, is on the offensive against the programme and methods of the proletarian class struggle, an offensive which has been answered, with all the limitations contained in those tendencies and groupings, by elements most sensitive to the proletarian traditions and bases of their respective organisations.

Elsewhere too, there are indications that the new upsurge of the class struggle in Western Europe is taking its toll among the centrist formations with a currently ultra-left line. Thus we see in Britain the beginnings of a hesitant turn in International Socialism, where elements have proposed a more serious policy towards the Labour Party: and a classic centrist zig-zag on the part of Workers Fight, which while still like the WRP, holding the Labour Party to be a thoroughly capitalist party, has commenced entry work of a sort within it.

(On the other hand, the IS leadership headed by ex-*'Private Eye'* radical and anti-Labour demagogue Paul Foot, and the 'state capitalist' Tony Cliff, hew to a line that has much in common with the Mandel 'hew vanguardism' and Healy's sectarianism. *'International Socialism'* No.76 speaks of 'the continuing decay of the social democratic organisation' and claims that the Labour left has 'less and less connections with the working class' - assertions belied by the current split emerging within the Labour Party from the Cabinet right down to the level of the local party organisations.)

We do not look on these gyrations as a source of hope. Such about turns (especially in the case of the pro-entry faction of Robin Blackburn in the IMG) obviously contain within them the other face of centrism; its rightwards, opportunist side, which may quickly pull it over towards an unprincipled relationship with the left-social democratic elements within the Labour Leadership

Nevertheless, these trends contain contradictory elements. Yesterday's ultra-lefts, as we know from the notorious case of Jock Haston, can and often do prove to be tomorrow's opportunists. But other forces are also at work here. Groupings as yet undifferentiated will crystallise into basically two currents - those engaged in yet another centrist zig-zag between sectarianism and opportunism, and those seeking to find their way towards the correct tactical and strategic positions in relation to entry work. It is primarily towards these latter forces that the *'Marxist Bulletin'* will be directed, and it is for this reason that we begin this new phase of our work with a three part study of entry and its relationship to the central strategic task of the re-building of the Fourth International, and the construction of the revolutionary party in Britain.

Fragmentation and regroupment - these are the dual aspects of the crisis of all tendencies which claim to speak in the name of Trotskyism and the Fourth International. The former is accelerating, and the latter is now possible, only because of the dramatic upturn in the class struggle throughout the world. It is the instinctive thrust of the proletariat towards power, expressed everywhere at this stage by determined attempts to force its own parties and leaders to form the government and im-

plement the demands of the workers and oppressed layers of the middle class, that has provoked the crisis in the Unified Secretariat, and driven the Healy petty-bourgeois radicals to launch their frenzied purge of the proletarian Thornett opposition, and revise the programme of the Fourth International.

In Portugal, where leftism has nourished itself with all manner of phantasies concerning the immediacy of the desertion of the workers from their two main parties, the Cliff-Mandel-Healy perspective received a crushing blow, as did the expectations of the Army leaders that a large section of the masses would turn their backs on the struggle to give the two workers' parties a mandate to form the government. In the event, the sectarians were spurned, as was the advice of the A.F.M. The workers rallied almost to a man and woman to their traditional parties, which together received a clear majority of all votes cast. For the sectarians, the elections simply served as diversion from the 'real' struggle for power. In reality, the struggle for power passed through the elections. Constitutional illusions are not overcome by rhetoric delivered from afar, but by the masses outgrowing it in a living struggle of classes, parties and programmes. This is what is happening in Portugal, where each new stage of the revolution has either dumbfounded or confounded the Healyite defeatists and the assorted sectarians and 'new vanguardists'. The fact that directly after the massive 38% vote for the Socialist Party, the Stalinists found themselves compelled to revive the gangster methods of the third period against the leaders and militants of the largest workers' party in Portugal, is an indication of how much a 'diversion' the elections in fact were. Nor was it mere co-incidence that the day after the results were made known, the Army leaders handed the leadership of the trade unions to the Stalinists, who represent only a minority of the proletariat, and who are hostile to the independence enjoyed by the workers' control commissions set up in the plants and the banks in the early weeks of the revolution. The Army leaders are now clearly relying on the Stalinists to divide the working class, to wind up the workers' control commissions, to behead the revolutionary struggle for a workers' government, and to rebuild the bourgeois state structure atomised by the fall of the fascist regime a year ago.

But the AFM, acting on behalf of the politically debilitated and demoralised bourgeoisie, cannot achieve this aim without coming into the sharpest conflict with the Socialist Party. For all its reformist policies and opportunist leadership, this organisation finds it impossible to acquiesce in its own liquidation. Its leaders, to preserve their own newly won role as reformists at the head of the largest workers' party, are forced to mobilise their members and supporters against the reactionary attacks of the AFM, Copcon, and their Stalinist allies. In this sense, the struggle of the Socialist Party leaders to protect their own positions against the Stalinists and Copcon refracts the struggle of the entire Portuguese working class to defend and extend its independence from all capitalist state control, either directly through the AFM or indirectly through the medium of the Stalinist apparatus in the trade unions and the workers' committees.

This is the background to the Stalinist led, and Copcon inspired assault on the Socialist Party newspaper *Republica Marxist Bulletin* stands full square, unconditionally, for the right of this newspaper to appear freely, whatever its views. This is not only a basic principle of democracy within the workers' movement, but a principle of

bourgeois democracy, which Trotskyists must be to the fore in defending and deepening to the utmost by the methods of proletarian class struggle.

Trotsky made his position very clear on this issue. In a polemic against the Mexican Stalinist Lombardo Toledano (who had been calling on the Mexican government to ban a right wing bourgeois newspaper), he declared that 'both theory and historical experience testify that any restriction of democracy in bourgeois society is, in the final analysis, invariably directed against the proletariat ... Consequently, any working class 'leader' who arms the bourgeois state with special means for controlling public opinion in general and the press in particular is, precisely a traitor... Anyone who has not yet understood this should get out of the ranks of the working class...'

No-one should be surprised to find the Stalinists reviving their reactionary tactics in Portugal, where they collaborate with the police (Copcon) in securing the closing down not of a right wing bourgeois paper, but that of a party representing 38% of the electorate and well over half of the workers. But what we do find alarming is that amongst all the tendencies claiming adherence to Trotskyism in Britain, scarcely one can be found that will speak up in defence of freedom of the press in Portugal, and specifically, the right of *Republica* to publish without the hindrance of either rival tendencies in the workers' movement or the bourgeois state.

The WRP's *Workers Press* is the most cowardly, putting the blame on the tiny 'centrist' sects, and criticising the action in the mildest possible terms: 'The centrists (NB, not Stalinists) in Portugal are opening the door to outright military dictatorship by their ultra-left diversions (sic!) at the *Republica* newspaper... A political struggle is required with workers influenced by... Socialist Party reformism no less than workers influenced by centrism. Simply (sic!) to occupy the *Republica* plant and prevent it publishing Socialist Party views leads only the violent conformations that have taken place between workers who support the Socialist Party and workers misled by the Stalinists and the centrists...' (*Workers Press*, June 20, 1975). We can understand the WRP leadership's reluctance to condemn outright this assault by counter-revolutionary Stalinism on the freedom of the press and the right of *Republica* to publish. After all, their conception of workers' democracy differs not one iota from that of the Portuguese Stalinists. But even the victims of Healy's party regime seem slow to learn the ABC of workers' democracy, and of the vital importance of the struggle to defend democratic rights under capitalism. *Socialist Press*, paper of the WSL, in a comment on the *Republica* affair, declared that the slogan 'freedom of the press' (the quotation marks are the WSL's, not ours) is 'thoroughly right wing'. Elsewhere in the same journal it was argued that the arrest of the Maoists was much more serious than the ban on the *Republica*, evidently on the basis of ultra left Stalinists having more democratic rights than reformists.

Another organisation that has suffered hooligan treatment by the WRP- the IMG- also appears to set little store by the freedom of the press. *Red Weekly* of June 12, in a statement on the *Republica* affair, found solace in the fact that the paper was 'not the official paper of the Socialist Party, and is not part of the militant press of the workers' movement.' And therefore, presumably, it is fair game for attacks by the Stalinists and their Copcon allies. What is more, *Red Weekly* derides the Socialist Party for 'organising its campaign around the theme of "press freedom".' In its place, the IMG advances the

slogan of nationalisation of the media - a demand to be implemented now, under the rule of the AFM. This runs entirely counter to both the spirit and the letter of Trotsky's defence of the freedom of the press under capitalism.

Workers Fight shows up no better. Its excuse for the attack on *Republica* is that it allegedly 'was originally connected with genuine workers' grievances...'. Like the IMG, WSL, IMG and WRP, *Workers Fight* does not roundly condemn the Stalinist offensive against *Republica*.

Here we have a trend, that while still in its infancy, is unmistakable. Let us call things by their right names. Failure to denounce, and campaign against the Stalinist attacks on *Republica*, is a capitulation to counter-revolutionary Stalinism, which, as always, is playing the role of spearhead in the bourgeois offensive on the independence of the proletariat.

AFTER THE REFERENDUM

Neither is it so different in Britain where the EEC Referendum has precipitated the deepest crisis in the bourgeois state and the Labour Party since the 1930's. Here is this country too, the drive of the most advanced workers is, despite its often being clouded with nationalist prejudices and constitutional illusions (and only those who are searching for a pure proletariat can be so shocked as to use this as an excuse for abstention) towards a government that will defend and advance the interests of their class against the British bourgeoisie and its EEC partners.

What role did the Stalinists play in the struggle for a 'No' vote in the referendum? Everywhere they sought out real or more often, since the monopoly bourgeoisie has made up its mind on the issue, imaginary, allies in the parties of the ruling class on the basis of a chauvinist rejection of the EEC. In this they stand far to the right of the majority of those forces in the Labour Party campaigning against continued EEC membership.

Benn, for example, refused to share joint platforms with anti-EEC Tories, in doing so expressing the desire of advanced workers to fight for a No vote on a class basis and through their traditional organisations. In the Referendum campaign, the most conscious elements of the working class made their presence felt *inside* the Labour Party right up to the level of the PLP and even the Cabinet, and only this, and not the psychological explanations of the sectarians, can help Trotskyists to find their bearings in this situation. It also tells us why the Stalinists, as in Portugal and France, find themselves, despite their 'communist' label, well to the right of Benn and Heffer. It should of course not be forgotten that there is nothing the Stalinists fear and hate more than a left current in the working class that they cannot control and therefore, cannot behead. They feared and tried to disrupt the Bevanite movement in the 1950's for precisely this reason, just as the Trotskyists of that day correctly chose to make it the centre of their work. They fear the Socialist Party rise in Portugal, for within it is expressed not only the illusions of the workers in social democracy, but their choice of a vehicle of struggle which is more responsive at the level of party democracy, than is the Portuguese Communist Party.

How should Marxists assess the results of the EEC Referendum? Not as a defeat for the working class, certainly, but a tactical set back which can be overcome in the months ahead. The decisive sectors of the bourgeoisie achieved their aim - a Yes vote to set their seal on British membership of the EEC.

We are completely opposed to any illusions on this ques-

tion. It is fatuous as some on the left have done to lump together the No votes and abstentions and to claim that the majority of the electorate rejected the EEC. On this ground, Labour has yet to win an election. We don't have to play such childish games to discern in the election result a clear class trend against the EEC. For example, whereas the overall No vote was 32.8%, in the Labour strongholds of Durham (35.5%), Greater Manchester (35.5%) Merseyside (35.2%) Tyne and Wear (37.1%) South Yorkshire (37.1%) Mid Glamorgan (43.1%) West Glamorgan (38.4%) and Strathclyde (42.3%) it was appreciably higher. Had the entire Labour movement campaigned for a No vote on a class line, with the Labour Government itself compelled by Conference to uphold the official policy of the party, it is obvious that the No vote would have been far greater, even possibly a majority. That the movement did not use its material and political forces in this way is primarily the responsibility of the Lefts, who backed away from Wilson and the Jenkins wing when they had a mandate from the entire Party to make them toe the line.

Entry and the Labour Party Crisis

Despite the set-back of the EEC Referendum, and despite the retreats of the Lefts, the overall development of the class struggle favours the Marxists, but only if they are able to bring their tactical conceptions into harmony with both the existing situation and their long term strategic perspective. For us, this means entry into the Labour Party - total entry of the type advised by Trotsky in his interview with Collins in 1936. In Britain today, to take any other course, to toy with the illusion that a revolutionary party can be 'proclaimed' or a sect 'transformed' into one, that it will be created without the Marxists having first passed through, together with the advanced workers, a prolonged period of fraction work within social democracy is to turn one's back not only on present reality, but the entire history of Marxism in Britain.

The proclamation of the formal 'independence' from social democracy so beloved of the British sectarians, fondly believed to be a fool-proof guarantee against liquidation and capitulation to reformism, is, in fact, and has proved, to be, in the case of the WRP, one of the surest roads to the real liquidation of the vanguard - not at this stage into the reformist swamp it is true, but the radical petty-bourgeoisie, which fears nothing so much as taking what Farrell Dobbs once called a 'bath in the mass movement'.

The WRP's vacillating policy towards the Labour Party, and entry work within it, has been the subject of several articles in the *'Bulletin'* over the last year. We say vacillating because whilst in the main holding to a sectarian course, the WRP leadership has on occasions lurched sharply to the opportunist Right, even going so far in the October 10 General Election to call on the Labour leaders - Prentice, Jenkins and the 'corporatists' alike - to 'carry out revolutionary policies'. If this is not creating illusions in social democracy, what is?

Centrism and Vietnam

But since the split on the EEC opened up inside the Labour leadership, new aspects of the Healy leadership's opportunism have come to light. Over the last two and a half years, the left Labour and trade union leaders have been denounced as 'corporatists'. It is interesting to note that this designation has not, so far as we know, been applied to Prentice, who supported the jailing of the Shrewsbury 2, or Jenkins, who apart from leading the pro-EEC

faction in the Labour Party, has turned down all appeals to release the two strike leaders. After the fashion of third period Stalinism's theory of 'left social fascism', it is the Benns, Scargills and Scanlons who in the WRP's estimation, seek to smash the workers' movement and install the corporate state. For example, on April 26, 1975, *'Workers Press'* likened Benn's plan for the nationalisation of Leyland to 'the giant state capitalist corporations in Italy which have their own origins in the corporate stage of Benito Mussolini - the fascist dictator and the butcher of the Italian working class. 'Benn here figures as a corporatist following the same path as Mussolini. But by May 5, he has transformed himself from an incipient fascist into... 'the foremost centrist in the Cabinet...' Of course, Healy is wrong on both counts. Benn neither wants to introduce the corporate state (nor could he if he wanted to) nor is he oscillating *between* reformism and Marxism. Benn is a left social democrat, and a correct attitude towards him and those workers who look to him for leadership must begin from this characterisation. Terms such as 'corporatist' and 'centrist' in the WRP lexicon serve merely as political swear words; whereas for Marxists, they embody more than half a century of the living experience of the international workers' movement. Neither is it simply a question of the wrong use of Marxist terminology, but of the very real centrism of the WRP leadership, which one day can denounce Benn and his supporters as willing accomplices in the establishment of the corporate state, and the next, bestow on him the entirely undeserved mantle of one moving away from social democracy towards revolutionary Marxism. Only a leadership which has entirely lost its political bearings can exhibit such wild oscillations within the space of a week.

The same centrist zig-zag course (which has also characterised Pabloism) has revealed itself in the WRP's reaction to the historic defeats inflicted on US imperialism in Cambodia and Vietnam. Here the opportunist orientation is towards Stalinism.

First it must be said that this staggering reverse for not just American, but world imperialism, means that the working class internationally has been given fresh room for manoeuvre, and more time to develop its struggle for its central strategic goals. Quite contrary to the WRP, which on the very day that it falsely claimed 'total victory' in Vietnam (even the *'Morning Star'* only said 'victory') predicted at its May Day meeting that the imperialists would now proceed to unleash a third, nuclear war (shades of Pablo!) the victory of the people of Vietnam and Cambodia means that the strategy of world imperialism is in tatters, its central leaderships at loggerheads, its political and military cadres demoralised, its mass base in the backward middle class and workers perplexed and disoriented. For Healy, this counts for nothing. Ford has only to press a button and all these factors, of inestimable value for the international working class and the oppressed peoples disappear. Here we find projected only a global scale, with *'Workers Press'* predictions of a CIA 'world police state', Healy's British perspective of an ever-imminent military coup. If nuclear war follows in the wake of 'total victory', then the lesson would then seem to be that the working class would be better advised to bow their heads and accept, at best, partial defeats.

The WRP leadership, we know full well, has never been happier than when predicting imminent disaster for the working class. We remember its obsession with a military coup early in 1974, when the miners were calmly taking the steps necessary to oust Heath and place in power their

own party. Grossly overestimating the power of the bourgeoisie has led to similar false prophecies in Portugal, where also, the workers in Lisbon proved themselves more than equal to the threat that so intimidates the WRP radicals in London.

But now we have coming to the fore another aspect of the degeneration of the WRP, namely its idealisation of the more left currents within world Stalinism. It has been well known for years that M. Banda has favoured a pro-Peking orientation inside the WRP/SLL leadership, though no discussion on his quasi-Maoist views was ever permitted to reach the Central Committee of the organisation, let alone its ranks. Therefore it is highly symptomatic of the current crisis of the WRP that Banda should receive support for his Stalinophile views in a recent recruit to the party from milieu of the bourgeois press, namely Royston Bull.

Bull, a former Communist Party member, joined *Workers Press* from the *Scotsman*, and after a spell as the paper's industrial correspondent, is now *Workers Press*' foreign editor.

Bull always managed to maintain an 'intransigent' opposition to British Stalinists when writing about their opportunist activities in the trade unions. Their sin was easy to see - they believed in the peaceful road to socialism. But in SE Asia, things looked very different. The NLF had guns in their hands, and the Hanoi government was supplying them. No peaceful road - and therefore Bull - and also Banda - no Stalinism. In *Workers Press* of May 1, 1975, Bull writes:

'The defeat for Stalinism in the triumph of the NLF's revolutionary struggle will... have far-ranging repercussions. The dramatic fall of Saigon demonstrates the relative weakness of imperialism and the superior strength of the worker and peasant masses once united in revolutionary struggle (i.e., behind the leadership of the NLF). The policies of 'peaceful co-existence' and 'peaceful roads to socialism' spring out of Stalinism's petty-bourgeois reverence for the imagined strength of imperialism (Here Bull challenges Trotsky's characterisation of Stalinism as a counter-revolutionary force, since according to Bull, it does not fear revolution, but the 'imagined strength of imperialism')... The further break up and disintegration of international Stalinism is assured. Further splits between the bureaucracy in Moscow, Peking and elsewhere, are inevitable. It is already clear that the pressures of revolutionary forces has influenced the communist elements within the NLF. The support given by Hanoi to the revolutionary struggles in Cambodia and Laos may not end there. Peking has already jumped on the bandwagon of renewed revolutionary struggle in Laos... Pyongyang may be left with little choice but to support a revolutionary struggle in the South, as happened with Hanoi.' (emphases added)

Or as Pablo said, the Stalinists, under pressure, will 'project a revolutionary orientation' that under the pressure of the masses, they will no longer be to avoid taking the revolutionary road, that they can no longer betray. Here we come, more than two decades later, back to the same revisionist, liquidationist vomit that destroyed the Fourth International as a centralised world organisation; only it is now spewed out not only by the Mandel-Blackburn-Rousset wing of the Unified Secretariat, but by the super anti-Pabloites of... the WRP.

Liquidationism

Beneath the ritual chants of 'join the WRP' and 'build the International Committee' can now be clearly heard the old liquidationist theme of delegating to left-Stalinist currents the task of defeating imperialism in SE Asia and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Indeed, *Workers Press*, forgetful of the butchering of an entire section of the Fourth International by Vietnamese Stalinism, applauds its NLF offshoot as 'revolutionary communists' who have never, since 1941, deviated from the path of struggle against imperialism! Can the past be forgotten so easily? It is like applauding the heroism of the Red Army in the last war without indicting Stalin's decapitation of its leaders, or his cynical deals with first Hitler, then the Allies, to partition Europe. The WRP leadership is down on its knees before the murderers of our own comrades. After all, do not the NLF, like the defenders of Moscow and Leningrad, have 'guns in their hands'?

What the SWP deduced from Castro's victory in Cuba (namely, that similar Castroite movements and revolutions might spread to the rest of Latin America) Healy and Banda have discovered in the NFL-Hanoi victory over Thieu and his US sponsors. And having said 'A' in Saigon and Phnom Penh, from past experience of Pabloism we must, sooner rather than later, expect the WRP leadership, or at least a section of it, to repeat the remainder of the liquidationist alphabet. The Stalinophiles are preparing new crisis and splits in the WRP, just as surely as they are in the Unified Secretariat.

So in each case, whether it be the elections in Portugal, the anti-EEC campaign in Britain, or the defeat of imperialism in Vietnam and Cambodia, the same basic trends assert themselves amongst those who have turned aside from the path of re-constructing the Fourth International, and abandoned the method of the Transitional Programme. We cannot be spectators either in the class battles now unfolding, or in the crisis of world Trotskyism. We submit that the solution to the latter lies primarily in an unequivocal intervention in the former on the basis of Transitional Programme.

We reproduce for the benefit of our readers an article by Leon Trotsky, 'The working class and freedom of the press' which was recently published in 'Intercontinental Press', international news bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party which is an American Organisation sympathetic to the 'United Secretariat' of the Fourth International. As the introduction of the translation which we also publish points out, this article by Trotsky is extremely relevant to the situation in Portugal today, in which the Bourgeois state, with the assistance of the Stalinist

apparatus, is trying to suppress the newspaper 'Republica' the only daily sympathetic to the point of view of the Portugese Socialist Party.

'Marxist Bulletin' is of the opinion that the attack on 'Republica' and the PSP is part of the attempts by Stalinism and the military to defend the bourgeois state, and destroy the independence of the Portugese working class.

Thus, we will campaign in the Labour movement in Britain to raise the widest possible opposition to the suppression of 'Republica'.

Introduction From 'Intercontinental Press' 29/6/75

The following article, for all its brevity, is an important one. Under the title 'La Libertad de Prensa y la Clase Obrera', it appeared as the lead editorial in the first issue of the Mexican theoretical journal *Clave* (Key), the 'Marxist Tribune' published in Mexico City from October 1938 to May 1941.

The editorial board when *Clave* was launched consisted of Adolfo Zamora, Jose Ferrel, and Diego Rivera, with Octavio Fernandez serving as managing editor. Besides articles by these authors and others, *Clave* featured contributions by Leon Trotsky, in most instances Spanish translations of articles by him that were featured in other languages in the press of the Fourth International at the time.

Trotsky, who was living in exile in Mexico, participated in meetings of the editorial board of *Clave*. Apparently the members of the board did not hesitate to ask him to take assignments, although we had a heavy regular schedule of writing. The discovery of the original manuscript in the Trotsky Archives at the Harvard College Library proves that he was the author of *Clave's* first editorial.

The carefully formulated statement voicing the opinion of the editorial board was intended to clearly define the policy of *Clave* on a key question, freedom of the press, which was under fire in Mexico from the Stalinists. A second editorial in the same issue, 'El Derecho del Asilo Totalitario,' may also have been written by Trotsky. It is a short, ironic comment on Lombardo Toledano's aping Stalin in favoring asylum for those in agreement with his politics but opposing it for others. The front cover of this same first issue of *Clave* was used for a brief editorial statement, 'Mexico No Debe Ir a la Guerra Imperialista' (Mexico Must Stay Out of the Imperialist War), that is, World War II, which was fast approaching.

Trotsky's explanation of why revolutionists are duty bound to defend freedom of the press in a principled way that is, without making an exception for even reactionary publications, should be read in conjunction with other statements made by Trotsky at the time on the vital necessity to defend democratic rights in building a revolutionary mass party. See, for instance, 'A Discussion with Trotsky on Latin American Questions'

(*Intercontinental Press*, May 19, 1975), 'Haya de la Torre and Democracy - A Program of Militant Struggle or of Adaptation to Americal Imperialism?' and 'Ignorance Is Not a Revolutionary Instrument' in the *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1938-39)*, second edition.

These three items and the editorial below reflect Trotsky's thinking in 1938 on the relation between bourgeois and proletarian democracy. They represent the considered conclusions of the founder of the Fourth International in the closing years of a life of extraordinary political experience in battling for a worldwide socialist order.

How timely Trotsky's writings often prove to be can be seen in relation to the current move in Portugal to silence *Republica*, the newspaper of the Portuguese Socialist party. In its affirmation of principles, and with but few changes in the details, the editorial could have been written in response to the reactionary attack today on freedom of the press in Portugal. It is striking, although not accidental that the initiative in closing down *Republica* was taken by the Portuguese Stalinists, most likely in connivance with leaders of the Armed Forces Movement, who would like to reestablish government control of the press.

One difference in the parallel with the counter-revolutionary initiative taken by the Stalinists in Mexico in 1938 is that Cardenas did not welcome Moscow's ploy in Mexico's domestic politics (which accounts for the failure of the campaign described in the editorial written by Trotsky). The bourgeois Cardenas was a more consistent democrat on this issue than the leaders of the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement, who are loud in proclaiming their 'socialist' goals,

Vice-ite Lombardo Toledano, the class-collaborationist head of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Mexico (Mexican Workers Confederation) and editor of the confederation's newspaper *El Popular*, was a Stalinist fellow traveler who played an active part in trying to whip up a witch-hunt atmosphere that would facilitate the plans of Stalin's secret police to assassinate Trotsky.

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The Working Class and Freedom of the Press

by Leon Trotsky.

A campaign against the reactionary press is under way in Mexico. The attack is being directed by the CTM leaders, or, more precisely, by Mr. Lombardo Toledano personally. The objective is to 'curb' the reactionary press, either by placing it under a democratic censorship or banning it altogether. The trade unions have been mobilized for war. The incurable democrats, corrupted by their experience with a Stalinized Moscow and headed by 'friends' of the GPU (Soviet secret police), have hailed this campaign, which cannot be regarded as anything but suicidal. In fact, it is not difficult to foresee that even if this campaign triumphs and leads to practical results that suit the taste of Lombardo Toledano, the ultimate consequences will be borne primarily by the working class.

Both theory and historical experience testify that any restriction of democracy in bourgeois society is, in the final analysis, invariably directed against the proletariat, just as any taxes that are imposed also fall on the shoulders of the working class. Bourgeois democracy is of use to the proletariat only insofar as it opens up the way for the development of the class struggle. Consequently, any working-class 'leader' who arms the bourgeois state with special means for controlling public opinion in general and the press in particular is, precisely, a traitor. In the last analysis, the sharpening of the class struggle will impel the bourgeoisie of every stripe to reach an agreement among themselves; they will then pass special laws, all sorts of restrictive measures, and all kinds of 'democratic' censorship against the working class. Anyone who has not yet understood this should get out of the ranks of the working class.

'But at times,' some 'friends' of the USSR will object, 'the dictatorship of the proletariat is forced to resort to special measures, particularly against the reactionary press.'

'This objection,' we reply, 'comes down primarily to trying to identify a workers state with a bourgeois state. Even though Mexico is a semicolonial country, it is also a bourgeois state, and in no way a workers state. However, even from the standpoint of the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat, banning bourgeois newspapers or censoring them does not in the least constitute a 'program,' or a 'principle,' or an ideal setup. Measures of this kind can only be a temporary, unavoidable evil.'

Once at the helm, the proletariat may find itself forced, for a certain time, to take special measures against the

bourgeoisie, if the bourgeoisie assumes an attitude of open rebellion against the workers' state. In that case restricting freedom of the press goes hand in hand with all the other measures employed in waging a civil war. Naturally, if you are forced to use artillery and planes against the enemy, you cannot permit this same enemy, to maintain his own centers of news and propaganda within the armed camp of the proletariat. Nonetheless, in this instance, too, if the special measures are extended until they become an enduring pattern, they in themselves carry the danger of getting out of hand and of the workers' bureaucracy gaining a political monopoly that would be one of the sources of its degeneration.

We have living example of such a dynamic before us in the detestable suppression of freedom of speech and of the press that is now the rule in the Soviet Union. This has nothing to do with the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat. To the contrary, it is designed to protect the interests of the new governing caste from the workers and peasant opposition. That very bonapartist bureaucracy in Moscow is now being aped by Mr. Lombardo Toledano and Company, who equate their personal careers with the interest of socialism.

The real tasks of the workers state lie not in clamping a police gag on public opinion but rather in freeing it from the yoke of capital. This can be done only by placing the means of production including the production of public information, in the hands of society as a whole. Once this fundamental socialist step has been taken, all currents of public opinion that have not taken up arms against the dictatorship of the proletariat must be given the opportunity to express themselves freely. It is the duty of the workers state to make available to them all, in proportion to their numbers, the technical means they may require such as presses, paper and transport. One of the main causes of the degeneration of the state apparatus is the Stalinist bureaucracy's monopolization of the press, which threatens to reduce all the gains of the October Revolution to utter ruin.

If we were to go looking for examples of the Comintern's fatal influence on the workers movements in various countries, the present campaign by Lombardo Toledano would provide one of the oddest. Toledano and his fellow doctrinaires are trying essentially to introduce into a bourgeois-democratic system means and methods that might in certain temporary conditions prove unavoidable under a dictatorship of the proletariat. What is more, they are not really borrowing these meth-

ods from the dictatorship of the proletariat but rather from its bonapartist usurpers. In other words, they are infecting an already ailing bourgeois democracy with the virus of the decaying Stalinist bureaucracy.

Mexico's anemic democracy faces a constant and deadly threat from two directions - first from foreign imperialism and second from the agents of reaction within the country, who control the publications with the widest circulation. But only the blind or feeble-minded could think that as the result of the ban on the reactionary press the workers and peasants can free themselves from the influence of reactionary ideas. In reality, only the greatest freedom of speech, of the press, and of association can create favorable conditions for the advance of the revolutionary movement of the working class.

It is essential to wage a relentless struggle against the reactionary press. But workers cannot let the repressive fist of the bourgeois state substitute for the struggle that they must wage through their own organizations and their own press. Today the state may appear to be 'kindly' disposed to the workers' organizations; tomorrow the government may fall, inevitably will fall, into the hands of the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie. In that case, whatever restrictive legislation that exists will be thrown at the workers. Only adventurers with no thought other than for the needs of the moment would fail to heed such a danger.

The most effective way to combat the bourgeois press is to expand the working class press. Of course, yellow journals of *El Popular's* ilk are incapable of taking up such a task. Such sheets have no place among the workers' press, the revolutionary press, or even the reputable democratic press. *El Popular* serves the personal ambitions of Mr. Lombardo Toledano, who in turn serves the Stalinist bureaucracy. Its methods - lies, slander, witch-hunt campaigns, and falsification - are also Toledano's methods. His newspaper has neither program nor ideas. Obviously such a sheet can never strike a responsive chord in the working class or win the proletariat away from the bourgeois papers.

So, we come to the unavoidable conclusion that the fight against the bourgeois press starts with throwing out the degenerate 'leaders' of the working-class organizations, in particular with freeing the workers' press from the tutelage of Lombardo Toledano and other bourgeois place seekers. The Mexican proletariat has to have an honest newspaper to express its needs, defend its interests, broaden its horizon, and prepare the way for the Socialist revolution in Mexico. This is what *Clave* proposes to do. So, we are starting out by declaring an unrelenting war against Toledano's wretched bonapartist pretensions. And in this effort we are looking forward to the support of all the advanced workers, Marxists and genuine democrats.

August 21, 1938.

Revolution in Portugal

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE 3rd CONFERENCE OF THE LIAISON COMMITTEE OF PORTUGUESE REVOLUTIONARY MILITANTS PORTUGUESE SECTION OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL'

1) The present resolution is based on the two preceding ones. The first, passed on 6 May 1974, characterised the crisis opened by the fall of Caetano as the beginning of a period in the class struggle of the Portuguese proletariat which we as revolutionary Marxists must describe thus: the revolution has begun in Portugal.

The resolution passed on 22 June 1974 confirmed this understanding and allowed for a more concrete definition of the exact stage of this situation.

This 3rd resolution is the result of the work of the 3rd Conference of the LCPRM, and its aim, starting from an analysis of the overall situation, is to outline precisely the class relationships, the relations between the parties, and institutions, the connections between the vanguard and the mass organisations; to define the lines of intervention of the Trotskyist group as well as our slogans and tactics, with a view to advancing on the road of building the Party of the Fourth International by reinforcing our work in Portugal.

2) In our 3rd Conference we arrived at this first conclusion: The Portuguese bourgeoisie was under pressure from more powerful rival imperialist states and unable to resolve the problems of the colonial war; in these conditions, and faced with the upsurge of the working class in the months before 25 April (strikes, anti-war protests, etc) its political crisis brought about a situation where one wing of the bourgeoisie, in order to escape from the impasse, had to have recourse to a coup d'état, aided by a section of the army.

The objective of this coup was to modify the form of the political system in order to preserve the bourgeois state intact against the working masses. The proletariat was swept in through the cracks and tears caused by the coup, and with the fraternisation of the soldiers, opened up a situation in which the state apparatus was dismantled through their activity. The state apparatus has not been destroyed; it has been dismantled. The internal political crisis of the bourgeoisie was thus confirmed, a crisis begun by a section of the bourgeoisie which wanted to modify the political form of the system of rule by the dominant classes in order to preserve the general system of domination by the whole bourgeoisie through the survival of the Salazarist state structures; this crisis could have led only to the dismantling of the bourgeois state.

The 3rd Conference rejects the assertion, made by all political currents, by all the bourgeois political formations, by all from the Communist and Socialist Parties to the Pabloites and leftists, which refuse to characterise

the result of 25 April as the beginning of the proletarian revolution in Portugal. They use this assertion, explicitly or implicitly, to try to convince militants and workers that the bourgeoisie has had the political initiative since 25 April and that therefore, in the epoch of imperialism, of 'reaction all down the line', we are involved in an alleged 'bourgeois-democratic revolution.'

In this regard, the 3rd Conference thinks it essential to bring out the following precise details:

Faithful to the teachings of Marx and Lenin, we know that in the proletarian revolution, the *State* is what is directly at stake. According to this fundamental thesis of Marxism and in light of the revolutionary process in Portugal, it is possible to characterise more precisely the relationships between what we call a pre-revolutionary situation, a revolutionary situation and the situation we define today as the proletarian revolution which has begun in Portugal.

Generally, it can be said:

- a) a pre-revolutionary situation is one in which the masses begin to rise up while the already crisis-ridden state seems to preserve its ability to resolve its problems.
- b) a revolutionary situation is one in which the stronger and rising mass movement directly poses the problem of state power in relation to the crisis of the political domination of the bourgeoisie.
- c) the proletarian revolution which has begun in Portugal is characterised by the fact that within the context of the dismantling of the bourgeois state by the masses, the latter are beginning to a greater or lesser degree to develop their own power.

Lenin's analysis of the development of the revolutionary process are thus confirmed, especially these lines: 'Not every revolutionary crisis necessarily leads to the proletarian revolution.' (Cf May-June 1968 in France).

Just as in Russia after Feb. 1917, the proletarian revolution began in Portugal on April 25 because the State apparatus was dismantled by the revolutionary action of the masses.

3) The balance of class forces within the country was thus radically modified on April 25 when the process of proletarian revolution began. The correlation of political forces which expressed these class forces with relation to the process of dismantling the State was also radically modified. Out of this came the setting up of embryonic organs of workers power.

Faced with this situation, the bourgeoisie as a class, regardless of the differing opinions about how to fight against the proletarian revolution, tried after April 25 to overcome its political crisis by gathering all its forces together to struggle against it. They did this by rallying around the Junta which became their real guarantor, and the focal point for the whole bourgeoisie in its struggle to rebuild the dismantled bourgeois state.

It is of paramount importance to understand this pol-

itical process if we are to achieve a correct appreciation of the developments and perspectives for the revolution in Portugal. There was not, and there could not have been, a 'progressive' wing of the bourgeoisie who organised the coup d'état so as to open an era of bourgeois democracy which would allow for a development of the productive forces, as is claimed by the Pabloites, leftists, the Communist and Socialist Parties. There was a political crisis brought about by the political impasse of the Caetano-Salazar regime which was unable to overcome the many contradictions assailing the Portuguese bourgeoisie. There was an eruption of mass action which dismantled the bourgeois state. There was the imperative necessity for the bourgeoisie to rally together as a class so as to create the political conditions for rebuilding the bourgeois state by inflicting defeats on the proletarian masses.

As a consequence of the foregoing 3 points:

- 4) The 3rd Conference considers that the Proletarian Revolution which has begun in Portugal confirms the previous analysis made by the international Trotskyist movement concerning the period of the imminence of the revolution.
- 5) The 3rd Conference states that the course of events since April 25 is leading toward civil war. What we must do now is precisely define the political correlation of the class forces involved.

The entire bourgeoisie, frightened by the fact that the State apparatus in all its forms (Army, Police, Administration) has been dismantled by mass action, has rallied behind the Junta. This class unity behind the Junta does not necessarily mean there are no political differences within it, much less within the bourgeoisie, but the entire bourgeoisie as a class understands perfectly well the absolute necessity of uniting together to save and to reconstruct the bourgeois state so as to re-establish the normal conditions for exploitation. Any outlook which considers the Armed Forces Movement as something above and beyond classes comes from a deliberate desire to hide the fact that the Junta is the bourgeoisie's counter-revolutionary centre.

Even if the Armed Forces Movement (AFM) had a certain degree of autonomy in its scope of action during and after the coup d'état, in no case can this autonomy be considered as above the class struggle, but only as a relative freedom of action within the bourgeoisie. This must be understood: 25 April witnessed the first victory for the proletariat precisely because the Army began to break down between ordinary conscripted soldiers and the minor officers who fraternised with the people on one hand, and on the other hand, the military hierarchy of which the Junta is the top layer. This disintegration and cleavage have been impeded up to now by the activity of the AFM, who use for this purpose the prestige they won from the April 25 coup. The bureaucratic apparatuses in the labour movement reinforce this prestige by sowing illusions in the AFM.

The AFM's programme is thus not only a camouflage aiming to take the edge off the difference between the rank-and-file soldiers who are part of the broad masses and the military hierarchy, part of the bourgeois state; but even more so it attempts to hide and tone down the fundamental contradiction between the aims of the Junta and coalition governments to rebuild the bourgeois State against the masses, and the action of the masses

who in order to achieve their aspirations need a government of their own.

The support given to the AFM by the workers parties (Communist and Socialist Parties) is no less than a deliberate desire to stupefy the masses, to fool them, to deaden and lead astray their revolutionary action. This analysis obviously does not imply that there are no differences between what is officially called the AFM, and the Junta. In fact there are differences within the AFM as well as within the Junta. But the fundamental balance of political forces is not based at the level of the AFM. It is based at the level of class forces and the political expression of these class forces in the institutions which represent antagonistic class interests. For the bourgeoisie it is based in the Junta, the centre of counter-revolution and to which the AFM has subordinated itself.

- 6) The political crisis which brought about the departure of Carlos was caused by the counter-revolutionary Junta's desire to strike a serious blow against the revolutionary action of the masses and thus contain the revolutionary implications of developments since 25 April. The response to this attempt by the Junta and the representatives of the bourgeoisie in the first provisional government was the formidable mobilisation of the whole working-class and especially the civil servants who, by using the organs the working class had created (the Commissions of Workers Delegates), blocked the measures that Carlos and Spínola intended to impose.

Carlos-Spínola's aborted attempt to strike a severe blow against the working masses was supposed to have created the conditions for taking more decisive steps to rebuild the bourgeois state apparatus. By nipping this attempt in the bud, the workers deepened and widened their revolutionary movement through the embryonic organs of workers' power (Commissions of Elected Workers Delegates, Management Councils) in every sector of national activity' productions, education, in the cities and spreading to the country.

- 7) Ever since 25 April the bourgeois Stalinist and reformist bureaucracies have collaborated closely with the bourgeoisie and its counter-revolutionary centre, the Junta. Each in its own way has tried to contain and dislocate the revolutionary action of the masses, putting all their weight behind rebuilding the dismantled bourgeois state. The 3rd Conference considers that in the midst of the proletarian revolution going on in Portugal, the treacherous policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses is the real guarantor of the disintegrating bourgeois order. Left to their own devices, neither the Junta nor that part of the military hierarchy around the AFM could possibly offer a vigorous resistance to the revolutionary movement of the Portuguese people. It is the leaders of the big working-class organisations who are holding up the counter-revolutionary institutions, the Junta and the provisional government. It is they who keep attempting at all costs to push back and destroy the embryonic organs of workers power. It is the leaders of the workers' parties who are managing to hold together the shaken and dismantled power of the bourgeoisie.

- 8) For 50 years the hated regime of Salazar-Caetano held millions and millions of Portuguese workers in the toils of exploitation, together with the tens and tens of millions of oppressed peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea ...

On 25 April the Salazar-Caetano regime collapsed

like a house of cards under the weight of the internal class contradictions of the landlords and capitalists and because of the activity of the masses who had suffered capitalist dictatorship for 50 years. We, revolutionary militants for the reconstruction of the 4th International, say along with the Portuguese people: it is the entire capitalist class and all the landlords, all of finance capital, which supported and which is identified with the Salazar-Caetano (S-C) regime ...

Since the 25 April the workers, both male and female, have thrown themselves into a completely justified struggle for the 'cleaning out' of management at all levels. The working masses of city and country understand that the landlord-dictatorship and capitalism are one and the same. The working men and women of Portugal want freedom. On April 25 they took this liberty which they want to spread, deepen and consolidate.

Revolutionary militants for the reconstruction of the 4th International, we declare: For 50 years capitalism and landlord tyranny have gone hand in hand with Salazar-Caetano. So in order to uproot the fascist dictatorship completely, in order to attain liberty, we must get rid of the landlord capitalists. We must cleanse Portugal of these capitalists and landlords ...

With all workers, we say: all those who are against freedom are against the demands and aspirations of the Portuguese people. The threats against the right to strike, against the freedoms of expression and assembly, and press censorship are against freedom. The attacks on freedom are only aimed at putting the capitalist and landowning S-C regime firmly back in the saddle with the help of the Secret Police. Everyone who opposes the legitimate demands rejected by the landowning capitalists allows the exploiters and oppressors of the Portuguese people to attack the rights won back on April 25.

The bosses, with the billions in profits which they have extorted from our labour and with the colonial war budget, can afford to pay

In the Lisnave shipyards the workers struck and won 7200 escudos minimum wage and 5000 escudos for the canteen staff who until then were earning 2500. They got 6800 for the apprentices (7200 after 6 months apprenticeship), no increase beyond 15,000; rehiring of all those sacked for political reasons or striking with complete compensation for wages and bonuses lost during their absence. All of the temporary staff was incorporated into the factory with the same advantages as the existing workers. Also, a 42 hour week until the end of the year and a 40 hour week starting on Jan. 1, 1975, double-time for all overtime and 200% of wage for Sundays and holidays, fully compensated, were gained.

What was taken from the capitalists in this strike in Lisnave can also be taken by the workers from the banking capitalists, the big financiers and industrialists. It can be done by the civil servants and all categories of workers.

The Elected Workers' Commissions were right to open the books and other accounts; they were right in contacting the bank workers' commissions to get all banking operations controlled so as to finance business activity.

By rejecting any redundancies the workers were right to demand that the government free the funds so that factories and workshops could remain in operation. We declare that the workers organised in the Elected Delegate Commissions in offices, factories, banks, building sites, big business and finance operations are capable of running the economy. This, we say, is the only way to

overcome the inflation, unemployment and chaos which are inevitable if the landlord-capitalists in alliance with the S-C regime continue to control and run the economy.

It is time to take all the measures necessary to destroy the forces of bourgeois fascist reaction which is trying to raise its head again after its humiliating defeat of April 25.

The soldiers want no more of colonial war. Their families want their immediate return. The soldiers want unity with the working people. Soldier and workers cannot understand why they are trying to take out of the army 'commandos' whose job it supposedly is to protect order. What order? The order that will limit the right to strike to the point where it will become a punishable offense? Order that is going to impose censorship and oppose the full and proper exercise of freedom of expression? But that order is the order of all those who want a return to the S-C regime.

No! the sowers of disorder are not the workers who strike for their demands and refuse to be made redundant. The creators of disorder are not the agricultural workers and small farmers who think that the landlord-capitalists should no longer get rich by rejecting demands for improved wages and working conditions and who are taking over better land! The sowers of chaos are not the soldiers who want to go home, who rightly believe that democracy requires clearing out all those who, however high-ranking, collaborated with or supported the S-C regime. They are not the thousands upon thousands of workers, militants and peasants tortured by the PIDE (secret police) who demand the punishment of the thousands of agents hired by S-C's police terrorists. Those workers who are cleaning out the public service are not the sowers of chaos.

The creators of chaos are the S-C capitalists, who oppose the demands, who raise the cost of living, who speculate and throw the poor peasants and agricultural workers off the land. They are all those who want to organise special commandos of repression as S-C did against the working people and democracy.

Things must be made clear!

The commissions of Elected Workers Delegates said what the workers wanted:

- * Collective bargaining
- * Concerning *all* questions, whether it be about personnel, working conditions, work-schedules, professional training, hygiene, job security, social assistance and redundancies, absolutely no step or decision must be taken without the consent of the Commissions of Elected Workers Delegates.
- * The company's management, economic and financial development, accounting, production and investments must be controlled by the Commissions.

The Lisnave Commission submitted the following democratic proposals to the workers:

- * election of representatives by will of the workers in general assemblies at every level, department and sector.
- * electing auxiliary representatives as needed on questions decided upon by the workers.
- * Coordinating committees of elected representatives at all levels of the company.

- * each section and professional group should elect one delegate for every 50 workers. Groups and sections of less than 50 can be incorporated into the section of their choice.
- * in each department the delegates become the commission of the department.
- * the same is true for management.
- * a coordinating committee of delegates should be made up, first of all, of delegates representing 200 workers of the professional group duly outlined, by category (or as the case arises, by less numerous professional groups) and on the other hand by Trade Union delegates making up one-eighth of the coordinating committee appointed by the leaders of the company's existing trade unions.

It proposed the following way of electing delegates:

- * the list of candidates for all the commissions electing the coordinating committee must be drawn up 15 days prior to the vote.
- * elections are by secret ballot.
- * all voting workers can put themselves forward as candidates in the various elections.
- * at any time the delegates can resign or be recalled by the assembly that elected them.
- * General Assemblies are to be held in the factory during working hours.

Is the road the Lisnave workers want to take the right one? Yes it is, and the workers in the factories, etc. who are taking this road are showing the way to the other Portuguese workers. This is the road of real democracy, which will replace the bosses with control over management by the elected delegates.

The workers in the Social Insurance Societies in Porto expressed what the workers want:

- * immediate resignation of all the present managers of the Social Insurance Soc.
- * effective running of them by workers and trade union representatives.
- * workers management of social services, creches, nurseries, canteens, co-ops, and recreational clubs financed by the Social Insurance Societies.
- * 100% refund of medical expenses and abolition of exemption.

The Trotskyist militants gathered together at the 3rd Conference agree with the Porto Social Insurance workers: It's possible, necessary and indispensable to establish a unified system of social insurance covering all risks - illness, job accidents, old age (with guaranteed minimum of full pay at retirement), maternity, etc for all workers everywhere run by the delegates of the Social Insurance workers and trade unions.

This is the only way to mend the catastrophic situation in the hospitals and to build a real national health service through nationalisation of hospitals at present controlled by religious orders and private clinics.

Workers everywhere are right in believing that the right to health belongs equally to everyone, aren't they?

After the fall of the hated regime, is it possible to tolerate the right of health being delivered into the hands of the pharmaceutical trusts? For all 7 hospitals in Lisbon there is but one doctor for emergency work and he

has time only to go around signing death certificates! Can this be tolerated one more day? Can the poverty of the medical personell be tolerated? Nurses and service staff are badly paid and cannot get a decent training. No, it's not tolerable! It cannot be tolerated! The workers, doctors and hospital staff have come out and said so clearly. In cleaning out the Caetano regime administration, the hospital workers elected management commissions which took control of the hospital without any interference from the administration.

As revolutionary militants we say: The workers who are demanding the confiscation of profits and nationalisation of the pharmaceutical trusts are right. This is the road to take and encourage. It's the one the factory workers of Tropan (Setubol) took when they demanded payment of back wages and refused to allow a young worker to be sacked. They too are setting up a commission to control production.

It's the road taken by the workers of Abis Lifts who occupied the factory in reaction against the decision of the director (a leader of the Christian-Democratic party) to expel them. After getting the books opened they saw that the company's dire situation was due to the said boss's bad management, giving rise to a deficit of nearly 10 million escudos. They decided to continue working, control the company funds so as to cope with the most urgent needs of the workers and pay the suppliers, and to open a bank account in the name of the Workers Commission.

Together with the working people, we ask: Were the Abis workers right in kicking out the capitalist bosses? Were they right to elect a Workers Commission to control management, production and to develop a management plan? Were they right to decide to open a bank account and thus get involved with coordination between their commission and the bank workers commission? Was it right to try to get rid of the bank magnates?

The working people deem it right to run out the capitalists, bankers and speculators who have accumulated billions in profits through the blood and misery of the masses in the colonial war. It must be clearly stated: the working people organised in their factories, offices, building sites, in their various commissions, *can* get the national economy back on its feet so as to satisfy the demands and needs of millions of Portuguese.

By bringing back all the troops from Africa, the Portuguese workers will not only declare their unconditional solidarity with the struggle of the colonial peoples for national independence but by doing away with the monstrous military budgets which eat away at the whole economy like a cancer, they will also be able to guarantee the building of a vast network of hospitals, schools, universities, creches, and nurseries which are so cruelly lacking.

Yes, the creative initiative of the working masses opens the way to real solutions which inevitably break down the domination of capitalism of the landlords and bring Portugal out of poverty, filth, ignorance and illness.

Housewives can and must organise in committees to keep watch on prices in the fight against rising prices and speculation. Supermarket and department store workers ought to guarantee real price controls through their commissions. Already, in the businesses and banks the workers commissions opening the books and bank records can put a prompt end to speculation by publishing all commercial operations.

It can't be accepted for a single more day that the banks and big bosses secretly plot to raise prices:

- * immediate nationalisation of all big companies and commercial enterprises
- * nationalisation of all banks and constitution of a single State Bank
- * control over the management of commerce and industry, transport and banks by the Workers Commissions.

This is how the working masses have begun to get for themselves what they want. They want measures to be taken immediately so as to guarantee and expand liberty and well-being for everyone.

Every politician, every party and organisation are placed in a situation where they must answer 3 questions which everyone is asking in order to save the country from chaos, poverty and unemployment.

1) Should we recognize the right of landlord-capitalists who collaborated with and supported the S-C regime to keep their position in the economy?

The working people have answered this question: The economy must be cleaned up. The landlord-capitalists must be run out together with their managers. The workers commissions and management councils must take over running the hospitals, banks, etc. as well as all educational establishments which must also be nationalised and integrated into the public service run by commissions composed of elected delegates from among the teachers, students, administrative staff and parents associations.

2) Can politicians and political parties, whatever their title, who come out for the landlord-capitalists and who collaborated with the PIDE distatorship take the steps that the people want and expect?

No. None of these can take the measures demanded for public welfare. All bourgeois politicians, if they keep their positions in the government, State, Army, etc. will organise together against the working people and create economic chaos in a plot against their rights.

3) Should defenders of landlording capitalists have any place in the government?

To this question the working masses reply: No, they must be run out of the government, of the administration, the Army and the State.

Therefore, the only positive answer to these questions must be:

The representatives of the Portuguese Socialist Party and Communist Party must constitute a government together and exclude from it all representatives of the political parties defending landlord-capitalist interests.

What the immense majority of working people want is a Communist and Socialist Party Government, A Cunhal-Soares government with no capitalist representatives whatsoever.

Militants of the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the 4th International, we state: No one can doubt the will of the masses to guarantee freedom and put an end to capitalism which is responsible for dictatorship, unemployment and poverty. The working class parties, the CP and the SP, enjoy the greatest prestige among the working population. They must work together to form a government from which the capitalist ministers will be expelled. They must take it upon

themselves to form a Communist Party-Socialist Party government drawing its strength from the Workers Commissions. This government must take it upon itself to satisfy the demands of the workers, peasants, youth and soldiers.

Who could doubt that such a unified government of the working people, a worker-peasant government is the answer that the workers are waiting for? Who could doubt that, backed by the invincible support of the workers organised in the Commissions and Management Councils, backed by the soldiers in their Commissions, the working people can crush the show of opposition from the capitalists and secret police agents to opening the way toward freedom and well-being?

These are the conclusions of the 3rd Conference of the Committee which we submit to the attention of all militants, workers and youth. Such are the conclusions that we, Trotskyist militants, believe to strengthen the unity of workers and workers organisations and allow the road to socialism in Portugal to be opened up, the freedom from capitalist exploitation, poverty, unemployment and war.

While all over Spain the political crisis of the bourgeoisie is accentuated more and more every day, while the Spanish working class sharpens its resistance, no one can doubt that the working class of Portugal benefits from the total support of the European working class in its struggle against capitalism to satisfy its demands and consolidate and spread freedom. It is the revolution of Europe as a whole which has begun in Portugal.

Portuguese Trotskyists, we are fighting for the perspective of a United Socialist States of Europe, for the building of the revolutionary party, for the re-building of the 4th International.

9) The contradictory movement between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is polarising around the Junta on the one hand and around the Commissions of Elected Workers Delegates and Management Councils on the other. The bureaucratic apparatuses are a counter-revolutionary brake on the masses' revolutionary action.

At the moment the situation is as follows: The movement of Workers Commissions/Elected Management Councils is in fact the movement towards working class power, towards soviets. This movement includes the organisations led by the bourgeois apparatuses who struggle against the movement from within. The masses are not aware that within the movement towards the spreading of the Workers Commissions and Management Councils the bureaucratic machines are there to destroy the newly-born organs of their power (soviets).

It is because the masses are not conscious of the counter-revolutionary character of the bureaucratic apparatuses that they get around the obstacles set up by the treacherous leaders of these organisations. Thus, falling back before the pressure of the bureaucracies, especially the Stalinist apparatus, the masses lost ground in the general wave of strikes which developed from 25 April until just before the setting up of the Palma-Carlos government. After being forced to draw back after the Post Office strike which was sabotaged by the Stalinist apparatus, the Portuguese proletariat got around the obstacle. Although it had to moderate the strike wave, it widened its 'political' movement toward re-organisation, toward workers control, workers management, that is, toward the movement of elected Councils and Commissions, movement of the Proletarian Revolution.

The 3rd Conference considers that a verification of the whole strategy of the Workers and Farmers government is found in the developments of the Portuguese revolution today.

If the movement of the elected Commissions and Management Councils involves illusions on the part of the masses in the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties, then it must involve also the slogan of a CP-SP government as its temporary expression. If this movement includes illusions about the CP and SP leaders, it also contains the necessity of taking a clear position on the problem of the trade unions which ought to be analysed in this context.

10) Working class power means that the proletariat constitutes itself as the ruling class in society, based on the destruction of the bourgeois state and the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat which opens the way for the building of socialism. The working class constitutes itself as the ruling class through its struggle and through the organisations which lay its foundations as a class within capitalist society. We know that the traditional organisations created by the working class in its class struggle are dominated by bourgeois apparatuses. We know, and the revolution which has begun in Portugal bears out, that the first step of the revolutionary radicalisation of the masses leads them to flow back into the big organisations controlled by the traitor-bureaucrats. We know that this constitution of the proletariat as a class through its organisations is expressed in the parties, trade unions and social conquests wrested from the bourgeoisie and its state in capitalist society. We also know that during a revolutionary phase the masses broaden their conquests, positions and organisations to the point where they create Factory Committees which in Portugal take the form of the Commissions of Elected Delegates and the Elected Management Councils. This movement is the movement toward soviets, toward the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The trust that the masses have in their organisations leads them to laying their confidence in the leading apparatuses in the first stage of the revolution, in the absence of a revolutionary party in a position of leadership.

At this point in the analysis, we must look more deeply into the place of the various organisations in the class struggle. The workers parties - which are bourgeois parties - cannot be reformed by the class struggle as they have definitively gone over to the side of bourgeois order. The trade unions, organisations independent of the bosses and of the bourgeois state, if viewed according to their organisational form, represent a permanent form of organisation of the working class for the defense of its interests, even though they are controlled by the bourgeois apparatuses. The reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies which are bourgeois apparatuses can guarantee their control over the trade unions only by partially respecting them as organs to defend the interests of the working class even as they try to lead them from this function.

In relation to these fundamental facts, the correlation of forces between the unions and elected commissions and management councils in Portugal today looks like this:

The commissions and councils are the autonomous organs of power emerging from the labouring masses. Although the latter build them against the bourgeoisie, they have confidence in the traitor-leaders of the appara-

tuses in spite of the open counter-revolutionary politics of the CP and SP leaders. The whole political thrust of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses is aimed at the destruction of the elected commissions and the management councils. One of the means which can be used, and which was used in France in 1944, to liquidate the organs of workers power is the constitution of trade unions to take the place of these autonomous organs.

But the confidence and the illusions the working class has in the traditional organisations led by the SP and the CP bureaucracies leads them to a situation where the Portuguese workers have set up basic organs of power in the factories and offices without having a clear idea of their political significance. The workers saw the first job of these commissions/councils as that of defending their demands, their working and living conditions and opposing redundancies. Thus in defending these interests the commissions/councils have the same functions as trade unions.

The workers in this way have created a pre-soviet form of organisation going beyond the traditional function of the trade union which nonetheless retains this function. The confidence and the illusions the masses have in the traditional leadership and the function taken on by the commissions/councils when they were formed could lead the workers to see the Trade Union Commissions and the Workers Elected Delegate Commissions as the same thing. This in part is happening.

We therefore conclude:

a) although we ought to strive to lead the proletariat toward distinguishing between the Commissions/Councils and the trade unions, which remain working class organisations; although we ought to strive as the Workers Commission of Lisnave proposed, to integrate into the Commissions the representatives of the unions as an independent organisational form, it would be perfectly false to counterpose the commissions to the trade unions when conditions don't allow the workers to realise the political significance of the Commissions. When they think that the Commissions/Councils are the same as trade unions commissions, the workers are giving the trade unions commissions powers that they are trying to give to the Elected Commissions and Management Councils: workers control, workers administration, etc.

b) in fact in certain areas, the trade union can become the first organisational step forward in the direction of elected Committees and Councils (eg. among the agricultural workers).

c) we are therefore never opposed to setting up trade unions, quite the contrary. We are both for electing factory committees and at the same time building trade unions independent of these factory committees. If we are able simultaneously to promote, develop, strengthen the Commission/Councils and organise the trade unions, we will more easily be able to foil the manoeuvres of the bureaucrats who are not only trying to destroy the emerging organs of workers power, but also to eliminate the vanguard of the trade unions.

d) because the situation in Portugal today is that which we have just analysed, the bureaucracies are consciously trying to thwart the movement of the working class which is striving more and more toward centralisation.

Aware that the working class is moving toward spreading its embryonic organs of power, the bureaucracies oppose even the setting up of trade unions and are trying to stop the growth of trade unions in the factories and offices. What is more, as much as possible, they are attempting to preserve the professional structures of Salazarist corporatism and the regional corporatist structures.

In its inevitable movement toward centralising the commissions/councils, the working class will force the bureaucrats to centralise the trade unions in a General Confederation of Portuguese Workers so as to oppose it. We must understand perfectly well that at a certain stage the apparatuses could be forced to set up a General Confederation of Unions in order to counter the movement towards centralised Commissions/Councils. But it would nonetheless be completely false to be against a united democratic Portuguese TUC as the leftists are. What we must keep in mind is that under any and all circumstances, all the initiatives of the Stalinists will be designed to break the movement of the proletarian revolution.

A number of other problems exist today concerning the trade unions and their relationship with the Commissions/Councils. The problems stemming from trade union unity, those stemming from the relationships among the different bureaucracies - all these problems must be analysed later on the basis of information, which is inadequate at present, to determine a really thorough tactic with regard to these questions.

11) We must now analyse the time-factor involved in the Portuguese revolutionary process. This evidently is dependent on many other factors:

- a) the international factor - the financial crisis, the threat of world economic crisis, political collapse of Francoism in Spain, in sum, all the factors relating to the development of the world-wide struggle and principally the European crisis.
- b) the chief factor is that of the development of the crisis in the Portuguese colonies. Even before April 25 the bourgeoisie was divided over what solutions would resolve this vital question in the face of the colonial independence movement and the Portuguese workers revolutionary rise, but since April 25 it has become even more crucial. This problem was, is, and will be one of the major elements in a situation of successive political crises within the Portuguese bourgeoisie, between it and the colonists as well as among a section of the army which refuses to accept political independence for the colonies.
- c) above all there is the process of development of the urban and rural working population's revolutionary maturity. Since 25 April the working population (who have dismantled the State apparatus) have taken a position which leads them to finding the most developed forms of proletarian struggle in answer to all the manifestations of the bourgeoisie's inability to rule.
- d) there is the factor of the Stalinist and reformist betrayals.
- e) finally, there is the fierce desire of the leading bourgeois cliques to inflict serious defeats on the mass movement with the help of the bureaucracies so that they can force the urban and rural workers back to their former conditions of exploitation.

The analysis of these factors points to the general direction in which the class struggle in Portugal is going

to be oriented. The great strength of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracies and the illusions of the masses would indicate that the bourgeoisie has the initiative, at least in appearance. But the crisis brought on by the dismantling of the bourgeois State and the thrust of the masses toward emerging organs of workers power are decisive factors which have led the workers to react to the political initiatives of the bourgeoisie (Carlos' resignation) by deepening the revolutionary movement toward power, forcing Spinola to retreat.

Beyond any doubt, having just been pushed back, Spinola and the bourgeoisie again tried another attack against the working population (the talk about limiting the right to strike, the attacks against the freedom of press, of assembly and of demonstration). Such a situation cannot have any immediate outcome because of the factors we have analysed, especially the colonial crisis, the mass action and the bureaucratic control over the workers.

The process of proletarian revolution in Portugal, although it could be hastened by the collapse of Francoism in Spain, will spread over a rather long period (more in terms of years rather than months). The counter-revolutionary bureaucracies put a brake on the working masses who have illusions in their traditional leadership. Without a revolutionary party they will be led to defeats by the bourgeoisie, defeats which will probably be severe ones. But in spite of the blows against them, the situation cannot have a quick outcome. The fundamental factors which brought about the April 25 coup, those which are at the heart of the bourgeoisie's political crisis, have not disappeared. On the contrary, their disintegrating influence on the bourgeoisie and its State has been multiplied tenfold by the uprising of the masses which dismantled the Salazarist-Caetano State apparatus.

Consequently, the 3rd Conference considers that:

- a) a situation of the type in Chile on September 11, 1973 could only happen in Portugal after a series of partial as well as severe defeats which would have demoralised the working masses. This is not the present case.
- b) in these conditions the situation opens great perspectives for the ripening of revolutionary conditions in Portugal (notwithstanding more or less severe set-backs) where the most favourable conditions are opened for building the revolutionary party.

In accordance with the entire analysis we have elaborated at this 3rd Conference, the Conference declares at the outcome of its deliberations that the intervention of Trotskyists in the Proletarian Revolution begun in Portugal has as its aim the victory of the Revolution.

The victory of the Proletarian Revolution depends on the building of the revolutionary party of the 4th International. The working class acquires consciousness through its own experience nourished by the intervention of Trotskyists who are building the revolutionary party. We consider that this is the very struggle for the victory of the proletarian revolution. The highest level of consciousness of the working class fighting to wrest victory becomes concretised in the building of the revolutionary party of the 4th International. Having noted that in the present circumstances Portuguese Trotskyists can be considered neither as a Party nor as an organisation but only as a group, we have adopted a tactic which should enable us to make real steps forward on

the road to building the revolutionary party. We consider this task inseparable from the struggle to rebuild the 4th International within the framework of the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the 4th International and its international bureau.

In accordance with the conclusions we have arrived at, to wit that the first stage of working class radicalisation is leading the vast majority of militants and workers toward the big organisations, we have adopted the tactic of entrism which will enable us to build a bridge in order to

reach the majority of the people controlled by the bureaucracies. That is why we have decided officially to set up the Group which will fight independently under the name of Liaison Committee of Revolutionary Portuguese Militants (for the Reconstructions of the 4th International).

This resolution was adopted unanimously by the Portuguese militants assembled at the 3rd Conference.

Trotskyists and the Entry Tactic

by Alan Bridges,
Part One.

It has been a long time since any of the Left groups in Britain which claim to be inspired by Marxism has produced a serious study of the Labour Party. Yet the Labour Party, and what the Left makes of it, need study. Every time that militants get into any real struggle against capitalism, be it over wages and redundancies, or wider questions ranging from housing to racialism or the status of women, they run up against the Labour Party. No one can successfully dodge round it. It dominates the political scene. All the important conflicts of the time are fought within it.

Its international significance is no less impressive. After 1945, it reconstructed the Social-Democracy of Europe, in the teeth of Stalinist opposition. In the 1950's, it greatly influenced the independence movements in the former British colonies. Its relations with U.S. imperialism have sometimes restrained and sometimes encouraged adventurism in the White House. Today its leaders stand behind Soares and the Right Wing of the Socialist Party in Portugal.

In October 1974, the Labour Party could mobilise 11½ million votes, two out of every five cast. It took 319 seats in Parliament, out of 635. Even after this spring's losses, it holds many thousands of seats on local authorities. At the last count, it still had some 665,000 individual members, while its affiliated membership included roughly half of all the trade unionists in Britain, led by every union of industrial workers of the slightest importance.

For eight out of the last eleven years, the Labour Party has been in 'power', any rate in the constitutional sense that its Parliamentary head has nominated the Queen's Ministers. The bourgeoisie and the proletariat - each in their own way - found its rule oppressive, and the Labour ministers have to answer for policies which have irritated the bourgeoisie without satisfying the proletariat.

Yet there is hardly a sign that decisive layers of workers are rejecting the Labour Party in favour of a revolutionary political alternative. Further, the Right Wing of the Labour Party can still count on a substantial support from trade union officials and the middle class. These are the people who compose and deliver to the workers the sermons about: 'We must settle our industrial differences by persuasion and not by strikes': 'The world does not owe Britain a living': 'Excessive wage demands cause inflation and undermine democracy', and so on.

Yet in these same years, bourgeois society, on a world-wide scale, has manifestly entered a period of more advanced economic and social decay. This means that in Britain the old ideology of social peace, of accepting 'democratic' capitalism, is in disarray. It persisted into the 1970's at all thanks largely to the intense indoctrination of the working-class in 'democracy', in which the Fabians and the 'British Road to Socialism' have done their share.

Meanwhile, the masses, and especially their lower-paid sections, which formerly were passive, stepped forward into battle, in order to satisfy the aspirations which negotiations could not satisfy. These newly-released energies express themselves in a wide variety of struggles, by far the most important of which, at present, are those which call into questions more and more the right of the employer to put people out of work by doing with his property what best suits his personal interests.

How can anyone claiming to be a political leader, let alone to be a Marxist, ignore the effects which these developments are having and will have on the Labour Party? Merely to state the problem as it is in the real world makes sure that any would-be leader who talks of ignoring the Labour Party gets a dunce's hat put on his head.

PART II: The Right Wing has lost ground.

The confirmed reformists and Parliamentary careerists in the Labour Party are not now as strong as they were fifteen years ago. For there have been changes in the trade unions, to the detriment of the Right. At one time the struggle against the Right went on largely in the Constituency Labour Parties, and only there. There were times when the critics of the Right-Wing could win a wider hearing, but this was only when they were associated with dissident Left reformists like Aneurin Bevan, or with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The processes of change remain to be traced in detail, but there seems to be no doubt that the privileges of the former aristocracy of Trade Unionism, skilled craftsmen and engineers, have been largely eaten away. While Britain's industrial competitors were making rapid technological progress, productive methods in Britain have also been to some extent rationalised. The struggle to keep up did not succeed, but as a result of it the skills in industry are now to be found, in the drawing-office, among the planners and round the computer, no less than in the tool-room or on

the shop-floor.

The new generation of union leaders Scanlon, Jones and Clive Jenkins, have had to appear with a more intransigent stance than the lamented Deakin or the Count of the Holy Roman Empire, Carron.

The engineers only pointed the way for more and more workers in general manufacturing industry, transport workers, miners, teachers, hospital and public service workers. In this vast confused forward march, first for wages and later to protect jobs, with all that that implies, unofficial could often hardly be disentangled from official action. Now even the once-immovable leaders of the iron and steel workers have to lead marches against redundancy.

All this time the Fabians have denigrated and slandered this movement of workers in struggle for the necessities of life. They have actively opposed this movement, through the columns of the 'New Statesman', in their lecture-rooms and their paid 'current affairs' broadcasts on TV and radio. Small wonder that, the more approval they got in the 'Times', the more contempt they met in the Labour Party. Hence the forecasts of doom as writers in the 'quality' press make each others' flesh creep, peering fretfully into the crevasses to see the dark forces emerge. It is the clash of battle in the Labour Party that alarms these doom-sayers, and, especially, the cries for mercy from the Fabians.

The workers pose, with increasing sharpness, the profound question: 'To whom is our Labour Government responsible? If not to our Party Conference, then to whom? Who are this vague 'people' of whom the Fabians talk, but the Tory Party and its hangers on? Is our Government, then, responsible to them?' The Left has, indeed, already defeated the Fabians and carried the Conference against the E.E.C. What is now to stop the Left from taking revenge for the innumerable injuries and insults it has suffered at the hands of these 'constitutional democrats' of the Right, who have come to think that the Labour Party belongs to them, who hope, with the support of the Liberals, to appropriate the historic title of 'Social-Democrats'? For innumerable expulsions, victimisations and persecutions, over the years down from Dalton through Gaitskell and Woodrow Wyatt to Roy Jenkins, there is a long and heavy account due from them and their agents large and small. From the respectable 'Social-Democrats', that is, from the arch witch-hunters in the constituencies, goes up the cry to 'forgive and forget', for 'Party Unity', and 'No Reprisals', from those who, let us be warned, are already planning their counter-coup.

This old right-wing renewed itself year by year from teachers and writers. It supported Gaitskell (coming at any rate near the C.I.A. money) in the fight about Clause IV, against nuclear disarmament and against 'Keep Left' in 1959-1962. What if they were to be eliminated, driven out of the Labour Party? There would be a vacuum in leading positions. The bearers of other ideas would fill it. The doom-sayers do not quite know what this new leadership would be, but they well know that it bodes them no good. In the end, it might do no better than the Independent Socialists in Germany in the 1920's, and fail to carry through a successful revolution. It might do no better than the Communist Party of Chile, but the alarmists are right to fear the worst. Real

revolutionaries might take over from it and, in any case, getting rid of it would be difficult and costly. If the workers smoke out the Labour Right Wing, then order will be all the harder to restore. That is the way the doom-sayers are reasoning.

PART III: How Marxists see the Labour Party

This question, 'What Is the Labour Party?', and the one which follows it, 'What are we to do about it?', have properly pre-occupied every serious Marxist tendency in Britain - and in the whole international Marxist movement - ever since the first decade of the 20th Century. In our own times the Marxist theoretical appreciation of the Labour Party has been almost forgotten, and has been overlaid with diverse superficial deposits. A new presentation of it, tracing the origins of the Labour Party, is long overdue.

These origins lie deep in the history of the working-class, and not that of Britain alone. That the Party could not be what it is without the support of the trade unions, is disputed by no-one. The industrial workers in Britain, world pioneers, understood the value and importance of trade unions already in 1834, at the opening of the Chartist movement. They went on, in the years 1834 - 1848, to win great political experiences on this basis. Their representatives made the discovery that the class conflict between the capitalists and the working-class is the decisive division in modern capitalist society. They saw that their problems in modern capitalist society are to be solved only by the political struggle of the working-class to place itself in power. [Its historic purpose, therefore, is to construct its own political party, in order to carry on the class struggle in its political aspects, as the trade unions carry it on at the point of production. The working-class therefore fought politically, in its own name, for the extension of the franchise.]

These lessons, all formulated before 1848, were expressed and developed by Marx and Engels. (Indeed, we take all this for granted in Britain today. Hardly anyone notices that anarchists or syndicalists or sectarians rarely present themselves in Britain in their true colours. They merely *abstain* from playing a role in the Labour Party. Their abstention *masks* anti-Marxist programmes. In Britain they pretend to be Marxists, while elsewhere they come out openly against participating in mass working-class politics with anti-Marxist programmes.)

The four decades following the decline of Chartism were spent in perfecting the organisation of the trade unions and other working-class organisation, and in testing, under the progressively widened franchise, every possibility that either of the two established political parties of the property-owners could satisfy the aspirations of the workers. By 1890, Britain's world industrial monopoly had been broken. British imperialism could bribe the labour aristocracy and especially its leaders, but it was obliged at the same time to try to subordinate all the forces of the nation to serve its imperial requirements. By the end of the 1890's the return of the working-class to independent class politics was long overdue, and it had the example of the German Social-Democracy before its eyes, a strikingly successful model.

Very strong opposition had had to be overcome, not only from the Liberals, but from sectional interests and loyalties in the workers' movement itself, themselves

the result of the English inability to theorise about their activities. In 1900 the Labour Representation Committee brought together representatives of certain trade unions and of the socialist societies, the political organisations of the working-class. They agreed to work to secure 'a distinct Labour group in Parliament, who shall have their own whips, and agree upon their policy, which must embrace a readiness to co-operate with any party which for the time being may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interests of labour, and be equally ready to associate themselves with any party in opposing measures having an opposite tendency...'

The Labour Representation Committee did not even claim to be socialist. It was concerned merely with 'the direct interests of labour'. Nor was it, in practice, fully independent, in its election contests, of 'deals' with the Liberals. It came into existence, partly because the working-class was able to express rising aspirations in the age of imperialism, and, partly, because, in that age, the very existence of the trade unions was being threatened by a combination of legal decisions and direct attacks from large-scale combinations of employers.

Yet the historic implications of its creation have gone far beyond what its creators can have been able to imagine. Its full effect is still to be seen, so numerous is the British working-class, so dependent on the world market, so strongly trade union conscious and so accustomed to regarding the Party financed by the trade unions as the party to which it looks for political self-expression.

All of those who took any leading part in basing the historic political organisation of the British working-class on its historic industrial organisations were reformists. Insufficient as their work may have been, it was progressive work, in which they attached themselves to the movement of the masses.

The Labour Party did not leap overnight into a position so dominant that today the 'Times' openly discusses how to change the electoral rules as to make sure that it does not get into power! In the first decade of the 20th century its achievement was modest, thanks to the political skill, based on long experience, with which the bourgeois statesmen exploited the theoretical and personal weaknesses of the workers' representatives.

The bourgeoisie bought even this limited success dear, for, temporarily disillusioned with 'politics', the militants took the lead in gigantic industrial struggles of the unions against the new monopolies of the employers. They defended their real wages against rising prices and the degradation of skills. They struggled to amalgamate the diverse unions into more efficient fighting organisations, and finally, they came back to politics with the demand for the nationalisation of the mines. These struggles reared the leadership which defended the working-class during the Great War and was later to give the Communist Party at its foundation its roots in industry.

British insularity had to acknowledge the lessons of the war. The new constitution of the Labour Party, recognising the radicalisation of the masses, included the well-known Clause Four, which declares, in effect, that the task of the Labour Party is henceforth to be the solution by socialist measures of the problems of capitalist society, despite all the efforts of the Right Wing to abolish it in late years: 'To secure for the workers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of

the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service'.

In the General Election of 1918 the Labour Party can be said to have fought for the first time as a national party, and won 57 seats.

At this very point in time, the Russian and German Revolutions had confirmed Marx's conclusion from the Paris Commune that, on the Continent, the workers could not lay hold of the ready-made state machine, but had to smash it. The previous year Lenin had shown, in 'State and Revolution', that Marx's exception - Britain - was no longer exempt from this historic law, because, with America, it had 'today' plunged headlong into the All-European dirty, bloody morass of military-bureaucratic institutions... Mankind had entered into the epoch of the death-agony of capitalism, the period of wars and revolutions.

Radicalised by the war, the British workers lifted up into the leadership of the Labour Party the reformist pacifists of the Independent Labour Party, MacDonald and Snowden. They had driven out the last of the 'Lib.-Lab.' trade union leaders. Yet at the very time they did this, reformism ceased to be capable of winning any permanent or substantial gains for the working-class. The same reformist leadership today presents itself to the workers with reductions in real wages and the standard of living - 'lest worse befall'. Many of them could soon come to see themselves in the role of the German Social-Democratic leaders, Noske and Schiedmann, quite ready to use force to beat back rebellious workers and to murder their leaders.

The British working-class was, therefore, only just beginning the historic process of testing Parliamentarism *with its own party*, when the state of world economy was pronouncing the death sentence on reformism. When Marxists say, therefore, what they think the Labour Party is, they define it as a contradiction: it is a counter-revolutionary, workers' party. It rests upon the working-class. Its leadership appeals to the working-class. At the same time, its leadership stands for policies which, in the present state of the world, not merely cannot meet the aspirations of the working-class but place it in grave danger.

The Fourth International

The over-riding task for Marxists today is the reconstruction of the Fourth International. The reconstruction of the Fourth International requires the construction by International collaboration of national Trotskyist parties. The construction in Britain of a Trotskyist party means to take up what has been for over fifty years the great task for scientific socialists. This task is to convince the working class that reformists cannot fulfil the expectations which the workers place in the Labour Party of the purposes for which it was built. The task is to convince the workers that they are right to put their trust in their own movement, in its activity and its historic aims, but that they misplace their confidence when they trust the reformists to express these aims. This is, indeed, a historic task.

As long ago as 1844, Engels pointed out that the working-class does not passively endure. The very conditions of its social life force it forward and compel it to fight for its emancipation, even though it does not

have a thorough understanding of the historic meaning of what it does. The struggle itself is the material basis for the intervention of Marxists. Building on this basis requires an understanding of the varied ways which this working-class finds of fighting, experienced as it is in both struggles and betrayals full as it is of both confidence and caution.

Our theoretical equipment consists of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky and the First Four Congresses of the Communist International. Our strategy is based on the lessons contained in the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. We are not propagandists, preaching what these documents say. Our intervention consists of common struggle with workers, but not that alone. We contribute by articulating the international programme of the socialist revolution in terms of the national peculiarities of Britain. We take part in the workers' struggles, injecting into them such demands as will mobilise them, advance their struggle and expose before their eyes, as a result of experience, the role of the reformists, of 'democracy' and the 'democratic state.' These are necessary steps towards building the Trotskyist revolutionary party in Britain, the British Section of the reconstructed Fourth International.

The method by which we present our transitional demands must depend, at its simplest, on what strength we have at any given moment. Today the forces of Marxism in Britain are rich in promise but small in numbers. Our place, therefore, is inside the Labour Party. Today we are 'entrists'. The best basis from which we can organise workers against reformism today is the basis which we are building, inside the Labour Party, for the revolutionary party of the future.

The rest of this article discusses concretely how Marxists undertake their work in the Labour Party, what they think will happen as a result of it, and why they are today opposed both to the building of "independent parties" and to "combining 'entry' with 'open work'".

An organised concentration of Marxist forces within the Labour Party, a struggle there to mobilise workers round our programme of transitional demands - on this basis we contribute to the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

It is neither by Act of God nor law of nature that the Labour Party is dominated largely by idiots or scoundrels. Anyone who says that such people have controlled it for over fifty years has to take up the record of the Communist Party, hitherto the principal 'opposition' to Transport House. Marxists today can simply explain why the reformists still hold sway. They point to the errors and betrayals by the Stalinists under the headings 'Socialism in a single Country', 'Anglo-Russian Committee', 'Third Period', 'Popular Front', 'British Road to Socialism'. At least we today have great experience, which our forebears in the Communist Party in the early 1920's would have been glad to have and which, we think, they would have put to good use. Nor do we believe that history will lightly forgive the tendency of today's ultra lefts, to turn their backs on the responsibilities of Marxists in the Labour Party - not to forget the 'deep entrists' today working within the Labour Party.

The principles which we enunciate here were not casually thought up yesterday or the day before. We shall now show that they are deeply rooted in the struggles and experience of the Trotskyists in the

1930's - to which Trotsky himself and the whole leadership internationally of the movement for the Fourth International contributed.

PART IV: Trotskyists and 'Entrism' in Britain 1931 - 1936

The Pioneers

The Labour Party did not present itself as an immediate problem to the first British Trotskyists, who, while they were still members of the Communist Party, began to develop round the ideas which they got from outside the British movement altogether, from the New York 'Militant' in 1931. They started their work as Trotskyists in one of the most difficult periods of the movement, in what Cannon calls the 'Dog Days of the Left Opposition'. Stalin seemed to be carrying all before him in Russia, and this disarmed those who had criticised him in 1928. The theoretical level of the Communist Party of Great Britain was low, as is well known. Its cadre was exceptionally subservient to the Kremlin.

For these reasons there simply did not exist in Britain in 1928-29 Communists such as those who, in France or U.S.A., stood up against such monstrosities as 'Social-Fascism' or 'Socialism in a Single Country'. On the contrary, the younger Communist militants in Britain in 1928 - 29 were enthusiastic supporters of the 'New Line' and its prophets, Pollitt and Dutt. They accepted the bogus 'independence of the party' which it implied. They went along with and agreed with calling the Labour Party a capitalist party.

Let us look at these comrades more closely. In 1929 they were the best elements in the Communist Party; for example, Groves was an able organiser and writer, and Stuart Purkiss a remarkably successful organiser of opposition to class-collaboration in his union, the Railway Clerks' Association. None of them had as yet thought for a moment of turning to Trotskyism. They drew consistent conclusions from calling the Labour Party the 'third party of capitalism' by fighting for the Communist Party to stand as many candidates, against Labour candidates, as it could, in the General Elections of 1929 and 1931, and in many by-elections. Indeed, these candidates did overall a great deal better than Healy's candidates in 1974.

In the 1960's, various tendencies separately re-discovered what had been Groves' pre-Trotskyist position in 1929. They were, of course, all tailing behind a passing mood of the working-class. They did not apply their minds to explaining *why* Labour Party individual membership fell from 1,015,000 in 1953 to 665,000 in 1973, with several interesting fluctuations on the way. They did not consider the problem (which, of course, challenges Marxists for an explanation) partly because they are the prisoners of their own methods of thinking and partly because the rude realities of the real Labour Party are beneath their notice anyway. They did not, therefore, detect that the mood of the working-class was the origin of their inspiration. On the contrary, they all congratulated themselves for being such monstrous clever and original fellows!

Healy at any rate might have given the matter a minute or two's thought. He had to face criticism from Cannon in 1961 that the SLL was off on an Oehler-ite binge. Cannon warned: 'This can lead to an impatient demand from the ranks of the Trotskyist cadre to cut

loose from the Labour Party and its Left Wing and to form an independent party and have done with it. I cannot imagine a better way to put the Trotskyist cadre into a corner!

How could - and did - Healy hope to reply? He boldly recalled the correct 'enlist' experience of the 'Club' in the 1950's. He recalled how, in the struggle against Behan, the 1960 Conference of the SLL, on his motion, laid down acceptance that the Labour Party is a workers' Party as a condition of membership. In other words, he called up the memory of his past to screen his present and future renunciation of it.

Just one example will suffice. In January 1961, in a letter to the SWP National Committee on behalf of the SLL National Committee, Healy explained the political basis of the split with Brian Behan in 1960:

'...Behan proposed the ultra-left theory that the Labour Party was a capitalist party and that we should have nothing to do with it.' (*Trotskyism Against Revisionism*, Vol. III, p.50) How Healy must now regret ever having written that! For Behan's 'ultra left theory' is now one of the central planks in the WRP's sectarian platform. We can easily see why Healy, along with all the other sectarians, has to either distort or obscure his own and our movement's past.

But back in 1929, such comrades as Groves and Purkiss were prisoners of the third period through no fault of their own, (as indeed was G. Healy, who it is understood joined the YCL the previous year). They had no better basis in theory or experience to work on, while the sectarians of the mid-thirties, and even more so today, have no such excuse. In fact Groves and Purkiss welcomed the turn to the 'Third Period' in 1929. They thought that it would be a progressive one, taking them away from the debilitating tendency of the Cambell-Rothstein leadership, in the period 1925 - 1928, to submerge the programme and identity of the Communist party in the general Labour and Trade Union Left. This was what the Comintern was then telling them to do. In the dark days of 1931, sectarianism presented its bill more quickly than in the lively sixties and seventies. The 'Third Period' policies of the Communist Party reduced it in less than three years to a state in which it could not intervene in the crisis of that year - unlike the SLL/WRP which can claim to have made certain gains on a not-dissimilar basis in recent years, however transient they may prove to be.

The Third Period

Only in 1931 did the future pioneers of Trotskyism in Britain find, in the New York 'Militant' the explanation, in Trotsky's criticism of 'Social-Fascism', why the Party line prevented them from building the Party. As to the 'theory of Socialism in One Country', no-one in Britain seems to have questioned it at all until Trotsky's writings began to circulate.

To do Groves justice, the work which he did later, in 1934, and the battle which he opened in the 'Red Flag' against the ultra-left conceptions about the Labour Party of Palme Dutt and the 'Third Period', are perhaps the most important of all his services to Trotskyism. Dutt's conceptions were embedded in the practice of the 'Third Period' (which did not, of course exclude, but made inevitable, disagreements in the leadership of the Communist Party about their application, as, for example, in the trade union dispute of 1932). His form-

al, un-dialectical way of thinking, displayed in the pronouncements in 'Labour Monthly', infected much wider circles in the Labour Movement with mis-leading ways of looking at the Labour Party, and re-inforced traditional, bourgeois methods of thinking about it. Dutt taught some to see the Labour Party as nothing more than a third, capitalist party. Others saw it as nothing but a 'workers' party. These conclusions appear to be completely opposed to each other. Yet they are both wrong, and for the same reasons. They both ignore the contradictions in the Labour Party. They ignore its development and its history, or mis-represent them. They have in common one essential thing, that they look just at *one* side of it. Dutt greatly encouraged this one-sided way of looking at the Labour Party (and at other things too, such as the Soviet Union and the Communist International).

The way the minds of Dutt and his pupils work can be understood when we consider his intellectual formation. His father was a bourgeois Indian nationalist, who lived in England. He went to a public school in Cambridge. At Balliol College, Oxford, he got a First in Greats, that is, in Latin, Greek and the philosophy of Plato. This gave him about as good a training in abstract rationalistic thinking and in formal logic, and as thorough an inoculation against dialectical thinking, as he could have got anywhere in the world, even from the Jesuits, or from the Cartesian doctors of the Sorbonne, or from the pragmatists of the United States. It was a thorough bourgeois intellectual formation, and even before he had consciously entered the service of the Stalinist bureaucracy, his methods of thought could flourish in the Stalinised Comintern after 1923 like a hot-house. Thousands of militants, to their detriment, learned to imitate the Kantian method which his sophisticated but sterile Marxist-Leninist language concealed. His pupils transmitted the virus. We have had to fight it in the Trotskyist movement for forty years. It still infects the outlook of important tendencies which know little of Dutt himself, and which, indeed, claim adherence to Trotskyism, as well as of the Communist Party.

Such, however, is the contradictory movement of history that Groves was able to free himself in 1934 from the Dutt-ish notion that the Labour Party is a 'capitalist' party. That error leads to worse. Dutt fostered the illusion that the Labour Party, at any given moment stands on the brink of decline and collapse, and that the bourgeoisie can, whenever they choose, use it to overthrow itself, along with the institutions of bourgeois democracy, and the trade unions on which it rests, to install Fascism, or, in another version, a 'corporate state'. As against these essentially pessimistic, un-realistic and divisive notions, Groves as long ago as 1934 succeeded in restoring some of the ideas of Trotsky and the First Four Congresses of the Communist International about the *contradictory* character of Social-Democracy.

He pointed with satisfaction to the electoral victories of the Labour Party in 1933 and 1934. He spoke of them as the re-conquest of positions which the workers had lost in 1931. Like every class-conscious worker, he took particular pride in Labour's capture of the London County Council for the first time early in 1934 - under Herbert Morrison's leadership! - when the former great Socialist bastions of Berlin and Vienna had gone down before the reaction in Central Europe. Therefore, he argued, the Communist Party's press was quite wrong to pretend, as it did, that there had been no real econ-

omic recovery, or that no deep significance could be attached to the revived electoral fortunes of Labour.

On the contrary, Groves drew the attention of Marxists to the conflicts between the workers at the base and the apparatus at the top of the Labour Party, to which its victories would inevitably give rise, because they were based on expectations which the workers had placed in the Party which the leaders could not fulfil. He warned Marxists not to overlook these historic opportunities for influencing the development of workers' consciousness.

Groves' development at this stage of his life is all the more interesting, following as it did on his evidently mistaken opposition in autumn 1933 to Trotsky's proposal that the Trotskyists should 'enter' the ILP as a body. In that discussion, he had reproduced all the misguided notions about the 'independence of the party' that he had learned from Dutt during the 'Third Period'. After 1934, he could make no further development.

The major forces of Trotskyism in Britain were engaged in 1934 in the 'entry' into the ILP. They undertook this rather late, when opportunities had already been lost, and they wasted more time acclimatising themselves, but around the end of 1934 their numbers had risen by about six times. Political mistakes in the autumn of 1935, into which we cannot go here, but which raise the Labour Party question, and which 'Pharmakos' described in the 'Bulletin', No. 7, late in 1974, led them to defeat at the hands of Brockway and the pacifists at Easter 1936. This is not a tale for wishful thinkers. In the real history of Trotskyism - unlike that which some have made up after the event to build up their own prestige - the 'goodies' do not always win. None the less, the ILP 'entrists' over a whole period based themselves on Trotsky's and Groves' ideas, in order to neutralise the ultra-left bloc in the ILP of the Stalinists and the organic sectarians, to explain their policy of 'critical support' for Labour in elections, and to orient the ILP towards the rank and file of the Labour Party.

With the disintegration of the ILP and the stronger hold which this gave to its old reformist-pacifist leadership, the 'entry' exhausted its possibilities. More urgent and fruitful work lay ahead in the Labour Party.

The Debate on 'Entrism' in 1936: The 'Geneva Resolution'.

Trotsky's advice, in the well-known and historic 'Interview with Collins', fell upon ears that were ready to receive it. A number of the former ILP 'entrists' turned to the Labour Party, where they were able to fuse with an important tendency in the Labour League of Youth. This consisted largely of young workers in the East End of London, who had come together round the paper, 'Youth Militant', on the basis of opposition to imperialist war, whether in an open form, or in the veiled form of 'anti-Fascist war' or 'League of Nations war'. The fusion of these tendencies and their development can be described in some detail, because we know now what happened, but it is enough here to say that it led to stable and effective work being done in 1937 and 1938 by the 'Militant Group' as a Labour Party 'entrists' group.

These comrades faced opposition on two sides. On one side were the ultra-left. C.L.R. James and his supporters, some of them wanted to stay in the ILP, contemplating the struggle, and accepting the ILP as an

'independent' organisation which they might one day take over. Others wanted to declare themselves an 'independent organisation.' In any case, both tendencies denigrated 'entry' work in the Labour Party as wrong on principle, or as untimely, or as secondary to 'open work' or as all right for other people. On the other side was the opportunist Right, the remnants of the Groves tendency. For those who refused to 'enter' the ILP in early 1934 had in 1935 'turned' into the Labour Party and the Socialist League with rather more enthusiasm than caution, orienting themselves towards left-reformist and petty-bourgeois circles, with which, as Groves' writings for the Socialist League press show, they went passively along. They attacked the young workers of 'Youth Militant' as tactless interlopers because they posed political questions too sharply. The intellectual labours of the 'Militant Group', based on advice from the International Secretariat, established in clearer general terms than before the reasons for concentrating forces to do a particular job in the Labour Party, as against both James and Groves. They were less successful in exploiting the advantages of being there, and the problems which their activity presented can be appreciated from the files of their papers, 'Youth Militant' and 'Militant', and the minutes of their Congresses.

They paid a heavy price for being young and inexperienced. In some ways the movement is still paying it. Practically the only Communist training on which they could draw was what a few of their leaders had got, in the 'Third Period' tradition, from the Communist Party or its ambiance. It was not only that they had to overcome rigid attitudes and learn how to collaborate in day to day work with left reformist workers, whose background and development had been quite different from theirs. Under the pressures which the Stalinists could exert, everything that the 'Militant Group' tried to do sooner or later resolved itself into defending the reputation of Trotsky against the slanders arising from the Moscow Trials. Consequently, in a situation rather like that which Cannon describes, when tens of thousands of new elements were looking to the Soviet Union as a source of inspiration for peace and progress, when the level of struggle in the trade unions was declining in Britain, here were these Trotskyists, with their documents under their arms, demanding, not only that you take part in trade union recruitment and in electioneering with them but also that you read books, study and discuss.

Good propaganda work was done, for example, in Bradford by the Yorkshire comrades of the 'Militant Group' in 1937. They held open air meetings on the car-park in the town centre. They sold the 'Militant' on the streets. They called on the workers to fight the Fascists. They intervened in Stalinist meetings. They were, of course, propagandists, in spite of which they had the welcome assistance of a young comrade who said he was just breaking with the YCL - one Gerry Healy. With their small numbers and inexperience, they did what they could be expected to do. They tried, of course, to campaign on transitional demands - for democracy in the Labour Party, for sending arms to Spain. They never imagined that such campaigns could replace propaganda.

Entry - The Record

Let us then hear no more of the slander on our movement that the pre-war comrades were 'mere propagand-

ists' or 'mere middle-class dilettantes'.

What do the documents tell? They show that we were already beginning to understand that every separate 'entry' is individual and different. We had entered the ILP *primarily with the aim of winning it to the Fourth International*. When the centrist leaders took no notice of Trotsky's advice in 1933, he simply left time to do its work, and addressed himself in 1935 and 1936, not to the Maxtons and Brockways, but the 'Marxist Group in the ILP', the Trotskyists.

The entry into the SFIO in France was, again, individually different. It was like the ILP entry in that an 'open' faction was set up. It was not like the ILP entry in that it was intended to place the Trotskyists inside the United Front of the working-class parties, of the SFIO and the Communist Party.

The Collins Interview showed that the Labour Party entry would be different again. Trotsky discussed the proposal to write off the ILP and that the Trotskyists should make an organised withdrawal, to join the Labour Party, in the late autumn of 1935. Thanks, however, to the influence of the Dutch Centrist, Peter Schmidt, who still claimed at that time to be for the Fourth International, but who had his own factional reasons for supporting sectarians, the ILP entry was prolonged and Trotsky's proposals ignored. Everyone should read today what the Old Man told Collins in Summer 1936: 'The idea of remaining in the ILP for a further period in order to win a few more wavering elements, whilst the Communist Party is rapidly penetrating into the mass-organisations, is ridiculous... The experience of the French and Belgian sections demonstrates conclusively the tremendous possibilities that unfold themselves inside the mass reformist organisations. Unless we accept that perspective, we can play no significant revolutionary role in the history of Great Britain'.

We were lucky to get the Collins interview, because shortly after it, during August 1936, following the First Moscow Trial, that of Zinoviev and Kamenev, the Social-Democratic Government of Norway interned Trotsky, in order to try to silence him, at the behest of the GPU. However, on July 29 - 31, 1936, the First International Conference for the Fourth International took place (the so-called 'Geneva Conference'). Two delegates and two observers attended from England, one each from the 'Youth Militant' and the James groups. The Groves group was urgently invited, indeed, by a personal letter from Trotsky, but was not represented. The conference produced an important 'Resolution on the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninists of England'.

May we ask readers to be satisfied, for the time being, with extracts?

The 'Geneva Resolution' opens 'the Conference ce considers as an extremely urgent necessity to effect as quickly as possible the unification of the three English groups'. We know enough about the different bases of these groups to recognise that the differences between them, though capable of being overcome, were of serious political significance, and that they should not be written off as mere personalities. The 'Geneva Resolution' went on 'The Conference is further of the opinion that the experiences of the Bolshevik-Leninists within the ILP must be brought to an end, and that the group which is at present working there should move its field of work towards the mass organisations, and especially the Labour Party and the Labour League of Youth. It is true that the Bolshevik-Leninists in the ILP can do trade

union work, but they could do it much more effectively if they were not associated with the bankrupt ILP in the eyes of the workers.'

Everyone in the British and international movement knew what the Geneva Resolution intended. It was the tactical application, in British conditions, of the international strategy. Here, as elsewhere, the small forces were to serve as instruments for building the future parties of the Fourth International. They were not yet themselves parties, and were not to try to act as if they were.

Of course, all experienced Marxists know, and can illustrate with a wealth of examples, that sectarians like to go on enjoying their sectarianism without being detected in it. As in France, Spain, Belgium and U.S.A., they came up in Britain with various subterfuges to frustrate the purpose of the Geneva Resolution, for not entering the Labour Party, for postponing entry, or for entering in such a way as neutralised its real purpose. These notions often anticipate those of later 'theoreticians' of sectarianism, who may fondly believe their ideas to spring from original genius in the 1970's!

The opposition to the international strategy was voiced on the Continent by the sectarian Belgian worker, Vereecken. For this man, as for C.L.R. James, Trotsky combined a personal regard and appreciation with the sharpest political criticism - an objective lesson for those who think that to be a Bolshevik you have to be a boor in personal relations and a hooligan in polemic. The leading sectarian in Britain was C.L.R. James. He had found that staying in the ILP, as it was, in many ways suited his talented but individualistic personality. In its decay, the ILP infected a group of Trotskyists with notions of 'independence', to be realised either in the ILP or in a separate group of their own, and they rallied round James.

Their opposition to the 'Geneva Resolution' was systematically developed at a general conference of all the British Bolshevik-Leninists in October 1936. James had represented his group (the Marxist Group) at the Geneva Conference, and at the October meeting put forward a proposal which paid lip-service to the Geneva Resolution but would actually have undermined it: '... at the present moment the main field of work should be in the Labour Party and the new organisation should take immediate steps to strengthen the present position in the Labour Party. But in view of the uncertainty of the present political situation, the possibility of an immediate split in the Labour Party and the re-grouping of political parties in general...', it was inadmissible that all the supporters of the 'Marxist Group' be asked to leave the ILP at once or at any fixed time. 'It therefore recommends that the new organisation, while working on the main principles stated above, i.e. the new grouping, will consider each case strictly on its political merits, being guided entirely by the needs and aims of Bolshevik-Leninism and not by the personal wishes of individuals'. Thus with no basis for political or tactical agreement, the new 'united' group was to be held together by organisational measures from the top, to be administered, no doubt, by the super-man, James. Where have we heard this kind of thing more recently?

Early in the debate James conceded that his proposal did not interpret the 'Geneva Resolution' in the sense in which the International Secretariat interpreted it. This was his reply to a direct question from Harber, who represented the Labour Party 'entrists' soon to form the 'Militant Group.'

On the following day, the Labour Party 'entrists' stated, in a declaration drafted by Harber: 'We are agreed on the principle of fusion on a political basis, i.e. on the basis of the resolution of the Geneva Conference. For several months we have been approaching the Marxist League (Groves Group) who like us are working in the Labour Party, for a joint members' meeting to discuss the fusion of both groups. Unfortunately we have been unable to secure their agreement to this... With regard to the 'Marxist Group' (James group), we have endeavoured to arrange with them joint activity on specific subjects, recognising the impossibility of fusion with the existing political differences... We have agreed to conduct our trade union work through ILP fractions where these are controlled by them, and on other activities such as the trial, etc. We now consider that the CLR James resolution, with its insistence that the main field of work is in the Labour Party, provided a basis for at least a discussion of the possibility of fusion of all groups'.

The International Secretariat Intervenes

The International Secretariat had heard only indirectly of James' proposals, and it ruthlessly dissected his essential opposition to the Geneva Resolution from his appearance of supporting it with qualifications. Possibly James was speculating, like others before and since, on 'taking over' the ILP from the pacifists and reformists for the sake of its letter-head and its assets. Failing that, he may have hoped to wipe it out. The success of these manoeuvres had to depend, however improbably, on rallying the centrists to his leadership, after they had repeatedly shown themselves concerned to snatch up any scrap of sophisticated revisionism from among the Continental emigration, and combine them with the basest slanders, to justify staying in the swamp where they were and rejecting Trotskyism.

The letter from the International Secretariat dated November 7, 1936, closes with these words: 'We beg you to reconsider your policy on the basis of the facts, to go over at once to the offensive on the political domain, to treat the questions of the ILP Constitution (National Conference of the ILP) and of formal discipline as wholly secondary, to outline a perspective for an open break with the ILP with a statement which we can use in all our international press, to face up to carrying through unification with our groups in the Labour Party and the Labour League of Youth'.

Only a couple of weeks later, the Parliamentarian and pacifists of the ILP left James with less choice in the matter. They threw him and his group out. His presence embarrassed them. They wanted to prove to the Stalinists that they were not soft on Trotskyism. By this piece of political profundity they hoped to take the heat off the POUM in Spain - as if it were the label that the GPU objected to! Anyway, the excuse they wanted was provided by James himself, who openly published his journal 'Fight', in the name of the 'British Bolshevik-Leninists', and in its first number attacked the ILP, the party in which he and his group were supposed to be working.

The London members of the 'Marxist Group' forthwith took it upon themselves to declare, in the name of the whole membership, that they were an open, independent organisation. James justified this course by tearing from context statements by Trotsky about the political independence of a *future* party and mis-applying

them to defend the organisational independence of a small group - a familiar piece of chicane, by which others also who think that they can cheat history have derailed the Marxist movement. The International Secretariat wrote to them again. Its letter of December 13, 1936, objectively and in moderate language separated out the three incompatible tendencies in the 'Marxist Group', those who accepted the spirit of the Geneva Resolution, those who wanted to stay in the ILP - and James, who tried to bridge these positions, with his proposal to found the 'independent' organisation, with the 'open' paper, with members also pursuing fraction work in both the ILP and the Labour Party.

Here we first met the 'bogus entrists', in whose footsteps, Healy, Cliff and Grant follow, James and Groves have had plenty of imitators. There are always shame-faced sectarians and painted-up opportunists about.

The Secretariat against Sectarianism

The International Secretariat wrote: 'Every important political turn requires the leadership of the whole organisation to submit a clear and accurate balance-sheet of the past policy. The leadership of the MG has not carried out this policy... it does not say a word about its own perspectives having shown themselves to be false. It does not mention the responsibility which it bears, for having stayed too long in the ILP but it attacks - though in a concealed fashion - the tactic of entry into alien organisations. It quotes a passage from the article of Trotsky where he says that a party (but not a little propaganda group) must have complete organisational independence, and he adds that the experience of the Bolshevik-Leninists since the summer of 1934 proves the correctness of these words. This signifies nothing else than that in the opinion of the authors of the resolution, the policy of the BL groups - which precisely have been only propaganda groups and not parties - was incorrect. The break-up, the internal disputes, passivity, etc (of the James group) resulted solely from the prolonged and opportunist presence in the ILP, contrary to the advice of the ISL, of the Geneva Conference and of Comrade Crux... The decision to create independent organisation has a result which is all the more fatal because by it the fusion of all the Bolshevik-Leninist groups... will be prevented...' Then follows a passage of such theoretical importance, the spirit of which is so timely in 1975, that we feel sure readers will be glad to have it in full: 'Unlike the Marxist Group, which, because it remains stuck in an opportunist fashion to the ILP grew weaker and weaker, the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in the Labour League of Youth, which was formed only in the February of this year by six comrades, has developed in an extremely rapid way. It is today much stronger than the Marxist Group, activity and optimism are flourishing there, and everything indicates that despite enormous difficulties it will grow still more. Its principal task is to inculcate the British youth against the plague of Stalinism so that there shall not happen what happened in Spain and in certain regions of Belgium, where the Socialist Youth has been left to itself, with the result that it has fallen completely under the influence of the Communist International. The decision of the Executive Committee of the Marxist Group, which renders fusion impossible, signifies an action contrary not merely to the recommendation of the Geneva Conference, but also to the Marxist Group's own declaration of October 10, where it was

declared that the premise for the establishment of an independent party is the fusion of all the Bolshevik-Leninists.'

'By the decision to establish an independent organisation, also, the structural modifications which are occurring in the Labour Party itself, and which will increase tremendously as a result of the deterioration of the situation on the Continent, are completely overlooked. Just as in its time a progressive left wing developed in the Socialist parties in France and especially in Belgium, today an analogous process is developing in the Labour Party. The Edinburgh Conference (October 1936 J.A.) signifies in this respect an important phase in the history of the Labour Party. Let us quote what Stafford Cripps said in 'Controversy' and what is confirmed by other words of the leader of the right, Dalton:

'The most significant development at the conference was without doubt the attitude of the constituency parties. The opposition to the platform ... of the great mass of the local delegates of the Labour Party, who voted together against the platform and against the block-votes, on all important questions. Their whole political feeling is outraged by their continuous defeats, and the principal question which came out of the conference is that of the 'democratisation' of the Labour Party itself. The indignation was great; one felt a spontaneous movement to improve the position of the constituency parties in a meeting of delegates from constituency parties, which was held on the night of the Thursday, at which some 240 (out of 290) delegates were present and declared unanimously to establish an ad hoc official committee which was then and there set up in order to bring together the constituency parties so that they could make effective their demand for greater power.'

You would have to be politically blind not to see that the Bolsheviks, under the cover of the increasing opposition coming from the radicalised working class masses demanding party democracy, have enormous possibilities of development. In this connection, again, the following observation by Cripps is equally very important; 'Discipline will become impossible, because the base of the movement will do what it feels itself called upon to do without regard to the structure.'

The Marxist Group observes in its letter that the split of this left wing of the Labour Party will be inevitable and that this will join up with the right-centrists and strengthen them. It draws therefrom the conclusion that 'even as a purely tactical question an independent organisation to ensure a more or less stable and solid centre is an urgent necessity in England.' But do the authors of this letter believe that some dozens of isolated Trotskyists will stop outside this powerful centrist current? It is absurd. Only in the closest contact with this left wing, only as active members of this left wing, can the possibilities be obtained of influencing it, of winning the revolutionary part for Bolshevik-Leninism. If we are outside, we shall be considered as powerless and incurable sectarians, who fear contact with the masses, but who want to impose themselves on the masses as sage counsellors, from outside. The 'tactical' argument, the only one, of those who take as their aim the formation of an independent organisation crumbles of its own accord.

The proposal from the majority of the London group, to bring help to the Bolshevik-Leninists in the Labour Party from outside by 'combined work' can be inspired by the best of intentions. But the first people who should

give their opinion on this help should be the comrades who are themselves in the Labour Party. But they are the sharpest opponents of the precipitate independence, and they declare that an independent group located outside can do them nothing but harm, for in that case they would easily be found to expel them prematurely and without political grounds. This could happen, not merely from the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, but even from the constituency parties of the Labour Party which we are trying to win. 'Combined work', as it is proposed, has revealed itself to be completely impossible in practice. In Belgium, theoretically, such a possibility existed as a result of the existence of the independent group in Brussels. But collaboration with the comrades of the Action Socialiste Revolutionnaire did not and could not take place, for the reasons which have already been spelt out. Today, after the fusion, the situation is such that in Brussels, where there was the independent group, the Belgian party is unhappily still weak, and has not yet overcome its isolation. That is another argument against independence.

Further, the danger exists that an independent group, as it eternally goes round in a vicious circle, will cultivate sectarian and opportunist tendencies in its own ranks. Field in America is an eloquent example of the political impotence which results from these tendencies. The personal and unprincipled struggle conducted by Field, Oehler etc., against our American section, and which the majority of the London group wishes to avoid, and (space) is, as experience proves, the only 'political' activity of such groups. It is a bad symptom that the majority of the London group writes that, 'it is a vice of the Trotskyist movement to create differences, to erect them into insurmountable barriers and to carry on a war of words on this basis.' This is the eternal argument of the Fenner Brockways, Schwabs, Fields and all their like. Another proof of the same opportunist influence is that you write that our movement has a 'bad reputation' as a result of 'fractional struggles' (as a result of impolite formulations, such as 'philistine centrism'). In certain periods, fractional struggle becomes inevitable. The old Bolshevik party also had a 'bad reputation' in this respect. However, intrigues which ought to be avoided always accompany an incorrect policy. That is why in the last year the struggle within the Marxist Group was full of personal bitterness while the Bolshevik Leninists in the Labour League of Youth were effectively free from it.

The Bureau for the Fourth International, on the basis of what is said above, is convinced that the Marxist Group as a whole must fundamentally reconsider the decision of the London majority, which cannot be binding on the organisation nationally. No one will reproach the comrades with having made mistakes in the past, the moment they recognise and openly counteract these mistakes. But when a new vote is taken, we must also take account of the comrades who, with or without the consent of the leadership of the Marxist Group have entered the Labour Party and have expressed their position by their method of acting. The best solution in the present conditions seems to be this. All the Bolshevik-Leninists in England who recognise the decisions of the Geneva conference for the Fourth International convoke by the democratic method a constituent conference where according to the principles of democratic centralism they will discuss and decide which road is the best.

The conference will create the sole and homogeneous [basis?] of organisation of the Bolshevik-Leninists, and by doing so will meet the demand of the Geneva conference for a 'unification on the basis of the fundamental principles and programme of the Fourth International'. Any solution which does not correspond to the will of the majority of the English Bolshevik-Leninists will be able only to obstruct and constitute a danger for the work of the Bolshevik-Leninists. The International Secretariat would consider itself obliged, in that case to reconsider its relations with such a minority.

December 12, 1936

Unanimously adopted by the Bureau for the Fourth International."

We may never know precisely who drafted these masterly documents. Trotsky himself can hardly have had a hand directly in them. The International Secretariat was being run at this time by Naville, Rous, Wolf and Klement, and Trotsky was interned in Norway. In later years ignorant septics have tried to pretend that this international leadership did not exist. The GPU knew better. Within hardly more than a year they had physically cut it to pieces.

PART V:

Fighting for Marxist Principles in the Labour Party

Capitulation to Reformism?

Such was the initial capital with which the Marxists began their 'entry' into the Labour Party in 1936, with a struggle over principles. They did not profoundly understand what they were taking on. That would have been impossible. They saw 'entry' as simply the necessary next stage, through which, in the real world, and not in the imaginations of sectarians, the Trotskyists and the other advanced workers had to pass together on the road to the construction of the revolutionary party. The Labour Party, of course, presented special problems of its own. When we had joined the ILP, back in 1934, we had wanted to counter-act the influence of the Stalinists there and to win it over as a going concern to the Fourth International, leaving behind only incorrigible pacifists and reformists. As to the Labour Party, on the contrary, nobody suggested for a moment either that it could be won over as a whole, or that its apparatus could be captured and used for revolutionary purposes. Those fantasies date from a later period.

We recognised that our forces were small and that our 'entry' was the best way, given our small numbers, of placing ourselves in the correct position to approach workers who were tending, for want of anything better, to fall under Stalinist influence.

None of us at this time would have felt that we had to convince each other that we based our work on the fruits of the First Four Congresses of the Communist International and of the experience of the Left Opposition based upon them. That went almost without saying. Our comrades in Paris provided us with the theses and resolutions of these Congresses (though even then, of course, in French and not in English), thanks to a tremendous effort of publication - at which the French anarcho-syndicalists, in their time, chose to sneer, for what was worth learning from the First Four Congresses?

There were, of course, other tendencies besides the Trotskyists who were competing for the leadership of the Left in the Labour Party. We knew that we had to try to express our ideas in the form of concrete proposals, that we would not win if we preached abstractly our maximum programme and our criticisms of reformism and Stalinism. Only those who have tried it - a minority of those who today venture to pronounce on such matters - know how much more easily this is said than done. We wanted to attract workers into struggle, on the basis of demands which would lead them beyond the minimum programme of the reformists and their Stalinist collaborators, towards the maximum programme, the seizure of power.

Trotsky had already outlined such programmes to our French and Belgian comrades. The concept of 'transitional demands' was partly understood by some of the British Trotskyists, though we did not know the actual term for describing such programmes until 1938, when, of course, we could grasp it better from the programme of the Founding Conference. In any case, being in the Labour Party meant campaigning round such demands - or it meant nothing.

The stakes in this work are tremendous, as our enemies well know, and they seek today every means to destroy it, as they did in the 1930's. For either the developing left-ward tendencies in the working-class must be won by Marxists, or their efforts will be aborted, at inestimable cost to the entire working class. Trotsky had already explained the mechanics of the process, in June 1933:

('The Left Socialist Organisations and Our Tasks'):

'At the present time the Social-Democracy everywhere is experiencing an acute crisis. In a number of countries more/or less important left wings have already separated themselves from the Social-Democratic Parties. This process flows from the whole situation... The independent socialist organisations and the left-oppositionist factions within the Social-Democracy are either avowed centrist organisations or they contain within their ranks strong centrist tendencies or survivals.'

We may venture now to set out what can be learned from the work of those who seriously tried, in the 1930's and the 1950's, to operate in the spirit of the Collins interview, the Geneva Resolution and the letters of the International Secretariat.

We resisted the illusion, then, in 1936, as we resist it today, that we can build the revolutionary party by the untimely announcement of an organisationally 'independent' group outside the Labour Party. To have done so in 1936 would have been to have fallen into the sectarianism of James and to have cut off the chances of passing on from propaganda to campaigning on transitional demands. We recognised, equally, from Groves' adaptation to the centrists in the Socialist League, like that of the 'Militant' today, that being in the Labour Party is not enough by itself. We rejected in 1936, as we reject today, any suggestion of an indefinitely prolonged peaceful co-existence with the reformist leaders and their reactionary supporters. We intended then, as we intend today, to present ourselves to our fellow-members of the Labour Party, not for a few days or weeks as a raiding party, but for such a period as at the very least to enable us to go through experiences of struggle with them. We were, and are, to present ourselves as if we were *testing their belief* that the Labour can be reformed, can be won over as a Party to the policies needed to abolish capitalism. We claimed then, as is claimed today, the right of all

left-wing workers to be in the Labour Party on this basis.

A consequence of the Marxist attitude to the Labour Party, of course, is that Marxists give critical support to Labour candidates against capitalist candidates at elections. In general, they oppose frivolous candidatures which split the Labour vote and foster sectarian attitudes to the main struggle, which in the historic period has been, as still is to be, carried on from within the Labour Party.

There could, evidently, never exist any possibility of successfully dictating to these workers, of ramming a programme down their throats or issuing ultimata to them. The duty of Marxists is, rather, to place themselves so that the workers can test out the programmes offered by the various contenders for their leadership, to give us the opportunity of convincing workers that ours is the only effective way.

There could be no other aim than to separate the leftward moving workers from the reformist leadership, and, no less important in its proper proportion, from the Stalinist and left-reformist alternatives which would offer themselves and find a basis as the gulf widened between the performance of the reformists and the aspirations of the workers. There could not be, and cannot be, any 'capitulation' to reformism here. In every generation, those who permit themselves to advise others on matters about which they know nothing, parrot the silly cry that 'entry' means 'capitulation'. As the philosopher said: 'Where ignorance is, silence is best!'

Trotsky forestalled, with immeasurably greater richness, what is useful in this objection. 'But does not entry into the SFIO imply the danger of opportunist adaptation or of degeneration? Undoubtedly. Yet it would be naive to think that one can escape this danger through self-isolation'. ('The League faced with a Turn', July 1934).

How the 'Entrists' Defend themselves.

Even when we were still organising our 'entry' into the Labour Party, we were beginning to get our minds clear about leaving it. If we worked correctly, presenting our general ideas in a form and a simple language consistent with our transitional demands, the time would come when an important movement of workers would consciously reject reformism, and would recognise that it could no longer fight for its aims within the constraints imposed by the Labour Party bureaucracy. It would recognise that it needed a new base from which to carry on revolutionary propaganda and agitation, to wage the class-struggle against the bourgeoisie. In short, the vanguard and the bureaucracy could no longer stay in the same party.

We already knew something about what would happen. The ILP had already broken away from the Labour Party in 1932, and the German SAP from the Social Democratic Party the previous year, repeating the experience of the Independent Socialists in 1917. These movements had been led by Centrists, who responded to the pressure of the advanced workers without understanding what they were doing. Therefore the Maxtons and Brockways in Britain, like Seydewitz and Rosefeld in Germany, not only failed to exploit the predicament of the Right Wing, but opened their movement to penetration by Stalinist agents who were to lead their members to disillusionment.

Either the left must be led by Trotskyists or it would be aborted, and in a particular way especially. For any break-away from Social-Democracy always contains

elements both of left-opportunism and of sectarianism. In the ILP these combined to foster in the party the futile ambition of building a Parliamentary group in competition with the Labour Party. Only the Trotskyists, basing themselves on the lessons of the First Four Congresses, can, on the day following the break of the Left from the reformist apparatus, identify itself anew with the struggles of the masses by offering a United Front to the Right Wing rump round which, we may be sure, the less-aroused workers will still cling to their traditional reformist leaders.

The best variant for the 'entrists' would be for them to be able to lead the organisational break when the left movement in the Labour Party had matured for it, seizing it at its height and not delaying while the militants became disappointed with lack of progress. Obviously, therefore, no one had any notion of staying with the Labour Party up to the seizure of power! But, in addition we have also to consider that neither the Right Wing, nor their jackals, the Stalinists, will stand by indefinitely and watch us building our forces on the basis of transitional demands. While, therefore, we educate the Left in the necessity for the break, we also educate it in protecting its position and that of the militants against provocations and premature expulsion.

Capitulators Right and Left

We shall come under fire in the Labour Party. We have to be prepared to repel the attackers. Those who are caught by surprise can re-act in two opposite ways, both of which would destroy their work. Some may capitulate, abandoning the opportunity to put forward their ideas in order to retain the empty formality of being in the Labour Party. They will, of course, cover their capitulation by reciting the sophisticated formulations about being 'in' the mass movement. The present-day 'deep entrists' may well be both the hand which strikes the blow and the source of the formula. Others will re-act by letting the bureaucracy drive them out *without a fight*. They will prematurely find reasons to declare that 'the Labour Party is already sufficiently exposed', because it is exposed to them! How delighted Reg. Underhill must have been to see the Left wing of the Young Socialists march out of the Labour Party in 1964, running away from the fight against the apparatus! Like Healy, others will rationalise dodging the fight with 'left' opportunistic phrases about 'independence', abandoning the leftward moving workers, abandoning their own perspective.

These expectations were confirmed, if ever anyone's were, by the experience of Healy's Club's 'entry' through the 1950's. The Labour Party very nearly did come to a split in 1955. Bevan's expulsion was lost on the NEC by only one vote! *Positively*, the perspective was confirmed by the building of our factions, under every conceivable kind of cover, Socialist Fellowship, the Tribune people, and so on, engaging in a long running fight to win the centre from the Right Wing of Attles and Gaitskell; and *negatively* in two ways, first because we had to resist opportunistic tendencies to liquidate us into the Bevan movement, and later, when we were fools enough to expose our positions in the Labour Party under fire from the Right Wing in 1959, to follow the inspiration of Brian Behan and let ourselves be driven out.

Yet the memory still lingered into 1960. Not only was 'Keep Left' winning leadership in the Labour Party Young Socialists, but 'Labour Review' (June-July 1960) could say, in its editorial article on 'The Labour Party Crisis', these heartening words: 'The second annual conference of the Socialist Labour League decisively rejected the sectarian conception that this was the period to launch an independent revolutionary party of the working class. We firmly believe that the time is coming when such a party will have to be launched. But it is important to understand that we are not yet at that stage. The Socialist Labour League will continue to encourage all those who want to challenge Gaitskell and the threatened split from the Right to turn their attention to work inside the Labour Party and trade union movement for a socialist policy, that will unite all those who stand for colonial independence, those who struggle to end the manufacture of the H-Bomb and those who want to extend nationalisation to all the basic industries in Britain. Now is the supreme testing time for all British Marxists'.

We have had a recent example in Britain of the way in which Marxists can combine their propaganda (for propaganda has to be done, and theoretical work kept going, amid all the campaigning activities) in its intervention in the campaign in the Labour Party for a 'No!' vote in the referendum on the EEC. They based this on international arguments, and used the campaign as a spring-board for a struggle in the Party for action against rising unemployment, a campaign from which the 'abstentionists' cut themselves off. (What do they think they are doing in the Labour Party, anyway?)

The workers have seen the Marxists in the Labour Party defending it against the attacks of the Tories and the Fascists outside and the bosses' reformist agents within. Yet, we have to repeat, the Marxists' position is that they are within the Second International to work for the Fourth. They cannot approach workers, except individuals and then with care, openly in their own political identity. They must not give the reformists an easy organisational pretext for driving them out. Experience points to several forms of self-protection.

The first is a resolute struggle to deepend and develop the entry work, so as to expose the Left sectarians by a combination of theoretical arguments with practical experiences. Many profess themselves disillusioned with the Labour Party. Marxists do not let them dodge the fight, or content themselves with gestures, however costly, exacting or consolatory such gestures may be: Either they must join the fight inside the Labour Party, or they must work outside, if they cannot get in, in such a way as contributes to building the Left in the Labour Party and does not compromise it. The bogus 'entrists' who prattle of putting 'raiding parties' into the Labour Party or of making 'Labour Party work' a side-show, will then show themselves up as shame-faced sectarians. Their next stage will be to enter the Labour Party in the tail of a drift of left-ward moving workers there, and to confuse the situation inside, because their political basis for being there is wrong.

PART VI: The Transitional Programme and the Left-Reformists: Suggestions to Dogmatists and Abstentionists

Let us be still more specific. The 'Labour Left' is not new, but we can discuss it in today's context. Benn stands

in the workers' eyes, for the policies for which they voted last October and for the expectations which they formed then.

The Tories, the City and the bourgeois press are howling at him, echoed by their jackals in the Labour Right Wing. This is nothing new. He has for years been the target for abuse from that reputable weekly, *The Economist*. These people want to isolate him, and to drive Wilson and his followers into the arms of 'public opinion' and the Jenkins-Prentice caucus. Under pressure even from the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, behind which stand the ranks of the 'Tribune' M.P.s, Wilson has pushed Benn forward to test the ground. Benn's policies, crazily distorted in the press, involve, as well as lading out public money by the bucket-full to savrage 'lame ducks', some interference with the right of the capitalist to do what suits him best with his property. Indeed, Benn suggests interfering not merely a civil service level, but at factory level, with the capitalists. Marxists would not dispute that his policies are futile and diversionary; reliance on them will, *in the long run*, serve only the bourgeoisie. But today (May-June 1975), the bourgeoisie and their allies do not want Benn and his policies. Why not? Is it all a masquerade on their part, to kid the workers into backing what will do them no good? Nonsense: the bourgeoisie have far less nebulous reasons for hating and fearing Benn. In the first place, they use the arguments of 'waste and inefficiency' to discredit the ingenious new forms of public or co-operative ownership with which he hopes to polish up the tarnished image of the industries nationalised in the 1940's. Publicly-owned industry is too great a prize. Their mouths water for it, and their hands stretch out to plunder it. But that is not all. They realise that Benn's proposals feed the workers' distrust of them. These reforms would cost them trouble and expense, which they do not want to pay. They do not want full employment or a combative working class. They are against anything that will rouse the workers. They may have to go along with Benn, not as they went along with the 1940's nationalisations, which the City welcomed, but grinding their teeth, defeated by the workers' strength.

For such the same reasons the workers regard Benn as 'our man'. They take his policies as a whole and not piecemeal. He is against the Common Market because he wants to use state power to protect jobs, as they see things, and that is O.K. by them. They know perfectly well the obvious reasons why the employers are against this kind of thing. The advanced workers, at any rate, sense that Benn's plans can be used as a spring-board for further inroads into the rights of capitalist private property. The prospect whets their appetites.

They see Benn as their elder brothers saw Bevan in 1953, and their fathers saw Cripps in 1935, as a rallying-point for the Left, and a shield. A sound instinct for what has to be done next makes them rally round Benn, while they are talking and thinking about defending jobs and, clipping the bosses' wings, about public ownership and workers' control.

The Defence of Benn

There are those who, mis-led by sectarians, even go round saying, 'Benn is now being brought on the scene to confuse the working-class, to try to convince us there is an answer to the crisis within capitalism'. To workers, this poor chap is just one of those clever people of

whom you need take no notice because he can't tell you what to do next.

The Marxists make a positive contribution in the discussion about how to defend Benn. They are off on the right foot. They understand what the defence of Benn means to the workers. They put themselves on the right foot by the way in which they opposed the Common Market. They are not paralysed with sectarianism. Why are we concerned with defending Benn? Because defending Benn means defending the fight for jobs. Let us then tackle the fight for jobs, along the lines that Benn's speeches open up. Let us, perhaps, take Benn's ideas further than he has. Could not the shop-stewards' committees really set about opening the books? Why should there be any sackings at all? If the owners want to close a factory, what stops Benn's department from buying up cheap, in the name of the working-class, what is no longer of value to the capitalists? What stops his department, in collaboration with the workers' movements, from developing a national economic plan for re-directing production, over-riding individual capitalist interests?

By independent campaigning, not waiting for Benn, but showing positive sympathy for the struggle for jobs and what it leads to, Marxists can mount a great practical test of the 'Parliamentary Road'. Under cover of Benn's rhetoric, this work goes ahead. Benn is opening the road to something bigger than he is. Starting from the workers' awareness that a defeat for Benn is a defeat for them, we can help them, not only to understand, *but to forestall a betrayal.*

Marxists are in a position to know something about people like Benn and the plans - if we are willing to learn. Trotsky wrote in March 1935, on 'The Belgian Dispute and the De Man Plan' against the Belgian Vereecken. (a giant beside the Bendas and Gales of today). 'in what consists the deception of the plan (of De Man)? In the fact that the leadership of the Belgian Labour Party, de Man included, does not wish to lead the masses into struggle, and without struggle this plan, inadequate as it is, is completely unrealisable. Then, when we say to the masses that to realise this imperfect plan it is necessary to struggle to the end, we are far from covering up the deception; on the contrary, we are helping the masses to expose it by their own experience... What is our task? To help the workers to turn the wheels into which the opportunist leaders have been forced to thrust their hands'. And Trotsky goes on to describe the way in which the Bolsheviks in 1917 'supported' the agrarian programme of the Social-Revolutionaries.

The plan of the 'Socialist' de Man and the plan of the 'corporatist' Mussolini were not the same thing. The difference lay in the not unimportant thing that de Man's plan opened possibilities of struggle. He was adjusting himself to the power of the undefeated working class and its organisations. Mussolini could operate on behalf of the capitalists just because the workers, thanks to the sectarianism of their leaders, had gone down to defeat and their organisations had been smashed up by force and the entire proletariat subordinated to the State.

Marxists have had repeated experiences of trying to work on these lines in the Labour Party, usually with opportunists or sectarians jogging their elbows. The need is imperative for an open, public platform *within* the Labour Party from which to present these ideas. By means of such an open, Left organisation, the Marxists can co-operate with workers who want to put forward

such immediate aims; they can strike roots into the working class, can readily assert the independence of their programme and can combine propaganda with campaigns for their transitional demands - and all without any of the vulgar shouting in and out of season about the 'independence of the party'.

A genuine party cannot, of course, be conjured at will out of the ground. Only the objective movement of the class struggle and great new experiences can make possible the creation of a real party. Meanwhile, the foundations have to be laid for it. The Socialist League promised to serve Marxism in this way, but it was derailed by the collaboration between the Left-Reformist Cripps, the Centrist Brockway and the Stalinist-social-patriot Pollitt in 1937 - and by the inexperience and mistakes of the Trotskyists. When they murdered it in 1937, they struck a conscious blow at Marxism. The Marxists then tried to construct the Socialist-Left Federation, which never got off the ground because Groves, in collaboration with centrists, intrigued to keep the 'Militant Group' out. Then in the autumn of 1937 the 'Militant Group' laid the foundations of the 'Militant Labour League'. The Left was by that time already in retreat: the Militant Labour League salvaged a little of the wreckage of the Socialist League and the Socialist Left Federation but, in the face of growing pessimism and war-danger, was able to establish only a very limited basis.

Healy and Banda should not have forgotten (though poor Slaughter never could learn) how the Socialist Fellowship served the same important purpose, in the late forties and early fifties. It helped to check the retreat from Socialism by the Right Wing. It exposed the chauvinism of the Communist Party's attitude to German re-armament. It prepared the ground for the rise of the Bevan movement. The living struggles of the Labour Movement are reflected in its paper, 'Socialist Outlook', until recently long-buried in the archives. No wonder, for it is a living example of the problems of struggling for the narrow knife-edge of Bolshevism, between opportunism, especially in a Stalinist cloak, and sectarianism. From its work rose later struggles, such as gave rise to Mary Archer's intervention at the 1955 Labour Party Conference, that dragged Aneurin Bevan out of his lair and made him speak up for the Left, of Vivienne Mendleson's never-to-be-forgotten motion for nuclear disarmament in 1957. Nor shall we let it be forgotten that many of the dissidents from the Communist Party in 1957 were won to Marxism, not merely thanks to the superior theoretical level of Trotsky's writings and our understanding of them, but because we were so placed in the Labour movement that we could help them to rehabilitate themselves morally by taking part in practical struggle.

Marxists have also fought successfully, under the discipline of the Bolshevik-Leninist group, to hold positions in the apparatus of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. Sometimes they have been able to maintain their positions and to extend the influence of Marxist ideas, for fairly long periods, usually under sustained fire from the reformists and the Stalinists. Before the war the 'Militant Group' maintained a 'principled' opposition to its members accepting nomination as candidates for election as Labour candidates to Parliament or Councils, on the ground that they would have in public support the Labour Party's pre-war policies. However, they helped Groves to get nominated as a Parliamentary candidate, and he put up a good show in the by-election at Ayles-

bury in 1938, with the Stalinists working for the Liberal candidate to get votes against him and against the Labour Party.

These experiences of the Marxists in the Labour Party prove that, down the years, a great struggle has been waged against reliance on purely 'propagandist' activities. In this struggle some of the greatest damage has been done by sectarians who thought they were Trotskyists. For the advance from the 'propagandism' of a small group does not at all mean that we renounce propaganda. If it meant that, why does Healy's publishing house reprint Trotsky - and produce practically nothing else?

In the second section of this article, we shall apply the Marxist analysis of the Labour Party to other immediate problems. We promise to deal, as they deserve, with those who genuflect before Trotsky's ideas of 'entrism', while they try at the same time to 'build' their little,

'independent' outfits. We shall, in other words, expose bogus pretences at 'entrism', giving our readers a closer look than has hitherto been possible at Healy's 'reconstruction' of the history of the SLL.

The same analysis will enable us also to dispose, without hysteria or complacency, of the defeatist notion that 'corporatism' or 'impending military coups' are to be regarded seriously as immediate dangers. We shall show that such untimely prognoses - assuming that anyone takes any notice of them - spread a demoralising pessimism, and obstruct the real work of studying the real conditions in which the undefeated working class will move into struggle, a struggle in which their determination to defend the trade unions and Labour Party, their historic organisations, will without the slightest doubt provide a central theme.

Our columns will be open to discussion on problems of the class struggle and the editorial Board would welcome readers letters on the contents of our journal.

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Black marshalls the evidence that Nazism arose from deep in German history, but that it was not just a German aberration. The big bourgeoisie elsewhere also can be seduced by an analogous movement, arising from the national peculiarities of other countries. The defeat was not, as the Stalinists argued, a good thing 'because it dispelled democratic illusions, and exposed the reformists'. It enabled the bourgeoisie to choose their time and place, in the Second World War, to settle their differences at the cost of millions of workers' lives. The German Social-Democracy was not a corporatist conspiracy against the working-class. It represented a large section

of that class, all the larger thanks to the previous mistakes of the Stalinists. The KPD could not mobilise the Social-Democratic workers, starting with common defence and leading on to a Workers' Government, because Stalin's course was set for an alliance with the 'Easterners' among the German bourgeoisie, including a section of the Nazis, anticipating in this way the 'Popular Front', but with nationalists instead of 'democrats'.

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