

# Marxist Bulletin

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# editorial

Serious problems of orientation and tempo confront Marxists involved in the Labour movement. Only the politically blind, or those who willfully deceive themselves, continue today as if the strike movement that defeated Heath and continued under the first year of Labour rule, were still in the ascendent.

A sober and as accurate as possible assessment of the relations between the classes on an international, as well as national, scale is the pre-requisite for the development of tactics and policies that will enable the working class to carry forward the struggle from the positions it conquered with the defeat of the Heath government, and the return of Labour committed to repealing all the reactionary legislation implemented by the Tories.

It is well worth while re-capitulating the extent and setting of this victory, certainly one of the most substantial inflicted by the British working class on its enemies since the war. Ultra-leftists and sectarians who today can see only defeat and treachery in the Labour Government forget that it contains and expresses a contradiction. Bought into being by the forward movement of the British and International working class, yet being led by reformists who have set themselves the task of administrating the capitalist state, it has since its first days of office found itself caught between the crossfire of the two main classes. It is a capitalist government staffed by the leaders of a reformist, workers party with deep organisational and historical roots in the proletariat. If only for this reason, the course that the Wilson government has followed, and will follow in the future, is not a simple, mechanical, reflex of the desires and policies of either British big business or international finance. We refuse to engage in the demagogic name-calling of the WRP or the British Communist Party, which both refer to the Labour government as being nothing but a "tool" of the international bankers (nor should we overlook the alacrity with which the National Front has taken up the same slogan!). The logical end-product of this non-Marxist method is to deduce that since the Labour government is just a passive tool in the hands of big business, it will carry out historical tasks that in other periods and countries have been exclusively entrusted to fascist parties and regimes. And this very conclusion is indeed contained in the WRP theory of 'corporatism'. To this day, the WRP leadership has failed to explain how its theory of 'corporatism' differs from Stalin's theory of 'social fascism'. And we can understand, if not excuse, this shamefaced silence when a prominent leader such as M. Banda denounces the Labour government as 'a conspiracy of the most reactionary kind, hell-bent on smashing the basic democratic rights of the working class'. (Workers Press, Nov. 17, 1975) 'Most reactionary Kind?' 'Smashing the basic democratic rights'? But only a fascist government or party would fit such a bill. Does Banda really believe that the Labour government is 'hell-bent' on closing down parliament, taking away the right to vote, to be in a trade union, to freedom of speech, press and assembly? If he does, then we can fully understand why the WRP has, for the last six months, been expending most of its energies on trying to 'force Labour to resign'. This at least is consistent with the WRP theory of 'corporatism', even though it goes entirely against all the traditions and principles of our movement. The Bulletin group declare

that it is unconditionally for the defence of this and all future Labour governments for so long as the only alternative to such a government is one based on either or both of the two capitalist parties. No amount of radical hysterics from the Bandas or the Redgraves will deflect us from this duty to defend every gain of the working class, however minimal or conditional.

Unconditional defence of the Labour government in no sense either involves or implies defence of or support for any of its policies. On the contrary, in being in the forefront of its defence against the Tories and their allies, Marxists in the Labour Party earn the right to be the most forceful of its critics. Those Marxists who as Labour Party members campaigned with the vanguard of the class for the electoral defeat of the Tories in February 1974, and for the return of a majority Labour government in October the same year, have won for themselves the respect of Labour workers and members. They are now in a strong moral as well as political position to attack the government for its retreat from its election pledges, and to criticise the Left for its failure to stand on the ground of the Manifesto over such questions as the £6 limit and unemployment.

We are learning the bitter, harsh, difficult lesson that the SLL-WRP never taught us — we must take reality as it is, and not dress it up as we would like it to be. For the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference gave evidence of more than the treacherous, counter-revolutionary role of the reformist bureaucracy and its Stalinist agencies. The overwhelming acceptance, with one or two exceptions, of government policy, also indicated that the mass of the working class is far from having tested out to the end its illusions in the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions. This estimation will enrage the leftists. They will accuse us of sustaining illusions in social democracy, simply because we say that the working class still has them. They will also accuse us of 'lacking confidence in the working class' simply because we indicate the length of road we still have to travel. Anticipating these loudmouths, who kill the reformists everyday with their vocal chords, we ask them a simple question — how do you explain the election results in the AUEW?

Only someone who believes that the working class is soft putty in the hands of the news media — or a party apparatus — can advance the excuse that the crushing defeat of the two Left candidates by the Right was the result of Tory press campaigning. Tory newspapers have intervened before in trade union elections, and the Left candidate has still won easily (Scanlon defeated Boyd in similar circumstances to become AUEW President back in 1967).

Here indeed is a problem for Marxists to think about. The AUEW was to the fore both in the struggle against Tory anti-union legislation, and against the Labour government's pay policy. Yet in this very union, the Right is on the offensive. For how long will it last, and how deep-going is the turn amongst the rank and file, we cannot at this juncture say. But to deny that this rightwards turn exists, as for example does the Communist Party, is to deny the reality of the class struggle itself. Are we, following the schematic methods of the Leftists (and it should be noted the Stalinists) to ignore the minuses and count only the pluses? Yet what weight should Marxists give to the massive 'Yes' vote in the EEC referendum, where Labour voters split evenly between the pro's and anti's? How should

we assess the vote in the NUM to endorse the government's pay policy, carried even if by a slim majority, in traditionally militant regions such as South Yorkshire?

We must say quite frankly that these problems are not even recognised, let alone seriously discussed, by some of the groups claiming adherence to Trotskyism. This runs entirely counter to the traditions of the Marxist movement, especially the Communist International in its Leninist period, and the Fourth International in the life-time of Trotsky. Their political orientation proceeded from facts, from reality, and not from supra-historical schemas and subjective desires. That is why, without for one instant adapting to this prevailing mood of hesitation in the working class (a mood re-enforced by the continued rise of unemployment, and the fears of a possible Tory come-back), it is necessary to take it into account in advancing demands to answer the basic needs of the working class. Economic problems demand political solutions at the level of government, and it is here that the attention of the working class should be focused. The threat of unemployment must be countered by trade union and plant organisations insisting on a sliding scale of hours with no loss of earnings. The Labour Party, from local up to national and government level, must be committed to support this demand, if necessary with legislation. For those 1.2 million workers already unemployed, the demand must be a vast public works programme, drawn up and carried out under the control of the trade unions and shop-floor organisations. The aim of such a public works programme should be a dual one — firstly, the provision of work at full trade union rates and under normal trade union working conditions; and secondly, the rapid expansion of all those public services (transport, health, education, etc) now under attack.

The other main economic problem facing the working class — the defence and improvement of its living standards — can only be met through the sliding scale of wages. Each rise in the cost of living must be countered with a comparable rise in the money wages of workers. Yet this demand, so elementary in its conception and operation, conflicts head on not only with official TUC and Labour policy, but with the basic material needs of British capitalism. Starved of investment funds (running at under 18% of the gross domestic product, the British investment rate is less than half of Japan's, and is the lowest of all the advanced capitalist countries) and still bedevilled by acute problems of backward equipment and low capitalisation (each worker in the Japanese car industry works with six times as much capital investment as his counterpart at Leyland) the British employing class find themselves in an impasse. They are saddled with a government brought to power as a direct result of the class defeat inflicted by the miners on Heath. That defeat disrupted many of the strategic plans of the ruling class, a setback for which Heath has since paid the supreme penalty. But is Thatcher the answer? Many, not only in the Tory leadership, but also in the business world, doubt it, to say the least. The Tory conference produced the expected orgy of 'grass roots' Tory union-baiting, but we can easily recall similar ecstatic reactions to Heath's unearthing of 'Selsdon Man' in the run-up to his election triumph of 1970. Then there followed the celebrated 'U turns' — Rolls Royce, UCS, his incomes policy, and finally, his ignominious retreat before the miners (at the moment when the WRP was predicting a Tory putsch!)

These bitter experiences have not been lost on the shrewder political commentators, nor, we can be certain, on those whom they advise. Banda may see in the Labour government the force that will crush the working class, but we cannot detect in even the Thatcher leadership the political resources for such a feat.

We find that this underlying forward movement of the class is, at this stage in Britain, refracted politically through the molecular evolution of a potentially power-

ful left current inside the Labour Party, from the base to the top. Its most developed expression has undoubtedly been the defeat inflicted on Prentice by his own Newham North East Labour Party, a blow against both the bureaucracy and the capitalist interests it represents within the workers' movement. As in the case of the House of Lords issue, to which use will return later, profound political questions are raised by the removal of Prentice. Right-wing Labour and ruling class commentators alike see clearly the threat to the institutions of the capitalist state implicit in the ousting of Prentice. The issue is no less than one of a choice between the right of re-call, of a Labour MP representing and carrying out the mandate given to him by the workers of his constituency, or of Labour MP's in the tradition of classic constitutional theory and practice, allegedly representing all the constituents, irrespective of political affiliation and class.

Why the panic over Prentice? Because every serious attempt by the working class to regain control over its basic organisations, to make them serve as weapons in the class struggle, inevitably exposes and subjects to strain the threads that tie the apparatus to the ruling class and its state. Is Prentice answerable to the Cabinet, to the Prime Minister, in the last analysis to the capitalist state (it is the Queen, as its head, who appoints its Ministers); or do Labour Ministers derive their mandate from the organisations of the class that elected them? It is not only a question of internal Labour Party democracy, vital though that is. The long-standing controversy over the sovereignty of the Labour Party Conference, the relationship between the cabinet and the PLP, and the PLP and the NEC, is about the most basic of all questions — who holds the real power?

For the last half century, the British capitalist class has buttressed its rule through its central and local state institutions by securing — at a price — the intimate collaboration of the Labour Party and Trade Union bureaucracy. Unquestioning loyalty to all the organs of the state, and the conventions associated with them, has been the condition of this collaboration imposed (with little resistance) upon the bureaucracy by the bourgeoisie. Classic capitalist rule in Britain, through the medium of parliamentary democracy, depends entirely on the continued functioning of this unholy alliance. Newham threatens it. Hence the sudden interest in the activities of alleged 'Marxists' and 'Trotskyists' inside the Labour Party, and in anyone else who does not identify these practices as 'Democracy'.

And here we stumble across another, equally unholy, alliance, only this time between the sectarians, who oppose entry into the Labour Party, and the right wing headed by Jenkins, who from a different standpoint, is just as determined to keep Marxists out of the traditional party of the working class.

At the pro-Prentice rally in Newham, Jenkins held up the WRP as an example 'extremists' in the Labour Party should follow. Once Marxists stop trying to challenge us from the outside, like the WRP, he pointed out, and come inside, their previously futile activity becomes a deadly threat.

How did the WRP reply to Jenkins? By denying that the WRP worked in any way inside the Labour Party (Jenkins never said it did — on the contrary, the WRP was singled out by him as model for the 'entrists' to emulate!) and by calling on Labour Party members to join the WRP — in other words, to oblige Prentice, Jenkins and Wilson by quitting the fight.

Could there be a better instance of ultra-right wing opportunism begetting its sectarian mirror opposite, and in turn, being protected by it? Neither have Prentice and Jenkins neglected the gift presented to them by the WRP's divisive and fatuous Parliamentary contests against them in Birmingham and Newham. The derisory votes given to the WRP candidates in these seats exposed the Left inside the Labour Party not only to ridicule, but to the unanswerable

charge that their alleged co-thinkers in the WRP wanted to defeat the candidates of the Labour Party. In Newham, those fighting to oust Prentice found themselves battle not only against the Tories in February and October 1974, but also against the election machine of the WRP. Yet this has not prevented Workers' Press making its ludicrous claim that the WRP in general, and Vanessa Redgrave in particular, gave the death blow to Prentice.

'Entry' is now a topic of discussion not only in the traditional circles linked to Trotskyism, but on the NEC of the Labour Party, in the serious capitalist press, and, we can be sure, in more cloistered quarters. The ruling class and its bureaucratic agencies in the workers' movement rightly fear the entry of genuine Marxists into the Labour Party, for it is there that the main political battles of the class are being, and will be, fought out.

That is why Marxist Bulletin gives such prominence to this aspect of Trotskyist strategy and tactics discarded by the sectarians of the WRP, and perverted by the 'deep entrists'. The situation in the Labour Party cries out for Marxists who are willing to apply the immense theoretical, capital and practical experience our movement has accumulated internationally on this question.

Taking the broad view, both nationally and internationally, the working class in Britain still has the strategic initiative. Only in this setting can we properly understand the reasons behind the blocking tactics of the House of Lords. Deprived of a majority in the Commons, a majority which it lost as a result of the defeat of February 1974, the ruling class has invoked its natural majority in the Lords to either amend or delete those aspects of Labour's legislation which, to however small or distorted a degree, reflect the pressure and aspirations of the workers. Unhinged Leftists like Banda, who begin from the false premise that the Labour government is 'hell-bent on smashing the basic democratic rights of the working class', are totally at a loss to explain how this same government is being hamstrung by that most undemocratic of institutions, the House of Lords. And what is the response of the WRP to this violation of the basic democratic rights of Labour workers, who now see an unelected chamber blocking measures for which they voted? We quote verbatim from Workers Press of Nov. 17, 1975:

'This is not a case of rushing to the aid of the Labour government. Quite the reverse. The campaign to demand the resignation of the Labour government must be advanced more urgently than ever'.

We will run the risk of being accused of 'rushing to the aid of the Labour government' by declaring that we support, unconditionally, each and every move the Labour Party and government takes towards the abolition of the House of Lords. We welcome the motion tabled by a group of Tribune MP's calling for this measure, just as we do the statement by the TUC General Council that it would consider using industrial action to counter the blocking activities of the Lords. We shall not let those undertakings be forgotten. Unlike the WRP, we do not think that the answer to every problem of the working class resides in the resignation of the Labour government, whose (corporatist) leaders would then be called upon to fight the resulting general election on the policies of the WRP. Not more elections. But the development of a programme of transitional demands bridging today's conditions and consciousness on the one side, and the full programme of the socialist revolution on the other, remains the task of Marxists. The abolition of the House of Lords is just such a demand. It raises the question of the capitalist state in a clear, concrete and direct way, and puts the issue bluntly before the Labour Leaders: "in order to carry out the mandate on which you were elected, you must challenge the organised power of ruling class, a power which in the case of the Lords, stands above the elected institutions of bourgeois rule.

Act as consistent democrats, and abolish the House of Lords! "But that means challenging the powers and privileges of the Monarchy itself", they will answer. Of course! And here we arrive at the core of the difference between a genuine workers' government, a government breaking from the bourgeois state, and one headed by a reformist workers' party that seeks to work within the framework of the institutions of the capitalist state and capitalist property. The House of Lords is no 'anachronism', as its radical critics and would-be reformers assert. To a remarkable degree, it centralises all the forces of the ruling class and the bourgeois state itself—landowners, bankers, industrialists, heads of the armed forces, the Law Courts, the Church — and when the occasion demands, does not flinch from using them when it cannot impose its will on the 'lower house'. The political history of Britain since the extension of the franchise from the propertied classes is filled with examples of the Lords taking the law literally into their own hands. And on each occasion that it has done so, the action has precipitated a full scale political and social, as well as constitutional crisis. It may well be that we are on the threshold of another.

But even if the present tensions between the Labour government and the Lords were to abate, and a temporary adjustment made, the basic problem remains unresolved for both the working class and the employers. Each class is being driven by objective forces to seek its own governmental solution to its historic problems, and for this reason, the question of the state is certain to recur with increasing force and regularity.

More and more workers may well begin to see that when the House of Lords vetoes legislation which extends the right to picket, which strengthens the trade unions in the newspaper industry, which however modestly, seeks to extend public ownership of land and industry (measures essential for the preservation and creation of jobs), this anti-democratic institution is acting as an obstacle to the advancement of the most pressing economic demands of the working class, and that it must therefore be swept away. Now is the time to prepare the political groundwork for such an awakening, both in the trade unions, and the Labour Party, where Tribune and Labour Weekly have already begun to agitate in a cautious way on the question.

That the working class will respond powerfully, even spontaneously, to democratic issues of this nature has been recently demonstrated in Australia, where the entire workers' movement fought back against the removal of the Labour government by the Governor General (carried out with the collusion of not only the Australian 'upper chamber', the Senate, but the British Monarchy). The upsurge in defence of the Labour government in Australia, where it ran into essentially the same obstacle that the Lords have erected against its counterpart in Britain, is a crushing refutation of the Leftists, who scorn democratic demands and call upon workers to 'force Labour to resign'.

Our view is that Marxists should see to it, so far as their forces allow, that each and every economic demand of the working class is focused on the single target of the capitalist state, not as an abstraction, but in its living embodiment. Thus the slogans of the hour should be:

—Resist unemployment—for a sliding scale of hours with no loss of pay; for a public works programme for those already unemployed.—Defend real wages—for a sliding scale of wages based on a trade union approved cost of living index, —for a single chamber, with the right to recall MP's who break their mandate —abolish the House of Lords and the Monarchy.

Marxist Bulletin advances these demands, not as an ultimatum, nor as a panacea, but for discussion, and where agreement is reached, as a basis for joint action inside the organisations of the working class. Our columns are open to any individual or tendency that wishes to begin the debate.

# editorial on SPAIN

IT IS thirty-six years since Franco completed the defeat of the Spanish Republic and along with it the butchery of hundreds of thousands of the Spanish people. The defeat of the Spanish Revolution of 1931-1939 marked the defeat of the last in a whole chain of upsurges of the proletarian revolution on a world scale. That defeat saw the whole of world imperialism take a stand against the Spanish masses, whether through the open intervention on the side of Francoism by Hitler and Mussolini, or through the 'non-intervention' of the 'democratic' imperialisms. In this defeat, the international apparatus of Stalinism played its counter-revolutionary role, by tying the Spanish masses to bourgeois interests through the mechanism of the Popular Front and the employment of the murder-gangs of the GPU against the cream of the Spanish proletariat. The Spanish proletariat represented the last obstacle in the march of imperialism towards world war. At the same time, it represented for the working class the last opportunity to roll back a series of defeats and to pass once more onto the offensive. Thus the struggle in Spain was an international event of great importance, concentrating all the problems of the world proletarian revolution. The defeat in Spain was a historic setback for the workers of Spain and of the whole world.

Today, after thirty-six years, Spain becomes again the focus of all the main problems of the proletariat revolution. Once more all the reactionary forces of imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy turn their attention to Spain.

It is not simply the death of one man, Franco, that causes consternation in their ranks. Underneath lies their panic and fear at the decay of the apparatus of Fascist rule, and its growing inadequacy as a means of preventing the striving of the Spanish masses to take their place in the international march forward of the working class. The working class itself has grown in strength, now constituting more than half the Spanish people. The struggle of the oppressed national minorities, especially the Basques, which takes the form not merely of heroic acts of individual terrorists, but is a deep movement involving masses, can less and less be dealt with even using the most savage repression.

The imperialists and the Kremlin fear what is going to happen in Spain. The example of Portugal exists to demonstrate the consequences of failure to transform the regime in to one which corresponds more directly to the needs of the bourgeoisie.

The macabre efforts to prolong Franco's life were a desperate attempt to gain time and prevent the crisis of the bourgeoisie breaking out into the open, by preparing to transfer the role of figurehead to the monarchy. Juan Carlos' role is to fill the breach. As an individual he does

not wield power but represents the continuation of Francoism pending a solution to the crisis of the bourgeoisie.

The scramble of all the capitalist governments and the bureaucracies to send condolences on the death of Franco and to send representatives to Juan Carlos' swearing in, including the Labour Government's own, demonstrates their awareness that the crisis of the Spanish bourgeoisie, intensified by the death of Franco threatens to create an opening through which the Spanish proletariat may surge. As such, the crisis of the Spanish bourgeoisie deepens the European revolutionary crisis and adds fuel to the linked crisis of imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

## Transition to Democracy?

Bourgeois commentators present the Spanish events as a possible prelude to a 'return to democracy' under the 'liberalising' influence of the King. Stalinism, ever-eager to prostrate itself, prepares for this by participation in Spain in an alliance with former Fascists under the guise of preparing a peaceful 'transition to democracy'. However, any such concessions which may be made by the Spanish bourgeoisie will be only partial and temporary. Crumbling fascism needs to lean on the crutch of the popular-frontist politics of the Stalinists in Spain for one thing and one thing only — to prepare a new defeat of the masses.

In the 1930's the Spanish bourgeoisie was forced to rely for a period on the popular front. Yet its only final defence lay in the crushing of the masses and the imposition of fascism. Spanish capitalism could not then afford the luxury of bourgeois democracy, due to its own inherent weakness. The following extracts from the book 'The Spanish Revolution 1931-1939' by Trotsky illustrate the basis of this historical weakness:

"Spain is unmistakably among the most backward countries of Europe. But its backwardness has a singular character, invested by the great historic past of the country. While the Russia of the czars always lagged far behind its western neighbours and advanced slowly under their pressure, Spain knew periods of great bloom, of superiority over the rest of Europe and of domination over South America. The mighty development of domestic and world commerce increasingly overcame the effect of the feudal dismemberment of the provinces and the particularism of the national regions of the country. The growth of the power and importance of the Spanish monarchy in those centuries was inextricably bound up with the centralizing role of mercantile capital and with the gradual formation of the 'Spanish nation'."

"Spain's retarded economic development inevitably weakened the centralist tendencies inherent in capitalism.

The decline of the commercial and industrial life in the cities and of the economic ties between them inevitably led to the lessening of the dependence of individual provinces upon each other. This is the chief reason why bourgeois Spain has not succeeded to this day in eliminating the centrifugal tendencies of its historic provinces. The meagerness of the national resources and the feeling of restlessness all over the country could not help but foster separatist tendencies. Particularism appears in Spain with unusual force, especially compared with neighbouring France, where the Great Revolution finally established the bourgeois nation, united and indivisible, over the old feudal provinces.

While not permitting the formation of a new bourgeois society, the economic stagnation also corroded the old ruling classes. The proud nobleman often cloaked their haughtiness in rags. The church plundered the peasantry, but from time to time it was plundered by the monarchy, who, as Marx said, had more in common with Asiatic despotism than with European absolutism."

"The monarchy was doubly necessary to the disunited and decentralised ruling classes, which were incapable of governing the country in their own name. And this monarchy, reflecting the weakness of the whole state, was between two upheavals - strong enough to impose its will on the country. In short, the state system in Spain can be called 'degenerated absolutism', limited by periodic military coups."

"Now even less than in the nineteenth century can the Spanish bourgeoisie lay claim to that historic role which the British and French bourgeoisies once played. Appearing too late, dependant on foreign capital, the big industrial bourgeoisie of Spain, which has dug like a leech into the body of the people, is incapable of coming forward as the leader of the 'nation' against the old estates, even for a brief period. The magnates of Spanish industry face the people hostilely, forming a most reactionary bloc of bankers, industrialists, large landowners, the monarchy, and its generals and officials, all devouring each other in internal antagonisms. It is sufficient to state that the most important supporters of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera were the Catalan manufacturers."

The Spanish bourgeoisie has been incapable of carrying through its historical tasks, it still is "at the tail-end of Europe". The Spanish state is unable today to overcome the "centrifugal tendencies" which are expressed by the demands of the national minorities.

For Spain therefore, a stable bourgeois-democratic regime can never pass from the dreams of bourgeois liberals into the realm of reality.

### **The political programme of the Spanish proletariat.**

The question is posed to the Spanish masses; how to begin the struggle to dismember Francoism and open up the way towards a workers' and farmers' government. Of prime importance in this beginning will be the fight to establish democratic liberties: freedom of speech, assembly, information and the freedom to strike. The demand for a sovereign Constituent Assembly and the struggle for a republic are not 'bourgeois', in the sense that the bourgeoisie dare not accede to them for they touch at the foundations of the state. On these questions, Trotsky might have been writing today:

"By advancing democratic slogans, the proletariat is not in any way suggesting that Spain is heading toward a bourgeois revolution. Only barren pendants full of pat, ready-made formulas could pose the question this way. Spain has left the stage of bourgeois revolution far behind.

If the revolution crisis is transformed into a revolution, it will inevitably pass beyond bourgeois limits, and in the event of victory the power will have to come into the hands of the proletariat. But in this epoch, the proletariat can lead the revolution - that is, group the broadest masses of

the workers and the oppressed around itself and become their leader - only on the condition that it now unreservedly puts forth all the democratic demands, in conjunction with its own class demands.

First of all, these slogans will be of decisive importance for the peasantry. The peasantry cannot give the proletariat its confidence a priori by accepting the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a verbal pledge. The peasantry, being a large oppressed class, at a certain stage inevitably sees in the democratic slogan the possibility for the oppressed to overthrow the oppressors. The peasantry will inevitably link the slogan of political democracy with the slogan of the radical redistribution of the land. The proletariat will openly support both demands. At the proper time, the communists will explain to the proletarian vanguard the road by which these demands can be achieved, thus sowing the seeds for the future soviet system.

Even on the national questions, the proletariat defends the democratic slogans to the hilt, declaring that it is ready to support by revolutionary means the right of different nation groups to self determination, even to the point of separation.

But does the proletarian vanguard itself raise the slogan of the secession of Catalonia? If it is the will of the majority, yes; but how can this will be expressed? Obviously, by means of a free plebiscite, or an assembly of Catalan representatives, or by the parties that are clearly supported by the Catalan masses, or even by a Catalan national revolt. Again we see, let us note in passing, what reactionary pedantry it would be for the proletariat to renounce democratic slogans. Meanwhile, as long as the national minority has not expressed its will, the proletariat itself will not adopt the slogan of separation, but it pledges openly, in advance, its complete and sincere support to this slogan in the event that it should express the will of Catalonia."

"The Bolshevik point of view, clearly expressed only by the young section of the Fourth International, takes the theory of permanent revolution as its starting point, namely, that even purely democratic problems, like the liquidation of semi-feudal land ownership, cannot be solved without the conquest of power by the proletariat; but this in turn places the socialist revolution on the agenda. Moreover, during the very first stages of the revolution, the Spanish workers themselves posed in practice not merely democratic problems but also purely socialist ones. The demand not to transgress the bounds of bourgeois democracy signifies in practice not a defence of the democratic revolution but a repudiation of it. Only through an overturn in agrarian relations could the peasantry, the great mass of the population, have been transformed into a powerful bulwark against fascism."

### **The struggle for a Boycott.**

The Spanish situation poses to the working class in other countries the question of an economic and political boycott of Spanish trade and the Spanish regime so long as our comrades are denied the basic democratic liberties which workers in Britain take for granted.

What this means concretely is that we must fight in the trade unions and the Labour Party to break all diplomatic links with the Spanish government and Crown. British Labour must block all trade, all cargoes to and from Spain. The whole movement must be roused against propping up the Spanish tourist industries, run on sweated labour. This is not a moral question. It is a question of the British working class coming to the assistance of the Spanish by striking blows at the Franco state as long as it remains. In doing so British workers will help prepare the next stage of the European proletarian revolution. It is not a moral gesture. That is why calls such as that from Jack Jones for a limited boycott must not be seen as enough. The slogan must be permanent boycott until the fall of the Francoist regime.

# First Annual Conference of the Bulletin Group

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## A REPORT

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The international significance of the Portuguese Revolution, the role of democratic demands in the proletarian revolution, and the concretisation of entry into the Labour Party through the development and application of an Action Programme, were the three central problems under discussion at the first Annual Conference of the Bulletin Group, held in London in October, 1975.

Both in the international report which opened the conference, and in the discussion which followed it, the impact of the Portuguese Revolution on those tendencies claiming adherence to Trotskyism emerged as the main theme. No organisation taking the name of the Fourth International has been able to avoid declaring its positions on the main issues of the revolution in Portugal, not only because of the intrinsic importance of the struggle in that country, but by virtue of Portugal's being the laboratory for the proletarian revolution throughout Europe, East as well as West. Programmes, policies, tactics, strategy, principles and leaderships are being put to the test with a severity and tempo not experienced since the split in the Fourth International arising out of the Pablo crisis in 1950-53. Then, as now, as speakers pointed out, the issue was the nature of Stalinism, its role in the international class struggle, and the consequent policies, based on such an estimation, that Trotskyists should adopt towards it. The essence of Pablo's line was this, that forces other than the proletariat would achieve its emancipation. Initially, Pablo ascribed this role to the Kremlin apparatus and its parties in the capitalist countries. They would, under the impact of a third world war, and the need to defend the USSR, project a revolutionary orientation' and go so far to the Left in countries such as Italy and France, where there were mass Stalinist parties, as to actually take power, establishing deformed workers' states that might preserve their bureaucratic features for 'centuries'. Speakers pointed out

that Pablo's revision of the Transitional Programme, which places at its centre the revolutionary role of the working class and the necessity of resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership (both were implicitly challenged by Pablo's line) passed through several stages. In fact the 'pre-history' of Pabloism, the period between 1944 and 1948, was a period when the entire international leadership, as well as the section cadres, hewed to what proved to be in retrospect a Leftist-inclined orientation, a perspective which tended in varying degrees to minimise the attempt of the workers in each country to impose their own demands onto their existing leaderships and to struggle for their own government through traditional mass organisations.

Sectarian mistakes, leading to isolation of the International, was the inevitable result of this policy. When the correction was made, new, opportunist errors were nourished, which when combined with the sudden Left turn of the Kremlin after 1947, created the fertile soil for Pablo's subsequent capitulation to Stalinism.

Since the split of 1953, Pabloism has passed through several distinct stages of further degeneration, a process of decay climaxed by its capitulation to the AFM in Portugal. How had this last step been reached, one which ascribes to the officer caste of an imperialist army a key role in establishing Soviets and mobilising the masses in the struggle for power?

The conclusion drawn from the international discussion was this, that at each stage in the evolution of Pabloism, there had emerged more and more clearly the notion of the 'new vanguard', of non-proletarian strata, leaderships and classes which could replace parties of the Fourth International based on the Transitional Programme, rooted deep in the proletarian and employing the methods of proletarian class struggle. First, it was the Kremlin outlining its 'revolutionary orientation'; then, with the rise of

Khrushchev, it was the 'liberal' wing of the Stalinist apparatus that was to carry out the political revolution in small doses without the direct intervention of the masses in their own name.

In the colonial and semi-colonial world, new leaderships based on the Castro model would suffice to carry through to the end the struggle against imperialist domination, establishing new workers' states.

Then, in the wake of the May-June 1968 general strike in France, and the student radicalised in many other countries, Mandel enthroned students and the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia as the saviours of the proletariat. This adaption to the radicalised middle class necessarily involved an acceptance of non-proletarian methods of struggle - urban terrorism, minority violence, 'exemplary actions' and the like. Now the stage was being set for the last chapter - the entry of the bloodstained mercenaries of a barbaric colonial war, whom the Mandel faction in the United Secretariat cast in the role he and Pablo once allotted to the Kremlin. Today in Portugal, the butchers of Angola are to accomplish that which proved beyond the powers of Stalin, Thorez and Ulbricht.

### Popularise Ultimately

This attempt to evaluate the precise stage reached in the break-up of Pabloism was one of the components of a discussion on the role of democratic slogans and demands, not only in Portugal, where they assumed prime importance as a result of forty years of fascist oppression, but in countries where either broad democratic liberals exist, or capitalism has been overthrown. It is now the fashion in leftist circles to deride bourgeois democracy, particularly in those countries where its roots are deepest and where, therefore, such tendencies exist as a result of the democratic gains of the working class.

In adopting this pseudo-revolutionary attitude towards democracy, the Pabloites and other leftists are rendering an invaluable service to Stalinism, which as in Portugal, is hell-bent on undermining those freedoms and democratic gains which the proletariat needs to further develop its struggle for its own government. Thus the synchronised campaign of the AFM, the Stalinists and their Leftist shadows against the Constituent Assembly (though each element in the bloc puts forward its own spurious alternatives to the mutually despised democratic verdict of the Portuguese people).

Democratic demands however are also at the centre of the political revolution against the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies - against state censorship, the right to strike, freedom of assembly, of speech, of conscience, of cultural expression. Here there is no dividing line between the struggle of the masses in Portugal, where the demand is for the workers' parties to form a government on the mandate given to them in the election of last April; the political revolution in the states dominated by the Stalinist bureaucracy, Germany, where the linked process of the social revolution in the West, and the political revolution in the East fuses around the demand for German unification; and Britain, where the institutions of the Monarchy are being employed to frustrate the demands the working class has placed on its own leaders in the last two elections.

The report and discussion on the Perspectives Resolution gravitated around precisely the same problems. The combination of economic and political demands, integrated into an Action Programme around which the working class can fight through its traditional organisations, is in fact the only way Marxists working inside the Labour Party can establish firm links with the advanced workers, and through them, with the movement of the class as a whole. Conference therefore decided that the most pressing task facing the Bulletin Group was the concretisation of the Transitional Programme in a form that draws together

all the main tasks facing the working class in the fight for a workers government and provides the basis for Trotskyists to popularise transitional demands in relation to the areas of struggle in which we are able to intervene. Thus we can begin to make the Transitional Programme a growing element in the process of political development taking place in the working class.

In its struggle to defend itself against the ravages of the present economic crisis. But the economic crisis, precisely because of its depth, demands political solutions. Hence the pressing need to raise by a variety of means, the necessity of destroying the capitalist state, of the need for the workers to establish their own governmental power.

Historically determined forms which are specific to the capitalist state in Britain are monarchy and its associated institutions - House of Lords, Privy Council etc - each of which stands above the classic form of bourgeois rule, the House of Commons. Pressed closer and closer to the wall by its own social crisis, the capitalist class in Britain is forced to resort to methods which increasingly collide with the norms of bourgeois democracy. Thus the House of Lords veto on a series of Labour Government measures that in easier times it would have allowed to pass without more than a token challenge. Even in Britain, the oldest capitalist nation, democratic demands will play an important part in mobilising the working class for the destruction of bourgeois order.

Another element in the discussion on British Perspectives was the evolution and differentiation of the Left within the Labour Party, dramatised by the Jones-Mikardo clash at the Labour Party Conference. The incoming Executive Committee was instructed by Conference to work out a policy of intervention inside the growing Left current in the Labour Party associated in different ways with the Tribune newspaper, in line with the Bulletin Group's positions on the entry tactics and the perspective of an inevitable eventual split from the Labour Party apparatus, a perspective which has nothing in common with the 'raiding' operations conducted by the various leftist groups.

Conference devoted its final session to a discussion on the Bulletin Group's relationship with the Workers Revolutionary Party (formerly Socialist Labour League). It was agreed that despite all the deformations of its internal regime, and the continued retreat of its central leadership from the application of the Transitional Programme in the traditional organisations of the working class, the WRP remains a Trotskyist organisation. The present leadership's orientation towards the radicalised petty-bourgeoisie, its abdication of the struggle to re-build the Fourth International, certainly places a question mark over the future of the WRP, but the Bulletin Group does not regard its degeneration as a completed process. We continue to fight for the conquests embodied in the WRP. Conference also agreed that the Bulletin Group would enter unconditionally into a bloc with any tendency or group within the WRP that opposed, from the standpoint of the characterisation of Stalinism contained in the Transitional Programme, the pro-Stalinist tendency personified by M. Banda. Here, just as in the case of the United Secretariat, the crisis of the WRP and its International Committee revolves around the question of Stalinism. All the issues that remained unresolved by the split of 1953 re-emerge today, impelled by the upsurge of the proletariat not only in Portugal, but throughout Europe. This upsurge is creating the material conditions for resuming those political tasks which proved insurmountable over the last two decades, not so much because of the failings of individuals, but as a result of objective problems in the development of the international workers' movement.

The First Annual Conference of the Bulletin group was a modest, but in our estimation indispensable, contribution towards this process of international clarification of the tasks facing Trotskyists throughout the world today.



# Introduction by Marxist Bulletin

AS A SERVICE to our readers, and as a contribution to the developing international debate on issues raised by the Portugese Revolution, we publish the following article by Jacques Meyrand, translated from the September 1975 number of LA VERITE; theoretical organ of the OCI.

In this introduction it is intended to raise a discussion of some of the political problems posed by the new situation in Portugal, where, in the second week in September a new government took office containing members of the Portugese Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and the Popular Democrats, under the title of a 'government of National Unity'. This new government, under the premiership of Jose Pinheiro de Azevedo (who replaced Stalinist-backed Vasco Goncalves after an internal struggle within the Armed Forces Movement at the end of August and in the first week of September) is the sixth coalition government to be formed since the outbreak of the Portugese revolution in April 1974.

In comparison to the government of Goncalves, the sixth coalition includes members of the SP and PPD. Not only is there change in the composition of the government, but the political themes it declares as its aims,— 'national unity', 'the restoration of order' in the country and the army, social 'responsibility', stand in apparent contrast to those of its predecessors. Previously the emphasis of official government policy has been cloaked in phraseology about 'advancing the revolutionary process', 'the advance to socialism', developing the theme that it was somehow a government of struggle against capitalism. But not only the tone and form of language has changed. We see today, as the largest of the political parties represented in the coalition government, the Portugese Socialist Party, which was previously denounced by the ruling circles of the MFA, the CP, and the leftists as the 'spearhead of reaction'.

## The Background.

The elements of the present situation in Portugal were prepared and can be seen developing in the whole preceding period of the revolution. In this period which lasted from the time immediately before the elections in April 1975, we can see the main feature of a movement of the masses, focused through the Socialist Party, centred around the question of democratic freedoms. The AFM imposed Stalinist control over the trade union movement through the Intersyndical, the attack of the freedom of the press of the Socialist Party involved in the 'Republica' affair, and the denial of democracy imposed by the AFM in refusing to recognise the results of the Constituent Assembly elections were the basis of a mass response of the Portugese working people in July, who demonstrated in scores of thousands under the banners of the SP. In the unions the candidates of the SP in alliance with the Maoist MRPP swept back the positions bureaucratically appropriated by the Stalinists with the blessings of the MFA. This movement which posed the question of respect for the wishes of the Portugese working people, as expressed in the elections, under the slogan 'socialist government', inevitably pushed into the centre of the political stage the

question of blocking the attempts of the military officer caste to stabilise the political situation and maintain its efforts to rebuild the bourgeois state?

In this process, Mario Soares and the leadership of the SP were able to appear as opponents of the reactionary forces. On the other hand, the PCP and its leftist allies (who were later to take the name of 'Revolutionary United Front'), acted as a transmission belt for the plans of the MFA, aimed at checking the movement of the masses. The Stalinists engaged in a full-scale series of adventurist policies, creating provocations against the masses who followed the SP. This policy entailed denouncing the main workers' party in Portugal as the main force and inspirer of reaction. The policy of the PCP throughout the summer months has been to deepen the divisions inside the working class, and to deepen the divisions between the working class and sections of the rural poor. All the while, the PCP has upheld the divine right of the military caste, represented by the MFA, to retain governmental power in its own hands. Today, division and disorganisation of the exploited masses in Portugal is the essential condition for the reorganisation of the forces of counter-revolution, a strategy which centres on gaining time to mend the ailing and broken state machine. In the strategy of the military rulers, the first consideration has always and everywhere been to attempt to block mass mobilisations. It fears the workers organisations 'moving independently of its guardianship'. For as was shown clearly last summer, such mass mobilisation inevitably tend to escape the control of the official leaders and overstep the political bounds within which they seek to contain them. The military caste needs to prevent the mobilisation of the masses because it inevitably raises the question of a government which will be answerable to those masses.

We can characterise the period opening with the elections to the Constituent Assembly, as one in which the Portugese Stalinist apparatus has played the chief role as an agency of division amongst the masses and as the main prop of the plans of the MFA. Through this period, the MFA has attempted to make moves to erode democratic freedoms, including denial of the legitimacy of the election results. It has tried to establish a bonapartist base for itself through schemes for 'people's assemblies' not responsible to the mass 'organisations', but on the contrary, opposed to them and responsible only to the military officer caste.

Yet the movement of the masses has not been checked by these attempts. Instead the plans of the Stalinists and the MFA have been unable to come to fruition. The mass opposition has deepened within the working class and also amongst the rural poor. The 'anti-Communist' offensive which erupted in the North of the country in particular, and which saw a wave of burnings of the offices of the CP and its allies, had as its main component, not organised reaction, but on the contrary was an expression of the extremely deep frustration felt against the Stalinists for their outright support of bourgeois order, whose main guardian is the MFA itself. At the same time the mass mobilisations have thrown the tactics of the MFA into crisis.

## A New Stage

This crisis came to a head late August and early Sep-

tember. The majority tendency of the MFA decided that the Stalinists idol Vasco Goncalves would have to go. The CP then found itself completely isolated as even its allies in the FUR refused to defend the record of Goncalves as Premier or to fight against his deposition. Without changing its aims or nature the bonapartist MFA had to make a turn to take into account its continued inability to make the masses accept its appropriation of total power in flagrant disregard of their expressed wishes. This turn of the MFA found a welcome with both the mass workers parties. With the CP because it took the pressure off them and gave a major role to the SP in the struggle against the masses. With the SP, because their presence in the government would temporarily defuse the mobilisations of the masses, which it had used, but which threatened, with the raising of the slogan of a Socialist Party government, to go beyond the limits of the kind of blackmail they could use to advance their position within the established order and raise instead the question of a workers government. The MFA was also threatened by the growing democratisation and self-organisation of the soldiers, and could not oppose this purely with its own prestige and that of the CP.

The MFA therefore decided to appoint a "Government of National Unity". The new government, the Sixth since the MFA's coup was announced on the 13th September. It included 4 members of the SP, 2 of the PPD and 1 of the CP, but it was not presented as a coalition government, since the members of it were not supposed to represent their parties, but to be individuals invited by the MFA to take posts. This government therefore represents an attempt by the MFA to appear to concede to the desire of the masses for a government reflecting the vote in the Constituent Assembly, while at the same time retaining control in their hands. The parties are happy with this situation at least in the short term because it means they can claim credit for carrying out the desires of the masses while they are also free to outbid the MFA, to the left or right, when the situation stabilises, without being compromised as organisations by the actions of the government.

The predominate role played in the government by the SP ministers places upon the shoulders of the SP apparatus the major responsibility for the containment of the masses, since the PPD and CP ministers refuse to take responsibility for each others actions. The CP makes noises about refusing to talk with the PPD and attempts to pass off their acceptance of the PPD ministers as a concession to the SP. Both the MFA and the SP are glad to have the PPD in the government because they in turn can, if necessary, present their counter-revolutionary actions as concessions to it. The PPD itself need have no fear of participation since the limitation of the governments programme to its own, strengthens its hold over the backward layers to whom the CP and SP will be incapable of showing an alternative way forward.

What then have been the actions of this government? The sending of troops on 29th September to occupy radio stations in Lisbon, to impose support for its policies and to ensure the broadcasting of a statement by Azevedo calling for the restoration of 'order' in the army and in society as a whole. The decision announced on 26th September to form a new 'Military Intervention Force' to be used in a repressive role in the restoration of bourgeois order. Attempts to break-up the most politically developed units of the army, typified by the disbandment of the main transport regiment in Oporto on 3rd October. These are signs that the purpose of the sixth coalition government, like the five preceding ones, is the quelling of the revolutionary movement in favour of defence of the bourgeois order. Whilst it represents the fact that the plans for defence of capitalism have received a check, and that the military hierarchy has to resort to a new base from which to begin over again, the formation of the new government is in no way a gain for the masses, but on the contrary poses new dangers.

## Has the strategy of the SP changed?

Mario Soares has announced what the PS sees as the function of the government of national unity, and what he sees as the role of the SP in the coalition. To quote from his recent interview given to Labour Weekly, which we have no reason to believe is inaccurate, Soares declares: "We shall not make any alliance to get rid of the communists. And we will not make any alliance with the communists to get rid of the Popular Democrats either. If we cannot get an agreement to make the present coalition work, then we are prepared to remain in the government in association with the Armed Forces Movement". Soares is also reported in the same interview to have listed four main tasks for the government of national unity to tackle: "To guarantee the authority of the state; to maintain discipline at work; to create stability. And in Angola, we must do our best to prevent the development of civil war."

Soares here outlines in a very graphic way the immediate needs of Portuguese capitalism, not least in the reference to Angola, where it is attempting to find some neo-colonial solution which would enable continued exploitation of the Angolan people and at the same time establish the government's pro-imperialist credentials with the West, through exploiting the divisions between the various national movements. So the SP of Soares is today unashamedly proclaiming itself as the main prop of the sixth coalition government.

This policy does not represent a fundamental shift on the part of the SP, and is entirely consistent with its nature as a counter-revolutionary workers party. The fact that the movement of the masses in the preceding phase of the revolution channelled itself through the SP, and that the SP gave a certain framework to this movement, did not mean that its nature as a reformist apparatus was altered. Prior to the Constituent Assembly elections, the SP, through its adherence to the pact guaranteeing the dominant role of the MFA in Portuguese politics for a period of 3-5 years and its participation in bonapartist governments before and after the election, proffered its advances to the MFA and to the Portuguese Bourgeoisie. These advances were refused, the military preferring to lean on the Stalinist apparatus instead. The attack on Republica which was in line with the anti-democratic and therefore anti-working class strategy of the MFA and the Stalinists led the SP leadership for its own reasons to defend its position. The SP, in defending its democratic liberties, and withdrawing from the bourgeois coalition government, created an opening for the independent action of the masses. The slogans raised by the masses were not those of the SP leadership, which depends on the MFA, but rather were ones which raised the question of a break of the SP from the bourgeois state. Thus, the SP leadership had to place itself on guard against the mass movement.

However, whatever the personal aspirations of Mario Soares as a Saviour for Portugal and despite the SP's continued support to the MFA, the SP as a social-democratic formation found it necessary to take up through whatever means were open to it the struggle for the establishment of bourgeois democratic norms. The SP's campaign for bourgeois democracy was taken up by the masses without their accepting the limits on the struggle which the SP leaders would have liked to impose. For the masses it was a question of democracy in order to achieve a SP government that would fight for socialism, while the SP leadership wanted an opportunity to play their rightful role as upholders of bourgeois order.

To point to differences between the politics of the PSP and PCP tells us nothing about the basic nature of these organisations, although from the point of view of the openings which these differences give to the mobilisations of the workers, they are important. For the leftists and centrists of the RUF and UDP, FEC etc. the SP is a capitalist party placed on the same level as the PPD and the

CDS. For them, the other main counter-revolutionary workers party, the PCP, is superior. A Marxist analysis of these differences does not lead to the conclusion that one or the other is "better". These differences are due to the fact that these two reactionary apparatuses are linked to the bourgeoisie in different ways: The SP being a part of international social democracy which is dependent on the existence of national bourgeois democratic states, while the PCP as an instrument of the Kremlin bureaucracy, can in the interests of 'detents' present the anti-democratic policies of the MFA as the flowering of 'Peoples Power' and can openly say that Portugal is not ripe for bourgeois democracy.

Although the pursual of this policy by the PCP caused it to lose its position as the largest workers party in Portugal to the SP, the isolation into which it fell during the period leading up to the formation of the present government is not absolute or irreversible. Through their pretence of opposition to discussion with the PPD, except through the mediation of the SP, through its acceptance of the pretence that the Azavedo government is a government of individuals, the PCP retains an appearance of opposition. Also it has given limited backing to the mobilisations of the leftists, and keeps its puppet the MDP in the RUF. It cannot be excluded that the PCP may attempt to put itself forward as the spokesman for those elements of the masses who come into opposition to the government in order to try to contain such a development. Certainly the masses who fought during the summer for a Socialist Party government will now find themselves in conflict with the Soares leadership. However because of its nature as a monolithic Stalinist apparatus the scope for the masses to use the PCP as a framework for their mobilisation is more restricted than was the case with the SP.

The Stalinists and the MFA have found willing though unwitting helpers in their attacks on the unity and independence of the working class in the various leftist groups. Although many of these groups are now being forced to re-examine their positions on the SP and MFA, the damage is already done: these groupings and the sections of workers they lead have been drawn into self-isolation through their connivance in the attacks on the masses who tried to use the SP. The MFA, supported by the reformist leaders and the PPD will now turn against these groups and the pseudo-sovietic organisations which they previously encouraged the leftists to set up.

Similarly the development of the 'Soldiers United Will Win' movement and the self-organisation of the soldiers generally in a break with the MFA is an extremely important and necessary development, but the interventions of the leftist groups will lead toward a situation where the soldiers advance alone and are drawn into a sectarian attitude towards the masses who still follow Soares and Cunha, opening them to defeat. Without attempting to link up with the masses in united action to force the SP and CP to break with the MFA, the soldiers committees will simply appear as the armed wing of the leftist's Popular Assemblies counterposing themselves to the bourgeois state machine not as part of the movement of the working class against the state but outside and against that movement.

The opposition of the leftist groups to the Constituent Assembly and to the formation of a SP/CP government their trailing after the MFA has meant that they have been and continue to be an obstacle to the achievement of the tasks of the working class. Even if their Popular Assemblies had not been fatally linked to the MFA, their attempts to 'build' soviets through their own intervention, irrespective of the existing consciousness of the broad masses, in opposition to the realisation of the workers united front and attempting to bypass a whole stage of popularisation of and struggle for democratic and transitional demands were doomed to failure.

The movement towards Soviets is bound up with the

process of the testing by the masses of their existing organisations and of the limits of bourgeois democracy. Workers' democracy can only prove its value when the masses have found through their struggles that bourgeois democracy is incapable of meeting their needs, and cannot provide the framework for a genuine workers government. To give up the call for a government responsible to the workers, who elected their representatives through free elections, who hold back the very process through which the workers come to a break with the apparatuses. To fight against the establishment of a government which received its mandate through the first democratic elections in Portugal for fifty years is to give arguments to the bourgeoisie and its servants and to confirm the prejudices and suspicions which it is the task of revolutionaries to dispel.

Soviets can only be built by the masses through their own struggles and experiences, as organs which contain all the tendencies of the working class, and within which workers' democracy implies acceptance of united action on the basis of decisions taken. The existence of the Popular Assemblies which are dominated by the leftists and echo their attacks on 'Social Fascism' and the Constituent Assembly actually works against the consolidation of the factory and tenants committees, since it alienates the SP and CP masses and gives arguments to the apparatuses against any extension of soviet forms.

In calling for the dissolution of Constituent Assembly on behalf of which the party leaders have already abdicated all power, passing their mandate over to the MFA, the leftists play directly into the hands of the apparatuses and the MFA. A transition from the rule of the unelected MFA-'individuals' government to the rule of a government elected through universal suffrage and forced on the bourgeoisie against their will by the masses, contrary to the assertions of the leftists, would not be a step backwards to the consolidation of bourgeois democracy, but on the contrary would be a body blow to the strategy of the Portuguese bourgeoisie and their military representatives. In the same way as the election of the Popular Front government in Spain in 1936, such a development would open a new phase of the Portuguese revolution in which the masses would surge forward and extend their self-organisation, independence, strength and gains. The movement would face an open path to the establishment of a higher form of democracy in the framework of workers councils.

In order to maintain its position against the desire of the masses for a democratically elected government the MFA must lean on the support of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses within the workers movement, and has to ask them to explicitly disown the mandate they received from the masses. To give an appearance of conceding to the masses demands it has had to play a bonapartist role, drawing the apparatuses into various coalition cabinets through which it attempted and is attempting to attack the economic gains, the democratic freedoms and the independent organisations of the working class. It did this first under the cover of the campaign for 'Peoples Power' and now in the name of restoring stability. Despite the temporary disorientation produced by the entry of the SP into the government, there is no reason to suppose that the SP leadership will be any more successful in their attempts to gain acceptance for this course than was the CP previously. The aims of the MFA cannot be finally achieved except through direct confrontations with the working class, which however at the present time is still on the advance. Since the feud between the CP and SP has lost its immediate relevance by their joint entry into the sixth government, the attacks on the working class by the MFA over the coming period will rise in the sharpest way yet the question of their breaking jointly from the MFA and of the establishment of a workers and peasants government through their accepting their responsibilities as the majority in the Constituent Assembly.

# New defeat for the Counter- Revolution in Portugal

by Jacques Meyrand

Translated from LaVerite, No 568, September 1975.

THE PORTUGUESE Revolution concentrates at the present time all the problems of the proletarian revolution and, as was the case with the Russian Revolution in 1917, every political force is intervening in one way or another, having in effect directly or indirectly on the Portuguese events. The comparison with the Russian revolution is not an accidental one. In 1917 the October revolution opened the first act of the proletarian revolution in Europe and in the world. For or against the Russian revolution — this was a cleavage which corresponded to the fundamental antagonisms in every country.

It was a struggle on every plane; within Russia, political, military and economic intervention; abroad, a confrontation of the social and political forces. They locked in battle every organisation, party and government, of the revolution and of the counter-revolution. The Russian revolution in this way concentrated all the problems facing humanity. More than a prize, or a part of a world process, it was a motive force in the world class-struggle. Through its place in history as the first victorious proletarian revolution. It was the first in the chain of revolutions constituting the world proletarian revolution. Even today, the revolution and the counter-revolution in Russia play a considerable role in the world. This is due, as much to what remains of the conquests of October, the collective property in the means of production, the vast development of the productive forces and the power which the working-class has achieved, still latent as it is, as it is due to the bureaucratic reaction, which has shown itself in the U.S.S.R. and which express the penetration and degeneration of the worker's state, but which has not yet been able to liquidate the collective property in the means of production, through inflicting on them terrible and innumerable contradictions and distortions.

The Portuguese revolution has also erupted at a historical moment which gives it a European and world importance out of all proportion to the small size of the country and its population, or to the economic and political position which the country previously held. Breaking out unexpectedly after the General Strike of May-June 1968 in France, after the movement of the political revolution which began in Czechoslovakia, and the revolutionary explosion in Poland, to quote only the most salient events, the Portuguese revolution is the first link in the part of the chain of world revolution formed by the meshes of political revolution. In other words, the European revolution is in a new period: One of which, basing itself on its previous conquests, the proletariat will take political power in the capitalist countries and expropriate the bourgeoisie; in which it will re-conquer power in the U.S.S.R., will conquer it in Eastern Europe, drive out the parasite bureaucracies, and will control, while regenerating them, the social relations of production in those countries; in which it will unite Europe into the Socialist United States of Europe. The Portuguese revolution is the first in this sector of the world revolution; hence its European and world importance. Just like the Russian revolution, the Portuguese revolution is, we repeat, more than just a prize. Every political and social force is intervening, directly or indirectly. The political clashes taking place throughout the whole of Europe. At the present stage, the Portuguese revolution is more than a part of the world class struggle: it is a motive force in it.

## The Holy Alliance Against the Portuguese Revolution

It is for this reason that all the forces wedded to the defence of the bourgeois order have for sixteen months led a bitter offensive against the Portuguese revolution. The Portuguese bourgeoisie, world imperialism, each particular bourgeoisie in Europe and the U.S.A. are primarily concerned that the movement of the Portuguese proletariat be blocked, canalised and smashed, that the former conditions

of exploitation, which the masses want swept away, be restored. But they are not alone. The Kremlin bureaucracy and all the parasite bureaucracies do so no less. The Portuguese revolution, the first link of the new period of revolution in Europe, and the class struggles of the Portuguese proletariat, have repercussions throughout the whole of Europe. Like burning torches they threaten to explode as it were a powder keg, bourgeois Europe, which is riddled with contradictions and which the crisis of its social, economic and political relations threatens to break asunder. What is collapsing is the European order which American imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy have so laboriously erected. This very order conditions the existence of both the Kremlin bureaucracy and its satellites. . . unless the Portuguese revolution were to join up with a new rise of the political revolution in Eastern Europe. In any case, each new explosion will shake the international apparatus of the Kremlin in Europe. In these conditions, all the forces of international counter-revolution are coalescing and working both inside and outside Portugal against the Proletarian revolution unfolding there.

Imperialism and the Portuguese bourgeoisie are not enough to save the bourgeois order by their own strength alone. Since April 25, 1974, the Portuguese Communist Party has had to commit itself totally to containing the masses. Behind the screen of its politics, three coups d'état have been prepared. Following the defeat of these coups, an offensive by the reaction, under the form of a classic military coup d'état, has become impossible for the time being. The Portuguese Communist Party has moved into the front rank, playing one of the cards of the bourgeoisie, cards which are getting fewer and fewer. After the defeat of victory for the masses, the Portuguese Communist Party has to undertake to prepare a new counter-revolutionary offensive. The officer-corps is the backbone of a dislocated bourgeois state. But the army itself is decomposing under the fire of revolution: the class struggle is tearing it apart. The officer-corps is torn by contradictions. The ambitions of each of its cliques (made up of officers who yesterday were captains and today are generals), ambitions which are all the more avaricious because the bourgeoisie needs them, are a supplementary factor in the crisis. The stalinist apparatus is the most coherent and united force which implacably defends a policy of subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie is at the present moment, from the political point of view, what remains of the state apparatus, which is more precisely the officer-corps which the Armed Forces Movement resents. To consolidate the Armed Forces Movement, to subordinate the proletariat to it, to help it to reconstruct the bourgeois state, even with a military dictatorship covered with the mantle of 'revolution' — this has been the policy of the Portuguese Communist Party since March 11 and the elections of April 25, 1975 to the Constituent Assembly. It has been the spear-head of counter-revolution - in the name of the revolution needless to add.

The counter-revolutionary offensive, on such a line, has introduced new contradictions, for it could succeed only by smashing the Socialist Party, which the masses are pushing forward, and by smashing the masses themselves. In the event of defeat, the Socialist Party will be necessary tomorrow to those who will try to stabilise a certain social and political order.

The battle which has just taken place in Portugal, and which is not yet over, is the battle of every proletariat in Europe. It is our battle. It brings into the cruel light of day the position of each and everyone. While its fate is of great importance for the development of the revolution in Europe, it illuminates how the forces of revolution and counter-revolution will come into collision. The French proletariat is directly involved. It senses profoundly what is happening in Portugal as elements of its own class struggle. Its own problems are in issue.

## A DECISIVE BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE OF PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

In this colossal battle, in which what is at stake is which of the fundamental classes (the bourgeoisie, or the proletariat leading behind it all the toiling masses) is going to be the victor, all of the political forces, every current, every organisation and party in the Labour movement has taken its position.

Since the crushing defeat of the Portuguese bourgeoisie's third attempt at a coup d'état, since March 1975, with the same unanimity as before March 11 made them deny the existence of the proletarian revolution, every party of the bourgeoisie, along with all those of the proletariat, on a world scale, now recognise its reality. More than that, even the P.P.D., even the Armed Forces Movement — the political expression of the officer-corps of the bourgeois army — have since March 11 spoken in favour of a 'Socialist' future for the country. In the name of this 'Socialism', promised by the army, the leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party call on the masses to subordinate all their activity to the Armed Forces Movement. We shall see below the very concrete way in which they do this and with results. Every shade of centrism and of more or less decomposed leftism has given its clear support to the policy of the Portuguese Communist Party, i.e. to the Armed Forces Movement, against the movement of the masses. The constitution of a 'Front of Popular Unit' at the end of August, between the Portuguese Communist Party, the Pablo-ites of the L.C.I. and various other petty-bourgeois groupings, stipulates in point 4: 'The creation of a front encompassing the revolutionary parties and other revolutionary political organisations, revolutionary militants, the Armed Forces Movement, and the autonomous organs of people's power. (to which the guide-document of the Armed Forces Movement—people's alliance refers) constitutes a way forward for the revolutionary process' (The text of the unity agreement of August 25, published by Intercontinental Press for September 15, begins with these words: 'In the presence of representatives of the Armed Forces Movements, who simply convened the meeting. . . ' As to the 'guide-document' which constitutes the programme of this 'front', this is the corporatist plan adopted by the assembly of the Armed Forces Movement on July 9 last, which we analyse in this article).

What could be clearer? All the parties and organisations which say that they are 'Communists' and for the revolution, namely the F.S.P., the L.C.I., the L.U.A.R., the M.E.S., the M.D.P., the P.C.P. and the P.R.P. - B.R., say with one and the same voice: the fate of the revolution is not the business of the proletariat, it is the business of the Armed Forces Movement, i.e. of the army, of what remains of the bourgeois state after sixteen months of revolutionary turmoil.

Thus each has taken position. On one side the Stalinist apparatus, to which all the so-called 'revolutionaries' give their support, identify themselves entirely with the Armed Forces Movement. They propose 'a political solution to the crisis', the fundamental content of which is, as we shall analyse in detail below, to place the proletariat and its organisations under the political control of the Armed Forces Movement, and therefore of the army, around which the bourgeoisie intends to reconstruct its state machine, the bourgeois state.

On the other side, the working class is seeking an independent path. Since April 1974, the O.C.I. alone of all the working-class organisations has fought for the defence of the proletarian revolution in Portugal, for a policy opening up a way out for the proletariat. On the question which today is decisive, that of the class-independence of the worker's organisations, its trade unions and parties, only the Trotskyists of the Liaison Committee of Portuguese Revolutionary Militants are fighting in a clear manner. The

Socialist Party, on its side, does not accept the dictatorship of the Armed Forces Movement, nor the liquidation of democratic rights.

**Which side is the revolution?**

**Which is the counter-revolution?**

It was precisely in the last days of August that Spínola, the Portuguese candidate for the role of Pinochet, incessantly made declarations, which were taken up by the world press. He coldly diagnosed, on behalf of his class, the bourgeoisie, the situation created by sixteen months of proletarian revolution. 'Portugal', he said on August 28 in Rio De Janeiro, 'has no armed forces; rather there are armed bands, whose indiscipline is a faithful reflection of the anarchic situation of a country on the road to disintegration'.

Spínola has understood on the morrow of April 25 that Portugal was heading towards 'anarchy', that is, that the revolution was in the process of bringing down the bourgeois state. This is the man who was the inspiration of the counter-revolutionary determination of the Portuguese bourgeoisie on three occasions — on July 10, 1974 (Palma Carlos' attempted 'cold' coup d'état, which was smashed by a powerful demonstration of public service workers), September 28, 1974 (the defeat of the 'demonstration of the silent majority', which would have allowed order to be restored in the state machine) and the March 11, 1975. It is also quite significant that the 'captains' of the Armed Forces Movement, who for the most part today are generals, these superior officers whom the Portuguese Communist Party, followed by the L.C.I. present as 'liberators' who wish to introduce 'socialism' — it is significant that until September 28 at least all the leaders of the Armed Forces Movement accepted as their leader Spínola, the centre of the counter-revolution, the indispensable 'saviour' who had at all costs to be placed at the head of the imperilled state. Why did Spínola fail on three occasions? Precisely because the revolution is penetrating the army itself from top to bottom. Each failed attempt by the reaction only deepened the course of the revolution, leading to an even greater disorganisation of the state. The coup of March 11 marked a turning point in this organisation, it might be said, for the reason that the masses of the army, the soldiers, once again fraternised with the masses, and refused to follow the putschist officers. After March 11, the split was accentuated to such a point between the ranks, the lower officers and the Armed Forces Movement officer-corps that it became impossible for the Portuguese bourgeoisie to use its army for a classical coup d'état. This is the fundamental reality which explains why despite the political obstacles that it has met on its path no one has been able to stop the movement of the Portuguese proletariat. The revolution is still the stronger. It manages to sweep aside obstacles one after the other. This besides, is why all its enemies rally against it to try to halt its forward leap.

**The elections have opened a way forward for the Proletariat**

What was the object of the bourgeoisie after March 11? It was to prevent, as far as possible, the radicalisation of the situation from dislocating the apparatus of the army itself, that is, the officer-corps grouped in the Armed Forces Movement. (In this respect, we have to dispel a certain 'ambiguity', which the defenders of the Armed Forces Movement knowingly put about. Contrary to what the Stalinists and others claim, the Armed Forces Movement is not the 'democratic' or 'revolutionary' vanguard of the officer-corps. The Armed Forces Movement is the

political expression of the whole of the officer-corps of the Portuguese army, at the head of which stands Spínola's 'friend', Caetano's former chief of staff, General Costa Gomez. This explains why the so-called 'left' or 'socialist' upper echelons (as 'France Nouvelle' characterised Costa Gomes, for example, in November 1974) would not hesitate, if they had the wherewithal, to undertake a coup d'état in the name of the Armed Forces Movement. If the revolution were to ebb, it would be from within the Armed Forces Movement that the 'saviours' of bourgeois Portugal would emerge).

In addition, the coup of March 11 can be explained by the fear which Spínola and the leaders of the military hierarchy felt that the elections would give a majority to the workers' parties, as the Financial Times' explained. Then, after the defeat of the putsch, it became impossible for the army to cancel the elections to the Constituent Assembly. And these elections did give a crushing majority to the workers' parties. Was the question of the government now to be resolved, since, as everyone claimed to be democrats, the passage of the reality of power into the hands of the Constituent Assembly would have conformed with the principles of democracy?

As we know, nothing of the kind happened. On the eve of the elections, the Armed Forces Movement, with the full support of the leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party, decreed that the Constituent Assembly would have limited powers. The result of the election would not in any case affect the composition of the government. The Armed Forces Movement had to go further. It decided to 'institutionalise' itself (by creating the council of Revolution to which, in theory, all power was developed), thus making a mockery, even before the elections, of the sovereignty of the people which it had been talking about since April 25, 1974. It insisted that the political parties of the working class sign a pact, by which the latter recognised the pre-eminence of the Armed Forces Movement at the head of the state, and which took away the sovereign powers of the Constituent Assembly.

Nevertheless, the whole of this structure rested, as it still does, on shifting ground. The events which succeeded the elections to the Constituent Assembly have amply demonstrated this.

But what we have to do now is to examine the relationship of the slogan of the sovereign Constituent Assembly to the developing proletarian revolution, and the significance in Portugal of the existence of such an Assembly, composed, in the majority, of deputies of the workers' parties.

At first sight, it might seem a paradox that, in an imperialist country like Portugal, where the socialist revolution has begun, the working class can use to its own advantage the bourgeois-democratic slogan of a Constituent Assembly. But the paradox is only superficial. In Portugal, and in Spain, the imperialist bourgeoisie, who have been in power for decades on the basis of having crushed the toiling masses, has shown itself historically incapable of realising certain tasks, which were carried out in past centuries in countries where (as in England or France) the bourgeoisie has been a revolutionary class, that is to say, tasks of a historically progressive character. Trotsky put the question in the following way in January 1931:

'To counterpose the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the problems and slogans of revolutionary democracy (for a republic, for an agrarian revolution, for the separation of Church and State, the confiscation of church properties, national self-determination, a revolutionary constituent assembly) would be the most sterile and miserable doctrinairism. Before the masses can seize power, they must unite around the leading proletarian party. The struggle for democratic representation in the Cortes, at one or another stage of the revolution, can im-

measurably facilitate the solution of this problem'.

(The reader will be interested to refer to the writings by Trotsky which are collected in 'The Spanish Revolution: (1931 - 1939)', Pathfinder Press, New York. This quotation comes from page 79. The quotation which follows comes from page 89 of the same collection.)

Agrarian revolution, confiscation of church property, the broadest democratic rights and liberties (including independence of workers' parties and trade unions in relation to the state): these are the democratic tasks for the realisation of which the people of Portugal are fighting implacably. Marxists know that, in the epoch of decadent imperialist bourgeoisie, and especially, the portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie, has no historic capacity, no energy of its own. The reason for this is simple. The exercise of the broadest democratic liberties, on the ruins of the Salazar-Caetano state, gives the industrial proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry the greatest opportunities to rally as a class and to impose their own solutions. Thus the concrete realisation of democratic slogans immediately opens up to the masses the road to exercising their own power. For agrarian reform to liberate the mass of the Portuguese peasantry, in the south as well as in the north, from the domination of the big landowners linked to finance-capital, it is necessary for the proletariat to take the leadership of the nation. It is because it can only rule in such countries by stifling the masses in the strait-jacket of the corporatist state that the Portuguese bourgeoisie is directly opposed to the complete resolution of democratic tasks, that it strives to hold back the autonomous organisation of the worker and peasant masses at every level.

The proletariat, in order to take power by leading the majority of the toiling population, in this way takes up as its own the slogans of political democracy which the bourgeoisie opposes, while it develops its own independent programme. In a letter to Andres Nin of February 1931 Trotsky refers to this question as follows:

... I think that you will hardly be able to cast aside the slogan of the revolutionary constituent Cortes. Peasants accounts for more than 70% of Spain's population. How will they understand the slogan 'workers' republic'? The socialists and the republicans, on the one hand, and the priests on the other, will tell the peasants that the workers want to wrap the peasants around their little fingers and to command them. What will you reply to this? I know of only one reply under the circumstances: we want the workers and the peasants to drive out the officials appointed from above and, in general, all their oppressors and their accomplices, and to express their own free will on the basis of universal suffrage. The peasants may be led to the workers' republic, that is, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the process of the struggle that will take place for the land, etc. But it is impossible to propose to the peasants a dictatorship of the proletariat as a priori formula'.

The 'constituent Cortes' was elected in Portugal on April 25, 1975. The masses opened up for themselves an independent road within the framework of the elections. They clearly declared themselves against one year of the Armed Forces Movement in power and against the coalition government, by refusing to abstain from voting (as advised by the Armed Forces Movement) and by giving a clear majority to the workers' parties, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Portugal.

Is it a coincidence that all the political forces which since March 11 have proclaimed themselves to be for 'socialism' and 'revolution' fight against the sovereignty of the Portuguese Constituent Assembly? For the exercise of this sovereignty would immediately mean: since the workers' parties have a majority, the government to be constituted must be that demanded by the will of the people, that is, a government of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Portugal under the leadership of Mario Soares, excluding any alliance with the parties of the bour-

geoisie and the Armed Forces Movement.

Whatever its policy, a government of workers' parties, which comes to power lifted on a revolutionary wave, with no ministers representing bourgeois organisations and parties has a tremendous revolutionary significance: the proletariat can bring to power a government of the parties which it considers to be its own. The satisfaction of its of its demands, therefore, is possible. Power can pass into the hands of what before were the oppressed masses. The oppressors can be driven out. The proletariat is ready to set up its own committees at all levels, to federate and centralise them nationally, its committees in which its own organisations all take their place, which function as revolutionary parliaments, the structure of working-class power, carrying out the political tasks of expropriating the exploiting classes. Such a government is in itself a powerful appeal for the establishment and organisation of 'soviets'

Today the commissions of workers' elected delegates are atomised. They are born, disappear and are re-born to disappear again. They still cannot find the road to centralisation. This is because the Stalinists fight them head-on, and because there is a split between the two great workers' parties. In the north, the independent leagues of small peasants, which have been set up to carry out the 'agrarian reform' which Lisbon promises to the peasants in words, are attacked by the Stalinists, who defend the old-established agrarian order, that is, the domination of capital in the countryside.

In any case, what does the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly signify strictly from the viewpoint of the principles of democracy, which the leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party and the Armed Forces Movement claim to support while actually trampling them underfoot? We have the historical example of the convention. The French Revolution of 1789-1793 was able to overthrow the old political relations bequeathed by the Ancien Regime, and to impose new ones which allowed the productive forces to develop, only by means of the dictatorship of the convention. In May 1793, the convention did not hesitate to sacrifice the party of the Girondins, who supported a compromise which would have preserved the foundations of the Ancien Regime. It was the revolutionary energy of the sansculottes, of the toiling masses of that time, in the towns and countryside, which struck the decisive blows, allowing the old aristocratic state machine to be completely destroyed, using, among other means, those of terror.

In Portugal the sovereign Constituent Assembly would open up for the broadest masses, the road to the complete destruction of the bourgeois state bequeathed by Salazarism. Specifically, it would mean the complete liquidation (not the partial liquidation, as up till now) of the police forces, the P.I.D.E. and the G.N.R. (which latter still exists), the complete overthrow of the army regime and their replacement by the power of the majority, taking decisions as a sovereign power in the framework of the Constituent Assembly. Thus, under the banner of the most resolute struggle for democracy, the masses would take great strides towards constituting their own organs of power. This is the reason for the savage determination of all those who are fighting against the sovereign Constituent Assembly in Portugal today, against the political axis of the P.S.P. -P.C.P. government.

### **The counter-revolutionary politics of the leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party**

The revolution goes deep enough to lift up all the toiling masses of the country. It has very quickly led all the defenders of the bourgeois state to form a bloc round the officer-corps, that is, the Armed Forces Movement, the

military hierarchy. In the first days of the revolution, the working masses, in Lisbon and throughout the country, deliriously acclaimed Alvaro Cunhal and the Portuguese Communist Party, which called for 'the alliance of the popular forces with the Armed Forces Movement'. It was in the name of this policy that the leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party vehemently opposed the strike wave which began in May 1974, and which they managed to block for a time, in June, having got the postal workers back to work.

About the revolutionary explosion which immediately followed the coup d'état of April 25 — which was intended, let us recall, to forestall the revolution — readers may refer to 'La Verite', Nos. 564 and 565, and especially to the brochure of the O.C.I., published by S.E.L.I.O. in December 1974, 'problems of the Portuguese Revolution', 142 pages, 8 francs. Readers may be interested to note that 'informations Ouvrieres', No. 713, of July 23, 1975, wrote: 'The Portuguese Communist Party was obliged at that time (May — June 1974) to obstruct directly the toiling masses and contain all the contradictions of the bourgeoisie. The first results of this were to be that in June 1974 the postal workers were driven back to work by a campaign of slander and violence orchestrated by the Stalinist leaders of the Intersyndical and were to turn their backs en masse on the Portuguese Communist party. Militant postal workers, who had been Communist Party Cadres under the dictatorship, tore up their party cards and joined the Socialist Party'. See 'problems of the Portuguese Revolution', Part III.

The Portuguese Communist Party has been obliged, therefore to throw itself totally into a policy of defence of the bourgeois state since the beginning of the revolution. At the same time, the 'alliance of the people and the Armed Forces Movement' was presented as a stage towards 'socialism', in order to deceive the masses. This involved persuading the masses to see in the Armed Forces Movement, the initiator of April 25, 1974, the authentic bearer of the revolution, its real representative, and and that the masses should submit to its 'wisdom' and the politics of the coalition government, over which presided Spinoza, let us not forget.

The great battle which the Armed Forces Movement and the leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party led mounted against the proletariat was about the decisive question of the independence and unity of the trade unions. The revolution carried the workers en masse towards the political parties, the Portuguese Communist Party and the Socialist Party, and towards the trade unions in even greater numbers. At the same time, the first commissions of elected workers' delegates were set up in the largest plants, such as the Naval ship-yards at Lisnave. Cadres of the Portuguese Communist Party, who, along with other militants, had taken control of many of the corporatist trade unions in 1969, were able, in the months following April 25, 1974, to occupy all the key posts in the trade union movement. Then the provisional government of the Armed Forces Movement, supported by the Portuguese Communist Party, proposed a bill on 'trade union unity'. This met with immediate opposition from the Socialist Party. We should recall the reason for this. Article 6 stipulates:

'The state has the right to dissolve all trade union associations which it considers to be illegal, and will de-

cide on any revision of the rules'. And article 37 says: 'The control of the legality of the activity of the trade unions is within the province of the courts'.

This bill (which became law on April 30) seeks to prohibit all independence of the trade unions in relation to the state. The workers expressed resistance to this iniquitous bill through the Socialist Party, which denounced the return to corporatism which the bourgeoisie was attempting to impose, with the total, unreserved support of the Portuguese Communist Party. (We should not forget that the Portuguese Communist Party and the Intersyndicale which it controls organised a demonstration in support of the bill and the Armed Forces Movement against the opposition of the workers who used the Socialist Party as a channel to show their opposition to the bill which instituted corporatist unions. 'Rouge wrote on this subject: 'Our comrades of the L.C.I. had issued their own call to join these demonstrations'. Seven months later, the Pablo-ites did not hesitate to constitute, with the Stalinists, a front of popular unity in support of the corporatist plan of the Armed Forces Movement).

As we know, March 11 could not succeed, because the masses paralysed the country. They fraternised with the soldiers and deprived the putschist officers of every possibility. On March 13, the Lisbon correspondent of L'Humanite congratulated the Junta, in the heart of which the Spinozist officers operated. 'Yes, decidedly', wrote a Mr. Aquaviva, 'the democratic Junta has reached a new stage. The reaction has not had its revenge'. On March, 20 Cunhal declared in an interview with the London Times:

'The Portuguese Communist Party firmly supported the institutionalisation of the Armed Forces Movement, which was necessary both before and after the elections. In the present situation in Portugal, an alliance between the people and the Armed Forces is essential to maintain liberty and build democracy'.

In the same interview, Cunhal declared himself in favour of Portugal remaining in N.A.T.O.

Cunhal declared to Agence-France-Presse on March 21: 'Here, there will be no bourgeois democracy, that is to say, democratic rights on one side and the power of the monopolies on the other'. The reference to the 'power of the monopolies' which is to disappear, is purely formal. In reality, the Portuguese Communist Party participated in the coalition government with the bourgeoisie. This government had not the slightest intention of suppressing the 'monopolies'. On the other hand, the orientation which the Stalinist apparatus openly advocated day after day was to flout the principles of political democracy and to deny any real power to the Constituent Assembly, with the aim of reconstructing the bourgeoisie state.

On the eve of the elections, in which everyone feared that the bourgeois parties would be defeated, the Armed Forces Movement got itself given plenary powers, which it could do only by a 'voluntary renunciation' on the part of the workers' parties. The leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party justified on April 7, its signature of the pact imposed by the Armed Forces Movement on the 11th, stipulating 'the institutionalisation of the the Armed Forces Movement and its intervention in Portuguese political life, at least for a period of three to five years'.

The Socialist Party in its well-known communique of January 13 declared its opposition to 'trade union unity', the negation of trade union unity.

The Socialist Party said: 'No! to trade union pluralism of the bourgeois origin!' and 'Yes! to unity built by the workers!'. None the less, the Socialist Party also signed the pact imposed by the Armed Forces Movement against the revolution which was preparing to bring off a victory on the electoral plane (however unfavourable the electoral plane might be to the workers), though the Socialist Party



signed the pact with reservations. But before we examine the place and role which the Socialist Party is playing today in the class struggle in Portugal, let us go further in our examination of the relations between the Stalinist apparatus and the masses.

### The Stalinists lash out at the Revolutionary movement of the masses

One of the first declarations by Mario Soares after the elections was to stress that the combined votes of the Socialist Party and of the Portuguese Communist Party gave a majority to the proletariat in the Constituent Assembly. But the Socialist Party vacillated. It kept its place within the coalition government and did not denounce the pact which the Armed Forces Movement imposed on April 11 binding the workers' parties to the policy laid down by the army.

L'Humanite hastened to write, on April 28, under the head-line 'The complex meaning of the Electoral Results':

'Spokesman of the Armed Forces Movement are trying to minimise the significance of the result of the voting which you get if you add together the votes cast respectively for the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Democratic Popular Movement (M.D.P.). Is this an artificial operation? Are the calculations of the Armed Forces Movement based on solid ground, taking account of the distribution and origin of the votes which the three parties have gathered?

One question arises immediately. To what is the performance of the Socialist Party due? Are all its two million voters devoted to Socialism? To answer in the affirmative would be to overlook that the Socialist Party had the advantage of support from abroad, from sources alien to the 'family of Socialism'. It is true that the Socialist Party channelled the votes of workers, peasants and office-workers who are sincerely attached to the ideal of Socialism. To challenge this would be to omit an important dimension in the reality of the country. It is every bit as true that the anti-communist tone of its campaign earned for it the support of sectors of opinion hostile and opposed to the Socialist perspective. How otherwise can we explain the high percentages in the North of the country in constituencies where the right is still influential?

Its supporters are mixed, and therefore heterogenous, and animated by contradictory motives'.

The idea to be inculcated here is that those who voted for the Socialist Party are 'backward', like the picture of the 'Northern Peasants' whom the Stalinists wish to pass off as a 'reactionary mass'. The leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party is clear. It intends to present the following, radically false, political picture of the country that, on the one hand, there are bearers of the revolution, the Armed Forces Movement and the Portuguese Communist Party, and, on the other hand, there is the Socialist Party with its reactionary electorate. (In trade union meetings the Stalinists lash out against the Socialist Party members, treating them as fascists). Therefore, you see, there can be no question of a Socialist Party - Communist Party Government, no question of a united front of the two big workers' parties! The Armed Forces Movement and the Portuguese Communist Party must be kept in power at all costs.

(After this article had been written, the leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party had still not taken a position 'in principle' against the P.P.D., as they did at the time of the negotiations by Admiral Azevedo for the constitution of the sixth provisional government. Besides, this is not the first time that the Portuguese Stalinists have formally come out, in words against the P.P.D., which is effectively a party of the Portuguese bourgeoisie. It

fighters for the restoration of the corporatist order, and would not hesitate to support a reactionary coup, if the means were forthcoming. On the morrow of the Spinoist coup of March 11, Cunhal replies to workers, who were shouting, 'only one solution: shoot the reaction: down with the P.P.D.!', by saying, 'Comrades, I can hear a chant: 'shoot those responsible!'. It seems we are not in agreement here'. L'Humanite wrote on March 18, dotting the i's: 'The Communists do not ask for the P.P.D. to be thrown out of the coalition. They ask that the P.P.D. declare itself clearly, that it cease being the Trojan Horse of the reaction within the Government'. The Stalinists have no hesitation today about sitting in a government of national unity with the same P.P.D., despite their 'reservations' with regard to it. This is what they call 'knowing how to compromise'. Every conscious militant knows that such compromises are dictated by the same counter-revolutionary policy. Despite all, the Stalinists have, therefore not in any way renounced the same policy of alliance with the bourgeois parties, including the most discredited.)

Yet despite the conclusions drawn by the Stalinists, the elections radicalised the situation. The leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party therefore decided to provoke the workers directly, to erect the obstacle of their counter-revolutionary policy against the movement of the masses who were heading for power, to pass over brutally to the offensive.

Since May 1, the target has been the Socialist Party. On that day, Intersyndicale refused to allow Mario Soares to speak at the Lisbon meeting. This provocation was to be thoroughly followed up. The attack on the Socialist daily 'Republica', began on May 2. The pretext was simple: the 'workers' commission, controlled by the Communist Party, and by certain ultra-lefts, refused to allow the reports to be published of the May 1 meeting which raised the question of the responsibility of the leadership of Intersyndicale. Then on May 19 the Socialist Party was deprived of any possibility of daily expression. The Portuguese Communist Party had a pirated edition printed of the Socialist daily paper, sequestered its editor and had the army occupy the offices.

The reason for this policy was clearly pointed out in L'Humanite for May 9. It waxed indignant that:

'The pact of April 11 is being called once more into question. The Socialist daily Republica states that this platform does not resolve all problems. It announces that the moment has come to 'capitalise upon' the result of the elections, by seeking new economic, political and social equilibria'. Having sequestered Republica, the Armed Forces Movement issued a warning to the Socialist Party. In the eyes of the higher officers, 'The Communist Party really engaged is in the popular mobilisation for production', whereas the Socialist Party 'ill conceals its mistrust of the acceleration of the revolutionary process', since 'it is not really committed to the mobilisation for increasing production'.

Obviously, they have to lash out at the Socialist Party, first by muzzling it and loosing a torrent of slander against it, for the simple reason that the working-class is rallying behind it to make its voice heard, and to try to impose its will. Already the Stalinist apparatus has a near-monopoly in practice in the news media. Most of the editors of big dailies: 'Diario de Noticias', 'O Seculo', 'Diario de Lisboa', etc. support its policy, which coincides with that of the Armed Forces Movement. It is the same in radio and television. In this context the sequestration of Republica was felt by the masses and militant workers as an affront, as an attack on one of its most important rights, the freedom of the press. The Portuguese

Communist Party has given proof of its zeal in mobilising . . . for production, in condemning strikes, breaking them when it can, dissolving the workers' committees (as at T.A.P.), taking control of the trade unions, or hanging on like grim death to their leading positions by every possible means; (slander and violence against militants are the rule in the trade union meetings, especially against Socialist Party militants).

(The international press, which fully understands what an enormous service the policy of the Stalinists renders to the drifting Portuguese bourgeoisie, has refrained from reporting what goes on in trade union meetings. For example, on May 28, 1975, the P.C.P. leaders of the professional unions at Assurances de Porto put forward a plan for insurances to be controlled in three sectors, i.e., nationalised, mixed and foreign-owned. The outcome of the plan was to transform the union into a transmission belt for the state. In Lisbon, the Stalinists wanted to get the plan adopted within 24 hours, in the course of a meeting to which only delegates were invited (out of 3,000 insurance workers in the capital). By means of motions and petitions the workers condemned the methods of the P.C.P. union leaders. It forced the consideration of a counter-plan, drawn up by Socialist militants, proposing that the organs of management be elected by the workers and placed in the charge of a commission of elected workers, without any intervention by the trade union or the state, in order to avoid the intergration of the unions and to guarantee their independence. The workers approved the Socialist Party plan in their offices between June 9 and 16. When the Stalinists called a general meeting in a hall seating 250 people, the mass of the workers defeated the manoeuvre: 3,000 workers asserted their presence against the P.C.P. leadership. The latter insulted the workers by shouting, 'down with reaction!' The workers yelled back, 'down with the leadership'!. Though the vote on on three plans (one from the minister, one from the Socialist Party and one from the ultra-lefts) took place at 4a.m., the Socialist plan received over 1,000 votes against scarcely 500 for that of the minister, which the Stalinists supported. The next day in 'Avante a leader of the Portuguese Communist Party denounced the insurance workers' vote saying: 'We shall not let the counter-revolutionaries think that they have won'. The L.C.I. denounced the vote in a manifesto and accused the majority, which had approved the Socialist plan, of being 'counter-revolutionaries'. This was on June 17, 1975. On June 24, the L.C.I. and the Portuguese Communist Party called a meeting with the object of 'crushing the Socialists'. The workers were insulted and treated as fascists. Everything was organised to prevent the Socialist workers from getting the floor. There were physical attacks and the military Police, COPCON were sent for. 700 workers were present at the end of the General Assembly, out of 1,300 at the beginning. The chairman, who was not elected, took a vote against the Socialist plan, and even without counting declared it a defeat. A motion was then presented accusing the Socialist plan of being 'self-management'. This motion was approved, along with the decree of the minister, slightly changed. The 'progressive' chairman then asked that the union leadership which had resigned a week earlier, reverse its decision. This was done. A statement was then presented demanding the apologies to the working class for our earlier attitude'. Such is the regime to which the Stalinists subject working class meetings. From a written private source).

Since April 25, 1974 the Stalinists and their M.D.P. satellites have installed themselves in numerous town-halls abandoned by the fascists, with the help of the army, in order to preserve the bourgeois state and to prevent the masses from taking over the municipalities. In the countryside the Stalinists openly oppose the independent organisations of the small peasants and defended the big landowners, the 'notables' from the Salazar-Caetano

days. They come out categorically against municipal elections, when the masses are aspiring to govern themselves. The Stalinists passed over to the offensive after the elections, against the toiling peasants, just as they did against the working-class, against worker militants in the trade unions, against the Socialist Party where the workers' wishes were being expressed.

### **The mass of the workers against the Stalinist Apparatus**

This is not the first time that the Stalinist apparatus has played the role or spearhead of the bourgeois counter-revolution when the mobilised masses have threatened, in the proletarian revolution, the class domination of the bourgeoisie. In Spain in 1936-39 especially from the workers' uprising of May 1937, (in Barcelona), it was the Stalinist apparatus that made itself the decisive instrument of the reconstruction of the state apparatus which the revolution had destroyed. After having exhausted the combativity of the masses, who were delivered to the republican bourgeoisie by the Stalinists and enchained in the Popular Front, the republican bourgeoisie capitulated beneath the blows of the fascist counter-revolution. The victory of Franco could not have happened except for the political disarmament and brutal repression of the working-class, the assassination of thousands of worker-militants of the P.O.U.M. and the C.N.T., etc., for the murder of Andres Nin, for the destruction of the workers' organisations which opposed the Stalinists. The victory of Franco, for which the whole policy of the Kremlin bureaucracy against the Spanish revolution prepared, ended at the same time with the destruction of the Spanish Communist Party. In Germany, too, it was the policy imposed by the Stalinist bureaucracy on the most powerful Communist Party in Europe after the Russian Communist Party, which ended in the catastrophe of 1933 and the advent of Nazism. The basis of this policy of division, which Stalin imposed on the German Communist Party, was the characterisation of Social Democracy as a 'left wing' of Fascism, as 'social-fascism'. In 1973 in Chile the policy of defending the bourgeois state, with the army remaining intact, allowed Pinochet's coup d'état to be victorious, at a time when the bourgeoisie had the opportunity to go over to the offensive against the proletariat, which the policy of the Popular Front, of subordination of its movement to the bourgeoisie and its parties which claimed to be 'democratic', had rendered impotent.

The Portuguese Communist Party is a Stalinist party. It is heavily dependant on the Kremlin bureaucracy. Its policy, like that of all the Stalinist parties, is entirely determined by the interests of the parasitic caste which has usurped power in the U.S.S.R. This caste fears above all that the revolution, in whatever country, shall call into question the world order of relations between the classes, and shall lead to liberating the dammed-up forces of the Soviet proletariat, which will take back political power on the ruins of the bureaucracy. This is what the ultra-left organisations, equally the Pablo-ites such as the L.C.I., in France and Portugal alike, constantly 'forget'. In their eyes, the policy of the Communist Party is 'sectarian' full of errors, of 'opportunist deformations'. The ultra-lefts and the Pablo-ites recognise a 'Communist' quality in the Stalinist parties which usurp the name of communism to fight the revolution in all circumstances. The Portuguese Communist Party openly approve the military intervention of the bureaucracy against the political revolution in Czecho-Slovakia in 1968. It is very heavily subordinated to Moscow. In Portugal the bourgeoisie commands less and less resources for acting independantly but the Communist Party does not hesitate, in the interests of defending the bourgeoisie order, to clash directly with the movement of the revolution, to strike at the workers of the cities and the countryside, and to try to impose the reconstruction of the bourgeois state which demands that the revolution be driven back.

To be sure, if eventually the bureaucracy achieves its aims in Portugal, that is, if it creates a situation in which the bourgeois state can be restored and the revolution strangled, it is no less probable that the Portuguese Communist Party itself as a workers' party, will be destroyed, like the other workers' organisations, by the counter-revolution. Such is the price which the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy of the Kremlin would not hesitate, once again, to make the workers of the world pay, and the militants of the Portuguese Communist Party.

### The place of the Portuguese Socialist Party in the class struggle

All the forces in the camp of the Armed Forces Movement and of the bourgeoisie want it to be believed that the Socialist Party is to the right of the Communist Party, through its very nature as a social-democratic party, since as a reformist party it respects the bourgeoisie state. This political geography is much in question today in Portugal. To pretend that the Socialist Party is to the right of the Communist Party is entirely contrary to the truth. It is true that the Socialist Party is not a revolutionary party. It is a workers party, which remains within the framework of bourgeois society and its state. Nevertheless the difference between these two parties is fundamental. The Communist Parties have no precise policy, no programme, but a function — that of defending on every occasion the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy, cog-wheels in the international apparatus of the Kremlin. The Stalinist bureaucracy has on many occasions sacrificed Communist Parties on the altar of peaceful co-existence and of the counter-revolution, when that is necessary to maintain the world equilibrium between the classes which is essential to its existence.

It is not the Socialist Party which, in Portugal, is waging a bitter struggle against the masses for the benefit of the restoration of power of the bourgeoisie under the form of corporatist regime. It is the Stalinist Party, the Portuguese Communist Party. But the revolution is defending itself against the Stalinist offensive. Today, after Sixteen months, the great mass of the workers is opposed to the counter-revolutionary apparatus of the party which the small peasants of the North reject as 'the party of Mr Cunhal' (while claiming that they do not condemn the Communist Party as such). The masses have thus in large measure unmasked the counter-revolutionary, Stalinist character of the leading apparatus of the Portuguese Communist Party. How can they struggle to advance politically from that point? By trying to make use, certainly with some new illusions and indeed in a halting manner, but nevertheless with a sure class instinct on the fundamental questions, of the framework offered by the Socialist Party.

As opposed to the Communist Party, a Stalinist Party, the Socialist Party comes out clearly against a return to corporatism, against making the trade unions the vassals of the bourgeois state, for respect for democratic liberties. It demands that account be taken of the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Its policy does not put at risk the organisational independence of the proletariat and the toiling masses. This policy of the Portuguese Socialist Party is not due to chance. In 1931, with regard to Germany. Trotsky explained as follows what are the fundamental relations between a social-democratic party, the proletariat and the bourgeois society:

'A contradiction does exist between democracy and fascism. It is not all 'absolute', or putting it in the language of Marxism, it does not at all denote the rule of two irreconcilable classes. But it does denote different systems of the domination of one and the same class. These two systems: the one parliamentary-democratic, the other fascist, derive their support from different combinations of the oppressed and exploited classes; and they unavoidably come to a sharp clash with each other.'

The Social-Democracy, which is today the chief representative of the parliamentary-bourgeois regime, derives its support from the workers. Fascism is supported by the petty bourgeoisie. The Social Democracy without the mass organisations of the workers can have no influence. Fascism cannot entrench itself in power without annihilating the workers' organisations. Parliament is the main arena of the Social Democracy. The system of fascism is based on the destruction of Parliamentarism. For the monopolistic bourgeoisie, the parliamentary and fascist regimes represent only different vehicles of domination, it has recourse to one or the other, depending on the historical conditions. But for both the Social Democracy and the choice of one or the other vehicle has an independent significance; more than that, for them it is a question of political life or death'. (L. Trotsky, 'What Next?', in 'The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany', Pathfinder Press, New York, p. 154 — 155.)

Social Democracy is therefore essentially a parliamentary workers' party. Doubtless its links with the bourgeoisie lead it to subject the principles of parliamentarism to severe strains, principles which are themselves elastic. Examples of this abound: in 1958 in France Guy Mollet was the architect of the coming to power of De Gaulle, who installed a bonapartist-type regime, emptying Parliament of its content. In Portugal today the Socialist Party is very discreet on the subject of the full sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly. Yet Social Democracy can exist only on the basis of the organisational independence of the proletariat, of its trade unions and political organisations.

Let us quote another extract from "What Next?", which illuminates the question very clearly:

"In the course of many decades, the workers have built up within the bourgeois democracy, by utilising it, by fighting against it, their own strongholds and bases of Proletarian Democracy: the trade unions, the political parties, the educational and sports clubs, the co-operatives, etc. The proletariat cannot attain power within the formal limits of bourgeois democracy, but can do so only by taking the road of revolution: this has been proved both by theory and experience. And these bulwarks of workers' democracy within the bourgeois state are absolutely necessary for taking the revolutionary road. The work of the Second International consisted in creating just such bulwarks during the epoch when it was still fulfilling its progressive historic labour.

"Fascism has for its basic and only task the razing to their foundations of all institutions of proletarian democracy. Has this any 'class meaning' for the proletariat, or hasn't it? The lofty theoreticians had better ponder over this. The pronouncing the regime to be bourgeois, — which no one questions —

Class war takes place on the soil of history, and not in the stratosphere of sociology. The point of departure in the struggle against fascism is not the abstraction of the democratic state, but the living organisations of the proletariat, in which is concentrated all its past experience and which prepare it for the future'. (What Next?), p.158-159.

In this respect the policy of Guy Mollet dealt a mortal blow to the S.F.I.O. and Guy Mollet himself had to break with and fight against De Gaulle when the latter sharpened the bonapartist character of the fifth republic by getting a plebiscite to approve the election by plebiscite of the President of the Republic in 1962. There you see the basis for the attachment to bourgeois parliamentary democracy, which conditions its existence as a party implanted and basing itself upon the masses. But parliamentary democracy implies the maintenance of democratic liberties which are elementary but are also necessary fundamentals for the proletariat to organise itself and fight as a class.

The relations and links of the Stalinist parties with

bourgeois society are not identical with those of the Socialist Party. It is true that they establish direct relations with the bourgeoisie, utilising parliamentary forms. It is true that the suppression of democratic liberties, of the organisational independence of the proletariat, endangers their own existence. But what defines these parties as Stalinist parties is their dependent and subservient relationship to the Kremlin. They are the cog-wheels of the international apparatus of the Kremlin, through the selection of the apparatus. Their relation with parliamentarism is not therefore the same as that which binds Social Democracy to it. According to the circumstances and needs of the Kremlin, they declare their attachment to parliamentary democracy (for instance, in Italy and in France), or, on the contrary, they denounce parliamentarism (Portugal). In Portugal today, respect for the rules of parliamentarism would mean the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, where the majority belongs to the Socialist and Communist Parties, and, consequently, poses the problem of a government of these parties alone.

In such a situation as this, the Stalinists reject "bourgeois democracy", in favour of a policy of support for the Armed Forces Movement, which denies all sovereign power to the constituent assembly with the avowed object of reinstating a corporatist order.

Since the elections of April 25, the fundamental political line of the Communist Party has consisted of trying to strike at the proletariat so as to demoralise it and make the revolution flow back. To achieve this end the Stalinist apparatus has not hesitated to do its utmost to ensure that the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly are annulled by a military government coming to power.

### **The Portuguese Communist Party : For A Military Government: For A Return To Corporatism**

After having succeeded in getting seals put on the premises of the daily paper of the Socialist Party, the leadership of the Portuguese Communist Party, beginning in the month of May 1975, put forward its positions. On May 11, Cunhal declared on television "The P.C.P. conceives of solutions adapted to the conditions and the possibilities of the country. Neither bourgeois democracy nor people's democracy, but a democracy appropriate to the peculiarities of Portugal, grafted on to a unique situation". Let us recall that Congress of the P.C.P. at the end of 1974 had formally repudiated the dictatorship of the proletariat. In fact, the P.C.P. had not only repudiated the "dictatorship of the proletariat" but was resisting the march of the proletariat towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, as all the Communist Parties have done since the Communist International died as a revolutionary international and became an instrument in the hands of the Kremlin, its international apparatus, that is, from 1933. This solemn renunciation, introduced just at the time when the Portuguese revolution was developing, carried the weight of a political proclamation: for the defence at all costs and by all means of bourgeois society and the bourgeois state.

The regimes of so-called "popular democracy" are those which were born at the end of shortly after the war, in the countries which the army of the U.S.S.R. occupied.

The bourgeois states of these countries had collapsed. Their exploiting classes were ruined. The Kremlin exercised effective political power by means of its army, the N.K.V.D. and the Communist Parties of these countries, which were themselves gear-wheels in its international apparatus: in the end, it finished up by expropriating the bourgeoisie. There could be no question of "popular democracy" in Portugal. But, according to Cunhal, there could be no question in Portugal of bourgeois democracy.

On May 11, Cunhal was already letting it be heard that the 'peculiarities' of the country, that is, the form of government which corresponds to the necessities of the maintenance of capitalism, require the imposition of a

military dictatorship against the masses, against their organisations, their committees, their trade unions and their parties. This is what he spelled out clearly on May 29 in an interview with 'Le Monde': "A military government is not on the horizon at the moment. (Prudence) But, in any case, I affirm that such a government would not be incompatible with the exercise of liberties in Portugal. It is in fact the Armed Forces Movement which has set the country free and has defended its liberties up to the present time. It is a slander to try to identify the eventual role of the Armed Forces Movement, that is to say, the placing in power of a military government — Editor's Note) in the process in which the country is living, with a military dictatorship. With or without the Socialists, with or without a military government, the forces which are trying to brake the march towards socialism will fail".

Says Cunhal: "the enemy is the Socialist Party". But behind the Socialist Party the working class is regrouping. Cunhal knows this. He goes on: "We have said: if the parties of the government coalition break the pact which they have signed with Armed Forces Movement and leaves the government, then the Constituent Assembly, which has been elected on the basis of this pact will have no further reason to exist. If there is a coalition government, there will be a Constituent Assembly. But without a coalition, there will be no Constituent Assembly. That is my opinion.

What does this kind of talk mean except an appeal to the Armed Forces Movement to dissolve the Constituent Assembly? In June, the P.C.P. continued to put forward a series of propositions which the Armed Forces seized upon in their entirety and which it published on July 9, in the well-known 'guide-document', which had the purpose of replacing the Constituent Assembly with a "Popular National Assembly" supported by a whole network of assemblies, (local, municipal, district and regional). The document defined in the following way "The principles of orientation and popular organisation" which were to be at the base of the future Portuguese state: "All levels of popular organisation should and can be unitary. This concept of unity is defined in the following way: independence in relation to parties". (Footnote: the "guide" of the Armed Forces Movement has been published in full in "Tribune Socialiste", the weekly organ of the P.S.U., No. 666 of July 19, 1975, from which the above quotations have been taken).

If we may use a term which is frequently used in the political language of Portugal, the organs of the future state must be "non-party" ("apartidaires"). The parties, and in particular the workers' parties, must have no place in a state which aspires to having a "popular base". On the contrary, in all these assemblies, there will be present at all levels alongside the delegates of the army, the delegates of the trade union organisations whom the law instituting "trade union unity" is attempting to subordinate to and integrate into the state (chapter "on the constitution", point d.). What is such a state but a bourgeois state of a corporatist type? A "national assembly without parties" would mean, in the end, destruction of the mass organisations. Such an assembly could be installed only on the basis of pulverising the working class into isolated individuals. If the Stalinists and their leftist supporters succeed in imposing it, against the organised working-class that would result in the factual dissolution of the workers' organisations, the National Assembly providing the legal justification for their devolution. The 'new' state, therefore, which the Armed Forces Movement projects with the total support of the Stalinists (at least until the turn which the P.C.P. effected in the middle of August) contains strong stench of Salazarism.

It is by chance that L'Humanite on July 10 congratulated itself on the "precision of the structures, forms and methods of the alliance of the people with the Armed Forces Movement" defined in this way. Behind the Stalinist

the leftists and most particularly the Pablo-ite L.C.I. gave their political support, in the name of the 'revolution' and of 'Trotskyism' to the guide-document of the A.F.M. (Footnote: Let us limit ourselves to quoting a "free opinion" published by A. Krivine in 'Le Monde' for August 2: "It is against the project, which is sure to be confused, of the A.F.M. envisaging that the structures of self-organisation with which the workers and soldiers have provided themselves, that the Portuguese Socialist Party has declared war, thus permitting the whole reaction to find a pole on which to converge". Here is the policy of the Pablo-ites, which has to be called counter-revolutionary, because it is exactly the same at the bottom as that of the Stalinists (support for the project for a corporate state of the A.F.M., by using the existing commissions of the workers in opposition to the parties and subordinating them to the army, and frontal attacks on the Socialist Party). Now we can grasp the political logic which has led the Pablo-ites of the Portuguese L.C.I. to enter a "popular united front" with the Stalinists and the other leftists on the basis of the corporatist "guide" of the A.F.M. Ernest Mandel, the eminent representative of the Pablo-ite "United Secretariat", wrote, none the less, in Rouge No. 311 of August 31: "Basing itself on the document-guide of the alliance of the people and the A.F.M., the agreement of the L.C.I. with the P.C.P. places the workers' commission, the commissions of moradores and the popular assemblies in a project of intergration which is opposed to the real autonomy of the mass movement in relation to the institutions of the bourgeois state". Thus Mandel contradicts Krivine, another eminent member of the "United Secretariat", the destroyer of the Fourth International).

### **The Socialist Party Condemns the Corporatist Plan**

Alone of all the workers' mass organisations, the Socialist Party formally condemned the corporatist plan of the Armed Forces Movement, which the Stalinists and the ultra-left and centrist groups supported. We shall quote here the essential points of the important communique published by the Socialist Party, which decided on July 11 to leave the coalition government, under the pressure of the proletariat and of the most left-wing militants.

From the outset the communique of the Socialist Party condemned the plan:

"While the document protests that it does not intend to militarise the people, it proposes in practise a militarisation of political life. What does the physical participation of the Armed Forces Movement in the municipal, district, regional and national assemblies mean, when it is known that the organs (i.e. military organs defined in the document - Ed.) are, or result from, assemblies of units of the Armed Forces. . . . ?

It is very serious that the document should propose to institutionalise the local committee in their present form and should claim to be perpetuating elections by show of hands. Equally disturbing is the pre-occupation with putting under military tutelage, not only these tenants' committees but also the commissions of the workers. . .

On the other hand, it is becoming difficult to hide the contradiction between recognising the political intervention of the parties and theses, according to which the fundamental and final object is that of "socialist construction". . . "only possible in unity", whereas this unity is defined as the independence of parties" of the assemblies in question"

(Indeed, we should stress that the Portuguese Socialist Party does not go through to the end with its critique of the Armed Forces Movement's document; it re-affirms its confidence in the Council of the Revolution, the Majority of which initiated the "guide-document". It also wrote, 'the solutions proposed do not correspond to its popular claims. This reduction of the country to a hybrid organism definitively serves only as a cover for a military dictatorship. By definition, and by the nature of things,

this could never be a dictatorship of the Armed Forces Movement. But we understand that this could be imposed by minority military groups. This dictatorship would rather resemble what emerged from the Russian Revolution of 1917, which also was born of Soviet power, and led to the destruction of the Soviets and dissolved the Constituent Assembly".

We repeat, the leadership of the Portuguese Socialist Party, which opposes the corporatist plan of the Armed Forces Movement, in the name of the organisational independence of the workers' parties and organisations (trade unions and workers commissions) is not a Marxist party, not a revolutionary party. The way it identifies Bolshevism with Stalinism is typical of a reformist party. Precisely because we do not confuse Communism with Stalinism we cannot overlook that the Stalinist plan is a corporatist plan, and that, at the present moment of the Portuguese Revolution, the question is to defend the independence, against this plan, of the organisations of the proletariat, and to fight the attempt to install a military dictatorship).

When the Socialist Party left the government on July 11, it spoke out against the "militarisation of political life", which the application of the decision of the Armed Forces Movement would imply. It equally refused to play any part in the government as long as it was deprived of its daily newspaper, Republica, and as long as no account was taken of the results of the elections to the Constituent and as long as it commanded only a minimum of power. On this plane, the Socialist Party responds to the interests of the working-class, irrespective of its hesitations (for instance, the Socialist Party never questioned the "pact" of April 11 with the Armed Forces Movement).

We must go further: The masses found in this resistance by the Socialist Party a means to act and to express their will. They strikingly demonstrated this at the time of the big demonstrations, which they undertook and organised, for which the Socialist Party called at Oporto on July 18, and in Lisbon on July 15 and 19.

### **The Opposition of the Masses results in the Disintegration of the Armed Forces Movement**

More than 30,000 workers demonstrated in Lisbon on Tuesday, July 15, and 100,000 on July 19. In these enormous demonstrations the masses said what they wanted. The mass of the militants chanted a slogan, which was taken up throughout the length of the demonstration: "The people is not with the Armed Forces Movement". When the speakers quoted statements in which the Armed Forces Movement claimed to fight for the Socialist revolution, the masses replied: "It is a lie", "The people have been deceived", "Soares for Prime Minister". When the representative from Lisnave asked the question, "What government do we need?", the mass of the demonstrators answered unanimously: "Socialist, Socialist. The people's will must be respected".

The central slogan of the immense workers' gathering on July 29 was directed against the Armed Forces Movement, in the person of the head of the Government: "Down with Goncalves": "The people is no longer with the Armed Forces Movement".

When the Socialist Party withdrew from the coalition government, it left the Goncalves government hanging in the air. The Armed Forces Movement began to fall apart when it faced the strength of the proletariat, which was concentrating all its forces by means of the Socialist Party. This movement had indeed only just begun, and the different tendencies in the Armed Forces Movement, which are openly polemical among themselves, are all in agreement on the essential: to rebuild the bourgeois state, re-establish discipline in the army, in production and in the country, against the revolution. For over a month the Armed Forces Movement and the Portuguese Communist Party were to try to resist the pressure of the masses. They decided totally to support the Goncalves government. It

was precisely the tenacity with which the Stalinists defend this government, which the masses had rejected throughout the country, which was to lead them to run head-on into the fury of the masses, particularly that of the small peasants in the North and centre of the country.

Thirty thousand workers organised behind the Socialist Party on July 15 in Lisbon had already shouted: "Socialist Party, Marxist Party"; "Inter-syndicale, Cunhal's plaything"; "Right of tendencies Yes", "Repression, No".

There is happening in Portugal today what did not happen on a mass scale in the Spanish revolution: the working masses, clashing with the counter-revolutionary offensive of the Stalinists are regrouping against it, within and around the Socialist Party. In the trade unions, socialist militants who defend the principles of trade union independence and democracy are followed by enormous majorities of the workers. In the banks, in Oporto and also in some other sectors such as, quite recently, the pharmaceutical industry, the Stalinists leaders who had installed themselves at the head of the unions after April, 1974, have been thrown out by the majority. In many trade unions the Stalinists are maintaining themselves at the cost of repeated provocations against general meeting and militants. But the workers everywhere have shown that they are determined to defend themselves. This explains why the Portuguese Communist Party is now reduced to the status of very much a minority party, after over a year of anti-working-class. There are large numbers of militants who came to it in the enthusiasm of April 25, who have drawn up a balance sheet, and have gone over to the Socialist Party.

After the Socialist Party withdrew from the Goncalves government, the movement of the working-class against the Stalinists was joined, in an even more spectacular manner, by that of the small peasants in the North and Centre (and even in the South, the fief of the Stalinists). They sacked a succession of offices of the Portuguese Communist Party and its satellite the M.D.P.

The leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party then made a first turn in their line. They ceased to call for a military government, now that the political disintegration was beginning to affect the Armed Forces Movement itself. They continued, none the less, to hit out at the masses and to attack the Socialist Party, which they accused of handing over the country to fascism, and to maintain themselves against the peasant masses at the head of the local municipal councils. The Lisbon press, most of which is controlled by the Communist Party with the Armed Forces Movement, lashed out at the small peasants, slandered them, and accused them of being fascists, as they did the trade unionists who support the Socialist Party in meetings of workers. This is the real reason why the Communist Party's premises were sacked in a series of small towns and villages. In such a situation, the appeal by the Archbishop of Braga, which followed the sacking of the Communist Party's office in that town, curiously coincides with the appeal of the Communist Party's leaders. On both sides, they are both striving to create an atmosphere of civil war, a troubled situation. But the masses do not stop. The Armed Forces Movement must be sent to restore order, against the small peasants, against the masses. The homily of the Portuguese prelate signifies the same thing, with its sinister content. It also announces that there are forces still around, which are awaiting the moment to pass on to the counter-offensive, on the day when the revolution is in danger of ebbing back, for want of perspectives and having been struck impotent from within by those who are fighting against it. But it is not the fascist danger which threatens Portugal in the present situation of upswing of the revolution. The Archbishop of Braga did render an excellent service to the Portuguese and international Stalinist apparatus. They hold up this bogey of a fascist threat, so as to continue their policy of division, to continue to strike out at the mass movement, to try to scatter the forces of

the proletariat and the poor peasantry, even though this policy must eventually lead to the destruction of the Portuguese Communist Party itself under the blows of the reaction.

## A First Balance Sheet

The undertaking for which the Stalinists have had to face the rage of the masses, that is, the establishment of a military government in order to reconstruct a state of a corporatist type — this undertaking failed. The leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party made a second turn at the end of August. They called upon the leaders of the parties, including the Socialist Party, to "resolve" the crisis. Everything indicates that the most probable outcome will be the constitution of a government of national unity, a coalition government of the Armed Forces Movement, the bourgeois parties and the parties of the working-class, the Communist Party and the most important of them, the Socialist Party.

It is clear that such a government will be able to resolve nothing for the proletariat, though the sharpness of the situation may be attenuated for a short time and a semblance of political unity may be affected. The demands of the proletariat, and of the toiling masses in general, can only be fully satisfied if the question of power is resolved, if the Portuguese revolution not only gives a forward impulse to the class struggle but is linked to the revolution in Spain, France and Italy. To expropriate capital totally and completely, the proletariat must conquer political power. The solution to the economic problems of Portugal cannot proceed without the same problems finding a solution in Europe. Nevertheless we cannot put an equals sign today in Portugal between a so-called government of national unity and a military government.

We must know how to make a distinction. The first type of government would be a coalition of the workers' parties, the bourgeois parties and the Armed Forces Movement more or less patched up. But such a government would be the result of the defeat of the plans to install a military government, to build a corporate state.

Millions and millions of workers would be clearly aware that they had safeguarded their democratic liberties, their rights to organise, and had inflicted a staggering defeat, not only on the officer-caste represented by the Armed Forces Movement, but also on the Stalinist apparatus of the Portuguese Communist Party. It would be wrong to think, however, that even on this plane everything would be resolved. The Portuguese Communist Party will continue its policy simply to changing the way it applies it in the changed circumstances. This can be seen even now. After Cunhal had suddenly changed his line to calling for a government of national unity (a formula which the Socialist Party had advanced), and had dropped the Goncalves government, he continues to fight for control of the state apparatus and to try to place Goncalves at the head of the army. He is fighting to hold under control of the Communist Party the trade unions, numerous municipalities, a large part of the means of communication, and to isolate the Socialist Party from them as much as possible. We can expect new provocations and new attempts to divide the proletariat, to drive back and smash the mass movement. At the same time the masses continue and will continue to regard the Communist Party as one of their parties, and to demand from it a united and democratic policy. They will be ready to acclaim the Stalinist leaders if they seem to be taking a step on the road to unity and respect for democratic liberties.

Yet nothing is settled. A government of national unity will be able to take no important measures in favour of the masses. The unemployment which is growing, and which can only increase in face of the growing economic chaos and return of large numbers of Portuguese from Angola, leads us to expect new movements of the pro-

letariat to develop. Strikes will take place. They will be accompanied by attempts to install real workers' control over the economy. In short, the masses will be attentive and critical. They no longer wanted the Goncalves government and they have managed to bring it down. Even if the Socialist Party occupies a good place in the government of national unity, they will place only limited confidence in that government. New contradictions will arise on old bases. Sooner or later they will raise the demand for their own government, the basis for which exists in the Constituent Assembly, i.e. a Socialist Party - Communist Party government, headed by Mario Soares, with no bourgeois ministers from the Armed Forces Movement - a perspective feared by the whole of the bourgeoisie, the Armed Forces Movement and by the Stalinists, together with all the parties tied to the bourgeoisie.

For the latter the essential problem will again be to contain the masses, and under the cover of a government of national unity, to strive to regenerate the Armed Forces Movement, to re-unify the officer-corps, and preserve the cohesion of the army. This is the immediate object of all those who are fighting the proletarian revolution, in particular the Stalinists, who, with the ultra-left groups and the Pablo-ites, have made an agreement along the lines of the corporatist plan of July 9, in the name of the so-called "Committees" which are tightly subordinated to the army. The "Front" of ultra-lefts, Pablo-ites and Stalinists has shown in this way ever since it was formed that it supports: the Armed Forces Movement on the slogan of "Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly". (It is true that at the time of these demonstrations the Communist Party repudiated this slogan, rather discreetly. They have just broken formally their agreement with the ultra-lefts. They have made the ultra-lefts accept responsibility for their policy, and used them to acclaim Goncalves. For the moment they no longer need a formal agreement with the ultra-lefts. They want to leave their hands free for eventual negotiations with the Socialist Party, the P.P.D. and the Armed Forces Movement. At the same time it is in their interest to have the ultra-lefts going on issuing slogans against the Constituent Assembly and for Corporatism).

### **Question of the Constituent Assembly and the Government: The heart of all the Problems**

Once again, we have to come back to the question of democratic slogans, which are all concentrated in the question of the powers of the Constituent Assembly. We must point out from the first that it was not the revolutionaries, the Marxist, the re-builders of the Fourth International in Portugal and internationally, who put forward the question of the Constituent Assembly.

The necessity for the Constituent Assembly flowed from the process of the classes in struggle, from the actions of the organisations and parties which represent these classes or speak in their names. It is this process, formed by the class struggle, which imposed the election to the Constituent Assembly, which was desired neither by the bourgeoisie (this was the reason why Spinola attempted his coup of March 11), nor by the Armed Forces Movement, nor by the Stalinists. After March 11, the bourgeoisie was forced to organise the elections, which could work only to its disadvantage in the face of the new rise of the revolution. These elections then gave the majority to the workers' parties, despite the pact which these parties signed with Armed Forces Movement, and despite the campaign of the latter in favour of abstention from voting. Beyond any question, the revolution is trying to use the slogans of political democracy to turn them against the bourgeoisie itself, a reactionary bourgeoisie, united in its hostility to applying the principles of democracy, for it has no great historic design to bring into being, its only programme being to return to corporatism on the ruins of the

revolution. The Marxists, the partisans of the dictatorship of the proletariat, can in no case counter-pose the finished programme of the proletarian revolution as an ultimatum to the concrete movement of the masses towards their own power, with the immediate means at their disposal.

When the ultra-lefts and Pablo-ites make a bloc with Stalinists, they are fighting bitterly not only the perspective of a Socialist Party-Communist Party government based on the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, but the very existence of the Constituent Assembly itself. They are doing so, what is more, in the name of "workers' commissions", the function of which is according to the 'guide' of the Armed Forces Movement, to "participate" in the exercise of power, that is, in fact, in the reconstruction of the bourgeois state under the tutelage of the Armed Forces Movement. Is that a revolutionary policy? Is that a policy in defence of Communism in Portugal? Not at all! We must say clearly; it is the policy of reaction. It is a policy contrary to everything which Marx, Lenin and Trotsky have taught. Trotsky, for example traced the question of relations between the Constituent Assembly and the proletarian revolution in the following way at the beginning of the Spanish revolution, in July 1931, after the elections to the Cortes has given a strong minority to the Spanish Socialists of the time (The Spanish Communist Party, for its part, had no deputies):

"There must be a clear political slogan, corresponding to the character of the present stage of the Spanish revolution. The results of the elections make that slogan absolutely clear: the workers must break the coalition with the bourgeoisie and force the Socialists to take power. The peasants must help the workers if they want to get the land. . . .

If the Communists, at this stage, turn their backs on the Cortes, opposing to it the slogan of the Soviets and the dictatorships of the proletariat, they would only demonstrate that they cannot be taken seriously. There is not a single Communist in the Cortes, according to the press. Of course the revolutionary wing is always stronger in action, in the struggle, than in parliamentary representation. Nevertheless, there is always a certain relationship between the strength of a revolutionary party and its parliamentary representation. The weakness of Spanish Communism is fully disclosed. Under these circumstances, to speak of the overthrow of bourgeois parliamentarism by the dictatorship of the proletariat would simply mean to play the part of imbeciles and babblers. The task is to gather strength for the party on the basis of the parliamentary stage of the revolution and to rally the masses to us. That is the only way that parliamentarism can be overcome. But precisely for that purpose it is indispensable to develop a fierce agitation under the most decisive and extreme democratic slogans". (L. Trotsky: "The Election Results and the Tactics They Indicate", "The Spanish Revolution: (1931 - 1939)" Pathfinder Press, New York, p.148).

These phrases apply precisely to the Portuguese situation today. "The task is to strengthen oneself on the basis of the parliamentary stage of the revolution and to gather the masses around", explained Trotsky to the Spanish revolutionaries of the time. The same task faces the Portuguese revolutionaries, the Trotskyists, today, with one supplementary factor, of major importance. The workers' parties are a majority in the Portuguese Constituent Assembly. These parties cannot therefore plead that they are a minority, as the Spanish Socialist Party did in 1931, as an excuse for not breaking with the bourgeoisie. They can form a government themselves, and the masses are demanding that they do so. That is the "most advanced democracy" in Portugal. This is the policy which opens the road to soviets, to the struggle for the full and complete power of the proletariat, on the basis of the complete destruction of the bourgeois state and the building of a workers' state. Trotsky went on in the same article in this way:

"In reply to the workers' delegations, the Socialist will say that they do not have a majority yet. The answer is clear: with truly democratic suffrage and an end to the coalition with the bourgeoisie, a majority is guaranteed. But that is indeed what the Socialists do not want. Their situation places them in conflict with bold, democratic slogans. If we simply counter-pose the dictatorship of the proletariat or soviets to the Cortes. We will succeed only in driving the workers to the Socialists, for both will say: The Communists want to order us about. But under the slogan of democracy and of an end to the coalition between the workers and the Socialists and prepare the next stage of the revolution.

"All the considerations mentioned above would remain a dead letter if we were to limit ourselves only to democratic slogans in the parliamentary sense. There can be no question of this. Communists participate in all strikes, in all protests and demonstrations, arousing more and more numerous strata of the population. Communists are with the masses and at the head of the masses in every battle. On the basis of these battles, the Communists first put forward the slogans of the soviets, and at the first opportunity build soviets as the organisations of the Proletarian United Front. At the present stage, the soviets can be nothing else. But if they emerge as the combat organisations of the proletarian united front, then under the leadership of the Communists they will inevitably become, at a certain stage, organs of power". (L. Trotsky: "The Spanish Revolution: 1939", Pathfinder Press, New York, p.149-150).

We should make clear that the Communists to whom Trotsky addressed himself in 1931 were fighting to reform the Communist Parties, which the Stalinist bureaucracy was trying to destroy at that period as revolutionary parties of the proletariat. After 1933 Trotsky drew the conclusion that the bureaucracy and the Communist Parties which it controls had definitively passed over to the side of the maintenance of the bourgeois order — this was the moment when the policy imposed by the Kremlin on the Communist Party of Germany, together with that of the Social-Democratic leaders, had led to the defeat of the proletariat, and all the Communist Parties in the world had submitted to Stalin on this decisive question. It follows that in Portugal it is in no way a case of recommending or advising the Stalinist apparatus to adopt a Bolshevik policy. For the Portuguese working-class to take power and build a workers state, it will not be able to spare itself the building of a new revolutionary party, which will be the Portuguese section of the workers' International, now being reconstructed, and the programme of which can only be that of which has preserved the gains of Bolshevism betrayed by Stalinism and its agencies in every country.

It is the masses who have demonstrated, in their movement and by their real struggles, that the question of the Constituent Assembly today could not be an arbitrary one in Portugal. All the problems of the proletarian revolution are concentrated on it and on the position which all the parties claiming to support democracy adopt on the question of its sovereignty. The ultra-lefts who reject the Constituent Assembly and call on the Armed Forces Movement to dissolve it in the name of the struggle against bourgeois parliamentarism, are disguising the fact they insist on leaving in power the Armed Forces Movement, the army and the bourgeoisie, in opposition to the Constituent Assembly and the working-class which utilised the elections with the results we know so well. More serious, such a policy joins directly with that of the Stalinist apparatus. To be against the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly and against democracy in Portugal today is to support those who want to destroy the independent framework of the workers' organisations (the bourgeoisie and the political resources of which it disposes, especially the Armed Forces Movement and the Stalinist apparatus. As we have shown, it is to place oneself in the camp of reaction.

Conversely, to come out resolutely in favour of it, and to fight with the masses for the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, does not mean entertaining any illusions whatever in the virtues of the parliamentary regime. On the contrary, this central demand is linked in an indissoluble way with that of a break of the workers' parties with the bourgeoisie. Since the two workers' parties, the Socialist and Communist Parties, have a majority in the assembly, and since they both claim to support democracy and socialism, then why should they not form a government which would have the confidence of the immense majority of the toiling nation, a Socialist-Communist government under Mario Soares, having full powers and responsible to the majority of workers' deputies in the Constituent Assembly?

Let us come back once more to the place which the Socialist Party occupies in the class struggle in Portugal, today. Against the Stalinists and the Armed Forces Movement, the Socialist Party is defending the principles of democracy. It has a direct interest in doing so, as we have seen, since, as a parliamentary workers' party, a return to corporatism would destroy it as surely as it would destroy the Communist Party. In the present situation it is the Communist Party which is the spear-head of the counter-revolution. . . not the Socialist Party, which, without being a revolutionary party is at least defending democratic rights and the organisational independence of the proletariat. The proletariat and the militants of the vanguard, who have come forward in the course of the revolution itself, expect a great deal from the Socialist Party in the present period. They expect in particular that the Socialist Party will open up clearly the perspective of Socialist-Communist government, on the basis of the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly. But such a policy is possible only on the basis of the clearest break by the leaders of the Socialist Party from the Armed Forces Movement, P.P.D. and the bourgeoisie in all its forms. It is along this line that all political demarcations will be made in the coming period following the fall of the Goncalves government and the defeat of the corporatist plan.

### **The Stake: The Proletariat Revolution in Europe**

The stake in this battle is the very life and death of the proletarian revolution in Portugal and the extraordinary encouragement which its advance gives to the class struggle of the proletariat throughout Europe. In this battle the revolutionaries are fighting on the full revolutionary programme of the proletariat. They do not oppose the slogans of the socialist revolution. They intergrate them in the most resolute struggle for the "most extreme democracy", as Trotsky put it. They are preparing for the next phase of the revolution, that of a re-grouping of the vanguard and the masses around the full programme of the revolutionary proletariat. In this sense, the study and understanding of the road that the Portuguese revolution is taking and the defence of the militant workers of the whole world. The fate of the Portuguese revolution concerns us all directly. Its defence of the workers organisations in this country is the concern of the militant workers of Europe and of the whole world. The fate of the Portuguese revolution concerns us all directly. Its defence today passes by way of the clearest political break from all those who are fighting against the forward march of the Portuguese proletariat for the benefit of the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

The Portuguese revolution has a long journey ahead of it. The absence of a revolutionary party implies that the ebbs and flows, which every revolution experiences, will be more numerous and profound in Portugal. But we must never lose sight of the epoch in which the Portuguese revolution is taking place. Its development will meet with an enormous echo in Europe. This is quite natural. The Portuguese revolution is an integral part of the international class struggle, and is felt directly by the proletariat of all



Europe as an element which today is decisive in its own struggle against each national bourgeoisie. In fact, the proletarian revolution which began in Lisbon on April 25, 1974 opens up the road to revolution in Europe, with the social revolution in the West fusing with the political revolution in the East.

The ebbs and flows of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat do influence and will influence the whole course of the class struggle in Europe. The bourgeois state in Spain is doomed to suffer, within a short time, the same fate as in Portugal since April 1974. The Italian bourgeoisie can no longer rule as before, with its bankrupt party, the Christian Democracy; it notes with terror that it is slowly but surely slipping towards the abyss. In France the Vth. Republic is moribund, its present survival due only to the division of the workers. Its collapse will ineluctably open up a revolutionary crisis.

The Portugese revolution is subject to fluctuations. A tragic defeat in the near future, like that suffered by the Spanish revolution in 1936-1938 is excluded, and, even more so, the tragic consequences which this defeat had on the European proletariat. That was the final touch to a

whole series of defeats suffered by the European proletariat since 1919, and set the seal on its rout. In the years 1974-1975, however, there has risen the dawn of a new period of the world revolution. In the present situation, the line of political development in Portugal is characterised by the repeated defeats of all the reactionary attempts by the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists. It is this which constitutes an extraordinary factor of acceleration and maturation in the Portugese revolution. One of the decisive questions of the Portugese revolution is its linking-together with the revolution bursting out in other countries of Europe. That is the reason for the sharp political battle now taking place in Portugal and Europe for or against the Portugese revolution.

September 4, 1975  
Jaques Meyrand.



# The IMG and the Portuguese Revolution

By Michael Casey

THE DEVELOPMENT of the Portuguese Revolution has opened up a discussion in the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International.' This discussion, because it is concerned with the highest point of the world class struggle today, revolves around the fundamental problems facing the working class — how to establish its political independence and unity as a class against the bourgeoisie — and successfully accomplish the revolutionary struggle for power, overthrow the bourgeois state and impose its own class rule through the means of a Soviet Republic.

The British section of the 'United Secretariat', the International Marxist Group (IMG), takes a position in support of the Mandel - Maitan - Frank majority. In this article, we will begin to look at the way in which the IMG has viewed the unfolding revolution in Portugal, as expressed in its paper, 'Red Weekly'.

We will begin with the period leading up to the

elections to the Constituent Assembly on April 25th, 1975. The reason for this starting point is not because there is not much to be said about the positions taken by the IMG before that date, but is a problem of practicalities. Unfortunately we do not have to hand a file of the publications of the IMG dealing with the Portuguese events until this time. The material we do have available however is enough to demonstrate that the positions of the I.M.G. stand totally to the programme of revolutionary Marxism.

## The IMG and Stalinism

In the Transitional Programme, Trotsky characterises Stalinism as having definitively passed over to the side of the bourgeois order. Further, he states that "Social Democracy, prostituting Marxism, and Stalinism — the anti-thesis of Bolshevism — are both mortal enemies of the proletarian revolution and its morals." We can find nowhere in the Transitional Programme nor in any other

writing of Trotsky since the time the Third International was thus characterised, any assertion that either Stalinism or Social Democracy are superior, the one to the other, from the point of view of the working class. The Transitional Programme is unambiguous. Both are reactionary, counter-revolutionary agencies within the workers movement. It was not until the development of revisionism in the Fourth International itself that this viewpoint was called into question by M. Pablo. Pablo saw a new role for the bureaucratic apparatuses which, under certain circumstances would find themselves forced to take up the leadership of the revolutionary struggle of the working class. A special place was reserved in Pablo's scheme for the Stalinist apparatus. Its misuse of the name 'Communist' was accepted by Pablo and the Pablo-ites, who in the 1950's talked in terms of "the World Communist Movement" as if Stalinism and Trotskyism were two trends or tendencies within the same fundamental movement. As an example of this policy, the so-called Fifth world Congress of the Pablo-ites in 1957, issued a manifesto containing the following demands:

"Demand that freedom of discussion and freedom of tendencies to be re-established within the Communist Parties. Demand the reconstruction of a Communist International within which, on a basis of strict equality, all communist parties would work together the joint line that would lead to the world triumph of communism!" Pabloism destroyed the Fourth International as a world party through an adaption to Stalinism in 1953, when Pablo and Co. supported the Kremlin against the insurrection of the East German workers.

When we look at today's lineal descendants of Pablo in Britain therefore, it comes as no surprise to see them adopt a position which places Stalinism on a special level, which imparts to the Portugese Communist Party (PCP), a superior role, from the point of view of the working class, to that played by the Socialist Party (SP).

The IMG's evaluation of the political situation and the state of the Portugese workers movement in the period leading up to the elections demonstrates this clearly. They see the PCP as their main expression of the Portugese working class. On the other hand, all the RED WEEKLY of 6th March can find to say about the PS led by Mario Soares is that it is a "catspaw of imperialism". RED WEEKLY paints a picture of the "reformist" PCP as being constantly to the "left" of the SP, as being the main framework of the struggles of the working class, which the SP, is regarded as being outside of. Not only is a question mark placed by the IMG in this period over the nature of the SP as a workers party (it is simply dismissed as "not a party with long standing or deep roots in the Portugese working class." "The fascists considered them sufficiently harmless. . ."), but C. Balfour states on June 6: ". . . the PSP has graduated from serving the interests of the Portugese capitalists to being a spokesman for the views of international imperialism in Portugal." Balfour finds as one of his reasons for such a characterisation of the PS, the fact that it is a member of the "so-called Socialist International" and that it is in receipt of funds and political support from parties such as the British Labour Party and the German SPD.

The IMG's view of the PCP on the other hand would lead us to suppose that it is a purely Portugese "reformist" phenomenon. The SP's position as part of international Social Democracy is enough to damn it. Yet the IMG never once analyses the position of the PCP in relation to the international apparatus of Kremlin Stalinism. Underneath this fact is not simply a question of omission, what lies underneath is a view of Social Democracy as the worst of the two by its very nature. This Stalinophile outlook, not blindness alone, dominated the IMG view of the impending elections to the Constituent Assembly. Balfour, writing in the IMG paper projects this view of the possible election results;

"In the forthcoming elections the Socialist Party will be one of the main hopes of the Portugese capitalists. They hope that it and the capitalist parties to its right can gain a clear majority of the votes cast. The capitalists will then try to boot the CP out of the government, and use the prestige of the PSP to split the mass movement and draw a section of it to support the new government, which can then get on with the job of making Portugal a safe place for capitalists to exploit workers."

On April 24, we find Balfour continuing in similar vein: "With the 'pact' that has been signed in Portugal between the ruling Armed Forces Movement (MFA) and all the countries leading political parties, the elections which are to be held on 25th April will have little direct importance. Irrespective of what happens on April 25, the MFA intends to continue to hold the political strings for the next three to five years."

"The MFA, as part of its class collaborationist scheme to meet the crisis of Portugese capitalism, has already proposed to draw up a common platform that will unite all the signatories of its pact — from the far right central democrats to the far left FSP. There is even talk of trying to fuse all of these groups into a single organisation whose job would be simply to back the MFA leaders."

"But the outcome of the elections will have an important indirect effect on what takes place in Portugal over the next few months. If the right wing supporters of the MFA pact — the bourgeois CDS and PPD parties and the Socialist Party — win a sweeping victory it will strengthen the right wing of the Armed Forces. This will lay the basis for manoeuvres designed to block any further measures that cut into the interests of Portugese capitalists and to lay the ground for a right-wing counter offensive."

"If the 'left' pact (the CP, its front group the MDP, and the FSP) do well, then the present policies of the MFA will be given a boost in the short term. But at the same time the combativity of the masses movement will be spurred on and the workers will feel encouraged to continue their demands for forthright anti-capitalist measures. At the same time, the right will be discouraged from pursuing any further its policy of compromise with the regime, and turn once more to plots and schemes for a future counter-coup".

"These two passages are such gems that it is worth our while to dwell upon them briefly, and compare the assertions made by Balfour with the reality of the elections. The first quotation assumes that the elections will provide the basis, if there is a large vote for the SP, for the formation of a new government on which the bourgeoisie can rely more directly. Note that the SP, PPD and CDS are lumped together as the "Right" as opposed to the PCP and its satellites which are presently "left". The words substitute for class criteria and blur over the awkward reality that the SP is a workers' party.

In the second passage quoted, Balfour asserts that the only possibilities opened are either a shift to the right within the MFA, resting on the support of the SP-PPD-CDS, or the continuation of the policy of the MFA at that time i.e., continuing to speak in the name of 'socialism' and 'revolution' while the mass movement will be given a "boost".

However, reality confounded this scheme. The SP and PPD between them received 66% of the votes cast but the CP was not removed from the government. On the contrary, while the SP emerged as the largest workers party, the CP revealed in its 12% vote the fact that it was becoming isolated from the masses, and under these conditions what we in fact saw, was a campaign conducted jointly by the Stalinists and the MFA, against the legitimacy of the election results. Precisely what we did see as a result of the elections, was not the formation of a large bloc in the Constituent Assembly of these parties of the "right" on which the "right wing of the Armed Forces" could rely, but instead the MFA began loudly to decry, in

the name of "socialism" and the "revolution", the democratic rights of the masses, in the guise of opposition to "bourgeois democracy". Instead of being ejected, the CP became the mouthpiece of the military caste in its campaign against democracy.

The situation which according to Balfour the bourgeois would most favour, came about. The CP received a derisory vote. Why then did the MFA feel compelled to reject the election results? The answer must surely be that the vote did not have the content that the IMG ascribed to it.

To understand the real significance of the election we have to return once more to that yardstick that the IMG so loves to blur over; the evaluation of election results as with all other social phenomena by class criteria. If we do away with the confusion created by Balfour with his use of above-class concepts of "right" and "left", and talk instead of the class nature of the CP and SP alike as counter-revolutionary but workers' parties nonetheless, we can begin to understand that the results, through the majority given to the workers parties, expressed the desire of the majority of the Portuguese people for a government of the workers' parties.

Red Weekly had already stated that the election results would be "of little direct importance", due to the existence of the pact with the MFA. The importance of the composition of the Constituent Assembly resulting from the elections, is here totally ignored. Nothing is made of the majority of representatives put there to represent the exploited masses. Surely the very creation of the pact and the determination of the MFA before and after the election not to let power pass out of its hands shows that the bourgeois order, was afraid of the elections and expected large votes for the workers' parties. This raises the very question that Red Weekly was unable to see — the replacement of the MFA dominated coalition set-up by a government of the workers' parties. Such a government would be expected by the masses to govern in their interests. Such a perspective of the elections in which Trotskyists could raise the question of a break by the workers organisations with the bourgeoisie, would open up a real channel through which to struggle for working class unity and raise the question of a workers' government,

In the IMG's view, how should the Portuguese masses have voted? Balfour tells us. "A significant vote" for — ". . . the 'centrist' movement of the Socialist Left, the Trotskyist International Communist League and the Maoist groups. . .". Such a vote we are told ". . . would show that the most politically aware sections. . . remained pledged to creating socialist solutions based on workers' power as the way out of the crisis".

Let us take note of the phrase used by Balfour — "the right will be discouraged from pursuing any further its policy of compromise with the regime". In this phrase is summed up the IMG's view of the nature of the ruling MFA. It is not the bulwark of reaction, but on the contrary according to Balfour the "right", including the SP, are unhappy with the MFA and are only compromising with it until they can prepare their forces for a counter-coup. The MFA is therefore, in this picture, standing in between the masses and reaction.

Ignoring the fact that a 'counter-coup', presumably to re-establish corporatism, could not be conducted with the participation of the SP, since such a coup would have as its goal the destruction of such workers' parties, we have here presented before us the political core of what was to be the policy of the IMG after the elections. Before proceeding to look at this next period, let us return to what the Transitional Programme says about the mass workers parties, and how Trotskyists relate to these parties in terms of their policy, electoral policy included:

"The central task of the Fourth International consists in freeing the proletariat from the old leadership, whose conservatism is in complete contradiction to the

catastrophic eruptions of disintegrating capitalism and represents the chief obstacle to historical progress. The chief accusation which the Fourth International advances against the traditional organisations of the proletariat is the fact that they do not wish to tear themselves away from the political semi-corpse of the bourgeoisie. Under these conditions the demand systematically addressed to the old leadership: "Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power!" is an extremely important weapon for exposing the treacherous character of the parties and organisations of the Second, Third and Amsterdam internationals".

"Of all parties which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers and farmers government."

As for the elections to the Constituent Assembly: they were important because they were the focus of political activity of the masses. The fact that the Constituent Assembly is an element of political life in the framework of bourgeois society, does not mean it is outside the class struggle. The fact is that the elections were part of the class struggle. As such a perspective of advancing the interests of the working class through a class solution to the elections is a duty for Marxists.

In Portugal the leadership of the masses is in the hands of the SP and CP. Concretely, the demand, "break with the bourgeois", could only be posed in terms of a break with the MFA by these parties. As we have seen, because the MFA was not seen at the centre of the interests of the bourgeoisie, but reaction was seen as incarnated in the "right" including the SP, the IMG was unable to present this perspective. The Transitional programme says nothing about the strategy of fighting for a workers government, by creating the illusion that a vote for one of the two apparatuses is better. It talks of "all the parties which base themselves on the workers and peasants". Thus the IMG turned their face away from the masses, away from a fight for the unity of the class and towards petty-bourgeois left-ist sects. They make no call for a government based on the expressed will of the masses. Instead they hope that a large vote for the Stalinists will "encourage the workers".

The IMG were forced by the 38% vote for the SP to recognise on the 8th May ". . . the undeniable emergence of the Socialist Party as the chosen spokesman for an important section of the working class." and that it "received a massive vote in the most important proletarian areas." Yet there is no reappraisal of their perspective which would take this fact into account, and begin to get to grips with the illusions and aspirations of these sections. Instead, in the introduction to an interview with a member of the LCI under the title 'Portugal after the elections', they can only pin their hopes on "a politically advanced vanguard layer" which voted for the so-called "revolutionary left".

### **The Republica affair and the MFA/PCP offensive against Democracy.**

From the elections, the MFA turned onto the offensive against democratic liberties, against the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly and against freedom of the press. In this it used, as its main mouthpiece in the workers' movement, the PCP.

In this it used as its main mouthpiece, in the workers' movement, the PCP. The MFA's aim was at all costs to stop the establishment of an elected government, preserving instead its bonapartist military dictatorship with the support of the apparatuses, in order to prepare the conditions for a re-introduction of corporatism.

The "vanguard" leftists played a key part in this offensive through their attack on the press of the SP. The 'Republica' affair found the IMG lined up once more with the MFA, PCP and the leftists. The common thread to the political statements of all of these is summed up in RED WEEKLY 12 June:

"The Socialist Party, however, has organised its cam-

paign around the theme of 'press freedom'. But what is this 'freedom of the press' at present? Freedom of information? Not exactly. Rather, it is the freedom of the owners to maintain their hold over the means of information and communication. "Republica" is not the official paper of the Socialist Party . . . . "It is a private newspaper".

At the same time as the MFA and the Stalinists were attacking the democratic liberties of the masses as "bourgeois", The IMG give a cover to this offensive by opposing one of these basic liberties.

Justifying the closure of Republica as a question of workers control because Republica was not an official PS paper, RED WEEKLY forgets that traditionally many social-democratic parties have expressed themselves through papers not under their organisational control, such as the DAILY HERALD in Britain. If the mass workers parties are judged by abstract criteria of their resemblance on a formal level to a Bolshevik party in matters such as control of the press, control over parliamentary fractions, trade union fractions etc, it is no surprise that the IMG is incapable of seeing the equally counter-revolutionary role of both the Stalinist and Social-democratic apparatuses. In actual fact the tight discipline of the Stalinist apparatus ties it to the bourgeoisie through the Kremlin, an agency of the bourgeoisie, just as surely as the relative freedom of the social-democratic apparatuses allows them to put themselves at the service of their 'own' bourgeoisie.

That we have an issue of principle involved here is amply pointed out by the article 'The Working Class and Freedom of the Press' by Leon Trotsky which appeared in Marxist Bulletin No 1.

In case anyone has doubts about the IMG's glib talk about the 'workers democracy', we only have to read further in the same article to reveal the content of the position they took over Republica.

The IMG calls for "immediate nationalisation" of the media by the MFA regime: This we are told would be a "necessary pre-condition" to the distribution of the means of communication and information amongst 'workers' and cultural organisations'. The MFA is asked to do something which only the working class, through its constitution as the ruling class can do, free the media from the straight-jacket of control by the bourgeoisie! Again we are presented with a perspective that the MFA can take progressive measures, when what characterises the MFA most of all is the fact that it will fight to the death against the will of the masses, expressed in the elections, for elected government, for the extension of freedoms. Because the MFA needs to prevent these advances if it is to fulfil its one and only aim, gathering the forces of reaction.

The same article complains: "The SP . . . has used the Republica affair to extend its post-electoral offensive: to call into question the municipal councils set up after April 25th 1974, and to challenge the trade union leaderships elected by a show of hands."

The SP is only conducting a manoeuvre when it talks about democracy we are led to believe. It is undoubtedly true, that Soares' is motivated by the need to preserve the position of the SP apparatus, but that does not invalidate the struggle for democracy, nor the movement which responds to Soares' words. Let us remember also that in both the Municipalities and in the Trades Unions, the Stalinists gained their positions through anti-democratic methods actions, including against the SP apparatus itself, and not just with the blessing of the MFA to boot, but as the chosen representatives of the officer caste and thus the bourgeoisie, within the workers movement.

The response of the SP to the offensive against democracy, was that on July 10th, they withdrew from the government. Not only this, but the SP organised a mobilisation of the masses in the form of mass demonstrations on the theme of defence of democratic liberties. Here surely was a magnificent opportunity for Trotskyists to explain to

these "important sections of the working-class", that only through working class unity and independence from the MFA and bourgeois parties, can the defence of democratic freedom be assured. Put the SP leadership on the spot!

But no, the IMG, Balfour once more, have this to say on 17th July: First he asserts that "the Socialist Party has left the Portuguese government for good." A rather sweeping statement. Does it imply that the SP had broken with the bourgeoisie irrevocably, and thus there is no further basis for its participation in bourgeois governments? Obviously not, for in the next sentence, lumping them together with the PPD, Balfour tells us that they are the "main defenders of imperialist interests against the struggles of the Portuguese working class." Note the use of the qualification "main".

Leaving the government "for good" must surely mean that there is something qualitative about the government which prohibits the SP from participating in it as a means to defend the bourgeois order. Here again, the reactionary government, the means through which the working class is tied down by its leadership within the framework of capitalist society, is painted up to be something opposite, once again the IMG implies that it is in between the main class forces.

Clearly the IMG don't see the break with the government as opening opportunities for the working class to carry the fight for a break with the bourgeoisie. The SP move is regarded as reactionary! The IMG opposed it! Listen to Balfour: "But what was really getting up Mario Soares's nose was the recent decision of the MFA to set up 'popular assemblies' based on elected factory and residents committees, co-ordinated eventually at national level through a national Popular Assembly. This would clearly challenge the authority of the Constituent Assembly elected earlier this year, which the SP and the Popular Democrats control and which they hope to use to back up their pro-imperialist policies."

The scheme for Popular Assemblies, the nature of which is explained elsewhere in this issue of MARXIST BULLETIN is here given support openly by the IMG. Support for a reactionary plan to attempt to stifle the working class in the name of 'peoples power'! Here, clearly, the IMG gives support to the military regime against the sovereignty of the only elected body in the country! You see, the MFA isn't all bad! Its contradictory!

"The AFM plan was first introduced two weeks ago as part of a compromise between the left wing and the right wing inside the AFM. As such it has two contradictory sides".

Here the MFA is presented as something which expresses the interests of the working class, even if only within a "wing", the objective contradiction between the MFA rule, and the establishment of democratic liberties, which include free elections, and which it is unquestionably in the interests of the working class to fight for, is denied in the IMG scheme. Instead of the objective conflict between the class interests of the workers and an unelected military rule which is bidding its time to prepare a bloodbath we have once more the conflict between "right" and "left" in the MFA which determines the IMG perspective.

The position taken by the IMG during the summer would have led them to be on the opposite side of the barricades to the workers who marched in the great SP demonstrations, as indeed were their co-thinkers in Portugal. On democratic rights, over Republica, and on all the major questions confronting the Portuguese working class in the period of political upheavals in the summer, the IMG found itself in fundamentally the same camp as the Stalinist apparatus, giving backing from the 'left' to the plans of the military in defence of bourgeois order. That is the measure of the distance between the IMG and the Transitional Programme, it is a gulf which is unbridgeable. A gulf which is graphically represented by the Military-Stalinist barricades against the working class set up in the month of July.

# introduction

THE IMPORTANCE and role of democratic demands in the proletarian revolution has been dramatically underscored by the course of the class struggle in Portugal since the fall of the fascist regime in April 1974. But the problem is as old as the Marxist movement itself, and in fact played a key part in germinating and fertilising the political outlook of its two pioneers. Those ultra-lefts who today scorn the slogan 'freedom of the press' as a reactionary bourgeois demand should know that the first political article written by Marx was a passionate defence of the freedom of the press against the censorship laws of the Prussian monarchy. (Comments on the latest Prussian Censorship Instruction, Marx-Engels Collected Works, Vol. 1). For unlike the sectarians of today who falsely speak in his name, the youthful Marx had already grasped the basic truth that a social movement or intellectual current that takes its stand on the grounds of science can only develop to maturity in conditions of an unfettered press, and freedom of expression, assembly and organisation. That is as true of Portugal 1975 as it was of Prussia in 1842. This axiom finds its programmatic expression in the Communist Manifesto, where it is stated that 'the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy'.

Active participants in the great revolutionary struggles of 1848, the Manifesto's authors understood the profound strategic, as well as tactical, importance of democratic demands and conquests for the proletariat in its struggle for emancipation. The rights and freedoms traditionally associated with the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary ascent were and are in no sense gifts handed down by the exploiters of the proletariat, any more than they are traps to divert it from the struggle for the workers' own class demands. In all its progressive historic battles, the bourgeoisie "sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore supplies the proletariat

with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie". (emphasis added)

Today we witness the lamentable spectacle of not only Stalinists (of whom we should expect such treachery) but self-styled Trotskyists voluntarily handing back these priceless weapons to the bourgeoisie. Constituent Assembly, freedom of the press, the independence of trade unions, freedom of religion — all these conquests of the proletariat secured at tremendous cost in the period of capitalist ascent, and defended with such tenacity, despite treacherous leadership, in the epoch of its decay, are now in Portugal scorned as reactionary diversions from the struggle for workers' power. And not only in Portugal. All eyes are now rightly fixed on Spain as the central arena for the next stage in the unfolding proletarian revolution in Europe. There, even more than in Portugal, democratic demands will play a central part in the struggle of the workers, and the exploited peasantry and urban middle class, against the fascist regime. For in Spain, unlike Portugal, there is the question of the monarchy, and therefore, of the burning need to raise the demand for both the Constituent Assembly and the Republic, combined with agitation for a government of workers' and peasants that will implement and advance the demands and struggle of the masses.

Naturally, the specific weight of democratic demands and slogans, and their relationship with economic demands (although here too, as in the case of workers' control, there is a democratic aspect) cannot be determined a priori. It flows from the living course of the class struggle in a given concrete historical setting. Thus in the opening phase of the Spanish Revolution, Trotsky insisted on not only the importance, but the primacy of democratic demands, and repeatedly referred to a distinct democratic stage within the overall process of the proletarian revolution in that country

Thus in January 1931 he writes that 'the masses of the city and countryside can be untied at the present time only under democratic slogans', while later the same month, returning to the issue of democratic demands ignored by the Stalinists, he insists, 'the more courageously, resolutely and implacably the proletarian vanguard fights for democratic slogans, the sooner it will win over the masses and undermine the support for the bourgeois republicans and socialist reformists.' Then, in April, Trotsky again emphasises, 'it is necessary for the communists at present to come forward as the party of the most consistent, decisive and intransigent defenders of democracy.' And in May of the same year: 'the immediate task of the Spanish communists is not the struggle for power, but the struggle for the masses (emphasis in original), and furthermore, this struggle will develop in the next period on the basis of the bourgeois republic and to a great degree under the slogans of democracy, and as if to anticipate the metaphysics of the present day sectarians and Leftists, Trotsky adds, 'to counterpose the slogan of Soviets as organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the realities of the present struggle means to convert the slogan of Soviets into a supra-historical divinity, into a superrevolutionary icon, which individual saints may worship (Saints Pierre, Ernest and Livio perhaps?) but which the masses will never follow.'

Not that it was a question only of Spain. Around the same time, Trotsky was drawn into a discussion on the problems facing revolutionaries in Italy, where there loomed the twin dangers of Marxists either subordinating the proletariat to a pseudo-democratic, liberal wing of the bourgeoisie after the downfall of the fascist regime; or, alternatively, of minimising or ignoring altogether the importance of democratic demands and slogans in the transition period between the break-up of the Mussolini regime and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. 'The question is posed', 'wrote Trotsky, of a series of battles, disturbances, changing situations, abrupt turns, constituting in their entirety the different stages of the proletarian revolution. These stages may be many. But in no case can they contain within them a bourgeois revolution or its mysterious hybrid, the "popular" revolution.' Then having demarcated himself clearly from any revived or revised version of the old pre-1917 'democratic dictatorship' formula of the Bolsheviks, or the 'two-stage' revolution of either the Mensheviks, or Stalin-Bukharin in China, Trotsky goes on:

"But does this mean that we communists reject in advance all democratic slogans, all transitional or preparatory slogans, limiting ourselves strictly to the proletarian dictatorship? (emphasis in original). That would be a great display of sterile sectarianism. We do not believe for one moment that a single revolutionary leap suffices to cross what separates the fascist regime from the proletarian dictatorship.

In no way do we deny a transitional period with its transitional demands, including democratic demands. But it is precisely with the aid of these transitional slogans, which are always the starting point on the road to the proletarian dictatorship, that the communist vanguard will have to win the whole class and the latter will have to unite around itself all the oppressed masses of the nation.' (Writings, 1930). Trotsky met stubborn resistance to this approach from the Bourgeois of the Prometeo group, for we find him resuming the debate with even more vehemence the following year:

'These doctrinaires refuse to understand that we carry half, three quarters, or in certain periods, even 99% of the preparation of the (proletarian) dictatorship on the basis of democracy, and in doing this we defend every inch of democratic positions under our feet.'

As Marxists, we of course have a duty to constantly warn against illusions in the stability of democratic positions gained under capitalism, and of the ability of any wing of the bourgeoisie, however radical, to defend them

against the attacks of reaction. But, as Trotsky pointed in this same article, 'democracy serves the bourgeoisie, but within certain limits it can also serve the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The unfortunate thing is that the Bordigists do not grasp democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat as historical institutions which can replace one another dialectically, but as two naked principles of which one embodies good, the other evil.' (Writings, 1930-31).

Does this mean that because the working class is the only class able not only to defend democracy under capitalism, but to supplant it with the highest form of democracy — the dictatorship of the proletariat — Marxists stand aside (or worse) when the democratic rights of other classes are violated by reaction? Here too Trotsky (following in the traditions of Lenin) is adamant:

'Let us imagine, . . . that the fascists tomorrow begin to storm Free Masons' lodges . . . Can we support the Free Masonry? Never! But we can and must defend its right to exist against the fascists, if necessary with rifle in hand. To be able to do this the working class must be revolutionary and remain effective in struggle. The People's Front makes this impossible. Therefore, to be able to defend eventually also the Free Masonry, the radical bourgeoisie must be driven out from the People's Front. Herein exists not the slightest contradiction.' (The Church Struggle under Fascism, "Writings 1935-36").

This methodological approach also underlies the article by Trotsky that we reproduce below. Directed against the ultra-lefts and sectarians of his day — not only the Stalinists of the third period and 'social fascism', but also those episodically drawn to the International Left Opposition (the Italian Bordigists) as well as the centrist Brandler current — it not only retains all its old force, but has even gained in theoretical stature with the passage of time. Could not these lines had been written in answer to those who in Portugal today, counterpose non-existent 'Soviets' to an elected Constituent Assembly in which the workers' parties have a clear majority?:

' . . . in the revolutionary awakening of the masses, democratic slogans will inevitably constitute the first chapter. Even if the further progress of the struggle should in general not permit, even for a single day, the regeneration of a democratic state — and this is very possible — the struggle itself cannot develop by the circumvention of democratic slogans! A revolutionary party that would attempt to jump over this stage would break its neck.'

Quite a few necks are being broken in Portugal, and not only those of the Stalinists, who naturally regard the democratic demands of the workers and peasants with the same contempt as do their masters in the Kremlin and its satraps in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, E. Germany and the other East European states. In attempting to impose their pseudo-radical, anti-democratic schemas on to the living process of the Portuguese revolution, the Mandel faction of the United Sectariat, and all those who in any sense share its reactionary stand on the role of democratic demands, has run full tilt into a revolutionary upsurge of the masses which has its immediate goal the extirpation of every last vestige of fascist rule. Thus the entirely legitimate thirst for democratic freedoms, for the right to a free press, for the workers' own parties to claim their right to shape Portugal's political, social and economic future Ninety years separate Marx's first literary thrust against the enemies of democracy, and Trotsky's scientific elaboration of its essential elements. Since then, the rise to power of German fascism, the triumph of Franco in Spain, and the continued degeneration of Stalinism from centrism into a system of bureaucratic repression of the most modest of demands by the workers and intelligentsia, have lent even greater force to this component of the Marxist programme. Marxist Bulletin takes its stand full square in defence of the tradition and methods embodied in this article.



# fascism $\beta$ democratic slogans

*The following article is from Writings of Leon Trotsky 1932-1933 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972). Reprinted by permission.*

## 1. Is It True That Hitler Has Destroyed "Democratic Prejudices"?

The April resolution of the presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International "on the present situation in Germany" will, we believe, go down in history as the final testimonial to the bankruptcy of the Comintern of the epigones. The resolution is crowned with a prognosis in which all the vices and prejudices of the Stalinist bureaucracy reach their culmination. "The establishment of an open fascist dictatorship", the resolution proclaims in boldface type, "accelerates the tempo of the development of a proletarian revolution in Germany by destroying all democratic illusions of the masses and by freeing them from the influence of the Social Democracy."

Fascism, it seems, has unexpectedly become the locomotive of history: It destroys democratic illusions, It frees the masses from the influence of Social Democracy, It accelerates the development of the proletarian revolution. The Stalinist bureaucracy assigns to fascism the accomplishment of those basic tasks which it proved itself utterly incapable of solving.

Theoretically, the victory of Fascism is undoubtedly evidence of the fact that democracy has exhausted itself; but politically the fascist regime preserves democratic



prejudices, recreates them, inculcates them into youth, and is even capable of imparting to them, for a short time, the greatest strength. Precisely in this consists one of the most important manifestations of the reactionary historic role of fascism.

Doctrinaires think schematically. Masses think with facts. The working class perceives events not as experiments with this or that "thesis", but as living changes in the fate of the people. The victory of fascism adds a million times more to the scale of political development than the prognosis for the indefinite future which flows from it. Had a proletarian state grown out of the bankruptcy of democracy, the development of society, as well as the development of mass consciousness, would have taken a great leap forward. But inasmuch as it was actually the victory of fascism that grew out of the bankruptcy of democracy, the consciousness of the masses was set far back — of course, only temporarily. The smashing of the Weimar democracy by Hitler can no more put an end to the democratic illusions of the masses than Goering's setting the Reichstag on fire can burn out parliamentary cretinism.

## 2. The Example of Spain and Italy

For four years in succession we heard that democracy and fascism do not exclude but supplement each other. How then can the victory of fascism liquidate democracy once and for all? We would like to have some explanations on this score by Bukharin, Zinoviev, or by Manuilsky "himself".

The military-police dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was declared by the Comintern to be fascism. But if the victory of fascism signifies the final liquidation of democratic prejudices, how can it be explained that the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera gave way to a bourgeois republic? It is true that the regime of Rivera was far from being fascism. But it had, at all events, this much in common with fascism: it arose as a result of the bankruptcy of the parliamentary regime. This did not prevent it, however, after its own bankruptcy was revealed, from giving way to democratic parliamentarism.

One may attempt to say that the Spanish revolution is proletarian in its tendencies, and that the Social Democracy in alliance with other republicans has succeeded in arresting its development at the stage of bourgeois parliamentarism. But this objection, correct in itself, proves only more clearly our idea that if bourgeois democracy succeeded in paralysing the revolution of the proletariat, this was only due to the fact that under the yoke of the "fascist" dictatorship, the democratic illusions were not weakened but became stronger.

Have 'democratic illusions' disappeared in Italy during the ten years of Mussolini's despotism? This is how the fascists themselves are inclined to picture the state of affairs. In reality, however, democratic illusions are acquiring a new force. During this period a new generation has been raised up. Politically, it has not lived in the conditions of freedom, but it knows full well what fascism is: this is the raw material for vulgar democracy. The organisation *Giustizia e Libertà* (Justice and Freedom) is distributing illegal democratic literature in Italy, and not without success. The ideas of democracy are therefore finding adherents who are ready to sacrifice themselves. Even the flabby generalisations of the liberal monarchist, Count Sforza, are spread in the form of illegal pamphlets. That's how far back Italy has been thrown during these years!

Why fascism in Germany is called upon to play a role entirely opposite to that which it played in Italy remains incomprehensible. Because "Germany is not Italy"? Victorious fascism is in reality not a locomotive of history but its gigantic brake. Just as the policy of the Social Democracy prepared the triumph of Hitler, so the regime of

National Socialism inevitably leads to the warming up of democratic illusions.

## 3 Can the Social Democracy Regenerate Itself?

German comrades testify that the Social Democratic workers and even many of the Social Democratic bureaucrats are 'disillusioned' with democracy. We must extract all we can out of the critical moods of the reformist workers, in the interests of their revolutionary education. But at the same time the extent of the reformists' 'disillusionment' must be clearly understood. The Social Democratic high priests scold democracy so as to justify themselves. Unwilling to admit that they showed themselves as contemptible cowards, incapable of fighting for the democracy which they created and for their soft berths in it, these gentlemen shift the blame from themselves to intangible democracy. As we see, this radicalism is not only cheap but also spurious through and through! Let the bourgeoisie only beckon these 'disillusioned' ones with its little finger and they will come running on all fours to a new coalition with it. It is true, in the masses of Social Democratic workers a real disgust with the betrayals and mirages of democracy is being born. But to what extent? The larger half of seven to eight million Social Democratic workers is in a state of the greatest confusion, glum passivity, and capitulation to the victors. At the same time, a new generation will be forming under the heel of fascism, a generation to which the Weimar Constitution will be a historic legend. What line then will the political crystallization within the working class follow? This depends upon many conditions, among them, of course, also upon our policy.

Historically, the direct replacement of the fascist regime by a workers' state is not excluded. But for the realisation of this possibility it is necessary that a powerful illegal Communist party form itself in the process of struggle against fascism, under the leadership of which the proletariat could seize power. However, it must be said that the creation of a revolutionary party of this sort in illegality is not very probable; at any rate, it is not assured by anything in advance. The discontentment, indignation, agitation of the masses will, from a certain moment onward grow much faster than the illegal formation of the party vanguard. And every lack of clarity in the consciousness of the masses will inevitably help democracy.

This does not at all mean that after the fall of fascism Germany will again have to go through a long school of parliamentarism. Fascism will not eradicate the past political experience; it is even less capable of changing the social structure of the nation. It would be the greatest mistake to expect a new lengthy democratic epoch in the development of Germany. But in the revolutionary awakening of the masses, democratic slogans will inevitably constitute the first chapter. Even if the further progress of the struggle should in general not permit, even for a single day, the regeneration of a democratic state — and this is very possible — the struggle itself cannot develop by the circumvention of democratic slogans! A revolutionary party that would attempt to jump over this stage would break its neck. The question of the Social Democracy is closely connected with the general perspective. Will it reappear on the stage? The old organisation is irrevocably lost. But this does not at all mean that Social Democracy cannot be regenerated under a new historic mask. Opportunist parties which fall and decompose so easily under the blows of reaction come back to life just as easily at the first political revival. We observed this in Russia in the example of the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. German Social Democracy can not only regenerate itself, but even acquire great influence if the revolutionary proletarian party should set up a doctrinaire "negation" of the slogans of democracy against a dialectical attitude toward them. The presidium of the Comintern in this field, as in so many others, remains the gratuitous assistant of reformism.

#### 4. The Brandlerites Improve on the Stalinists

The confusion on the question of democratic slogans has revealed itself most profoundly in the programmatic thesis of the opportunist group of Brandler-Thalheimer on the question of the struggle against fascism. The Communist Party, the theses read, "should unite the manifestations of discontentment of all (!) classes against the fascist dictatorship" (gegenden Strom, p.7. The word "all" is underlined in the original).

At the same time, the theses insistently warn: "The partial slogan cannot be of a bourgeois-democratic nature". Between these two statements, each of which is erroneous, there is an irreconcilable contradiction. In the first place, the formula of the unification of the discontentment of "all classes" sounds absolutely incredible. The Russian Marxists did at one time abuse such a formation in the struggle against czarism. Out of this abuse grew the Menshevik conception of the revolution, later on adopted by Stalin for China. But in Russia, at least, it was a question of the collision of the bourgeois nation with the privileged monarchy. In what sense can one speak in a bourgeois nation, of the struggle of "all classes" against fascism, which is the tool of the big bourgeoisie against the proletariat? It would be instructive to see how Thalheimer, the manufacturer of theoretical vulgarities, would unite the discontentment of Hugenberg — and he is also discontented — with the discontentment of the unemployed worker. How else can one unite a movement of "all classes" if not by putting oneself on the basis of bourgeois democracy? Verily, a classic combination of opportunism with an ultraradicalism in words!

The movement of the proletariat against the fascist regime will acquire an ever-greater mass character to the extent that the petty bourgeoisie becomes disappointed with fascism, isolating the possessing summits and the government apparatus. The task of a proletarian party would consist in utilising the weakening of the yoke on the part of the petty-bourgeois reaction for the purpose of arousing the activity of the proletariat towards the goal of winning over the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie.

It is true the growth of the discontentment of the intermediary strata and the growth of the resistance of the workers will create a crack in the bloc of the possessing classes and will spur their "left flank" to seek contact with the petty bourgeoisie. The task of the proletarian party in relation to the "liberal" flank of the possessors will consist, however, not in including them both in a bloc of "all classes" against fascism, but, on the contrary, in immediately declaring a decisive struggle against it for influence on the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie.

Under what political slogans will this struggle take place? The dictatorship of Hitler grew directly out of the Weimar Constitution. The representatives of the petty bourgeoisie have, with their own hands, presented Hitler with the mandate for a dictatorship. If we should assume a very favourable and quick development of the fascist crisis, then the demand for the convocation of the Reichstag with the inclusion of all the banished deputies may, at a certain moment, unite the workers with the widest strata of the petty bourgeoisie. If the crisis should break out later and the memory of the Reichstag should have had time to obliterate itself, the slogan of new elections may acquire great popularity. It is sufficient that such a road is possible. To tie one's hands in relation to temporary democratic slogans which may be forced upon us by our petty-bourgeois allies and by the backward strata of the proletariat itself would be fatal doctrinairism.

Brandler-Thalheimer believe, however, that we should only advocate "democratic rights for the labouring masses: the right of assembly, trade unions, freedom of the press, organisation, and strikes." In order to emphasise their radicalism more, they add: "these demands should be strictly

(!) distinguished from bourgeois-democratic demands of universal democratic rights." There is no person more wretched than the opportunist who takes the knife of ultraradicalism between his teeth!

Freedom of assembly and the press only for the labouring masses is conceivable solely under the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, under the nationalisation of buildings, printing establishments, etc. It is possible that the dictatorship of the proletariat in Germany will also have to employ exceptional laws against exploiters: that depends upon the historic moment, upon international conditions, upon the relation of internal forces. But it is not at all excluded that, having conquered power, the workers of Germany will find themselves sufficiently powerful to allow freedom of assembly and the press also to the exploiters of yesterday; of course, in accordance with their actual political influence, and not with the extent of their treasury — the treasury will have been expropriated. Thus even for the period of the dictatorship there is in principle no basis for limiting beforehand the freedom of assembly and the press only to the labouring masses. The proletariat may be forced to such a limitation; but this is not a question of principle. It is doubly absurd to advocate such a demand under the conditions of present-day Germany, when freedom of the press and assembly exists for all but the proletariat. The arousing of the proletarian struggle against the fascist inferno will take place, at least in the first stages, under the slogans: give also to us, workers, the right of assembly and the press. The Communists, of course, will at this stage also carry on propaganda in favour of a soviet regime, but they will at the same time support every real mass movement under democratic slogans, and wherever possible will take the initiative in such a movement.

Between the regime of bourgeois democracy and the regime of proletarian democracy there is no third regime, "the democracy of the labouring masses." True, the Spanish republic calls itself the "republic of the labouring classes" even in the text of its constitution. But this is a formula of political charlatanism. The Brandlerian formula of democracy "only for the labouring masses," particularly in combination with the "unity of all classes," seems to be especially designed to confuse and mislead the revolutionary vanguard in the most important question: "When and to what extent to adapt ourselves to the movement of the petty bourgeoisie and the backward strata of the working masses, what concessions to make to them on the question of the tempo of the movement and the slogans on the order of the day so as more successfully to rally the proletariat under the banner of its own revolutionary dictatorship?"

At the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1918, during the discussion of the party programme, Lenin carried on a decisive struggle against Bukharin, who considered that parliamentarism is done for, once and for all, that it is historically exhausted "We must," Lenin retorted, "write a new programme of the Soviet power, without renouncing the use of bourgeois parliamentarism. To believe that we will not be thrown back is utopian. . . . After every setback, if class forces inimical to us should push us to this old position, we shall proceed to what has been conquered by experience — to the Soviet power. . . ."

Lenin objected to a doctrinaire antiparlamentarism with regard to a country which had already gained the Soviet regime: we must not tie our hands beforehand, he taught Bukharin, for we may be pushed back to the once-abandoned positions. In Germany there has not been and there is no proletarian dictatorship, but there is a dictatorship of fascism: Germany has been thrown back even from bourgeois democracy. Under these conditions, to renounce beforehand the use of democratic slogans and of bourgeois parliamentarism means to clear the field for a new formation of the Social Democracy.



# BOOK REVIEW

"WRITINGS OF LEON TROTSKY 1930" Pathfinder Press, New York, 1975.

The year 1930 found Trotsky grappling simultaneously with several distinct, though inter-related political problems. From his new exile home in Prinkipo, he kept a close watch on the convulsive course of Stalin's vain bid to build 'socialism in one country' through the techniques of state planning emptied of their democratic and international content. Trotsky demonstrates in this, as in later volumes in the series, the inner unity between Stalin's adventurist policies unleashed by the grain crisis of 1928, and the policy of the preceding four years, a period of concessions to capitalist elements in town and country alike (Nepmen and Kulaks) and merciless baiting of those who, like Trotsky, advocated an offensive against the rich peasant and the adoption of central long term planning methods to modernise Soviet industry. Both in his right phase, when in a bloc first with Kamenev and Zinoviev, and when they went over to Trotsky in 1926, with Bukharin; and then during the period of ultra-leftism and economic adventurism, the strategic goal (first enunciated by Stalin in Autumn 1924) was that of building a fully developed socialist economy and society unaided by the extension of the October Revolution to the industrialised and culturally advanced nations of central and western Europe. Equally important was the fact that this goal was to be achieved over the heads of the Soviet workers and peasants, and if necessary, against them. The privileges and political monopoly of the Stalinist apparatus were jealously defended against any incursions from 'below' where the masses who made the October Revolution were now, under the rule of Stalin, being transformed from the subject of history into its object.

Trotsky's articles on the problems of the Soviet economy, and the permanent crisis that racked the party revolve around these themes. It must always be remembered, however, (and this applies with equal force to his writings on the policies of the Communist International) that up to the victory of German fascism, and the failure of the Stalinist leadership either to acknowledge it as defeat or effect any change in the course that made it possible, Trotsky saw as his central task the reform of both the Soviet Party and the Communist International. Stalinism he regarded as a centrist tendency of a new type, a centrism resting on state foundations established by a victorious proletarian revolution. For this reason, it possessed a stability which no centrist current arising within capitalism, and expressing the oscillation of workers and leaders between reformist and communist organisations and programmes, could exhibit. Did this mean that Stalinism, in the period between its birth and its transformation into a counter-revolutionary agency, experienced no vacillations? On the contrary. Its base was more stable than that of its counterpart on the left flank of reformism, or the right wing of communism. But the very solidity of its base — the conquest of a planned economy and the consciousness of tens of millions of workers and poor peasants enriched and strengthened by participation in a victorious revolution — had come into violent conflict with the rise of the bureaucracy to its positions of power, and the false orientation both nationally and internationally that the Stalin faction projected from 1924 onwards. Hence the wild zig-zag to Left (1924), to right (1925-27) and back again even further to the left (third period, 'social fascism', 'liquidation of the Kulaks', 'five year plan in four years').

This brings us to the second component of Trotsky's work contained in this volume — his analysis of the ultra-left course being pursued by the Comintern leadership. In 1930, this line (one of refusing united fronts with social democratic parties in favour of the 'united front from below' with random individual workers of the same organisations) had been under way, after a hesitant beginning,

for two years, being officially inaugurated by the Sixth Comintern Congress in the summer of 1928.

Here too we should place Trotsky's critique in its concrete historical setting, not to speak of the false policies against which he was polemicising. In the period 1925-1927, when in Britain and China, the mass movement had been in the ascendent, the Stalinist leadership had proclaimed a period of 'stabilisation', and pursued policies in those two countries which in fact actively helped to bring it about (i.e., blocs with the TUC in Britain, and Chiang Kai-shek in China). It should also be borne in mind that the German proletariat at this time was still only slowly recovering from its disastrous defeat of 1923 (also the consequence of a centrist policy applied by the Brandler leadership of the KPD under the tutelage of Zinoviev and Stalin). In France, the workers movement was at its lowest ebb. Everywhere the parties of the Comintern, reflecting this trough between the spent waves of the past and those still on the distant horizon, were either declining or stagnating. Yet now, in 1928, the Stalinist faction proclaims a sharp, even brutal left turn in every party of the International without exception, irrespective of the national situation, the economic trends, the temper of the masses or their communist proletarian vanguard. The problems of the international working class were now to be solved by the same methods that Stalin recommended for the Soviet economy — commands from above, instructions to 'beat the plan', which when translated into the language of the Comintern, revolved around 'capturing' the majority of the workers, 'liquidating' the 'social fascists' and winning the 'battle for the streets'. Calendar days were artificially concocted to breath life into this partly simulated battle with reformism, its most tragic fruits being the criminal adventure launched by the German Stalinists in Berlin on May Day 1929, when the unarmed workers were hurled into a suicidal confrontation with the armoured cars and machine guns of social democrat Severing's Prussian police.

Trotsky subjects the method, strategy and tactics of the 'third period' to merciless criticism in this volume, above all in his superb essay, *The Third Period of the Comintern's Errors*. Yet were this article to appear anonymously today, many in not only the ranks, but the leaderships, of organisations that claim adherence to Trotskyism would denounce its author as a 'liquidationist', a 'renegade' from communism, a pessimist with no confidence in the workers, an empiricist concerned only with the surface appearances of politics, a centrist mesmerised by the seeming stability of capitalism and social democracy — and, no doubt, many other choice epithets from the arsenal of the groups in question.

Who we have in mind can perhaps be gleaned from reading the article in question. Taking issue with the empty-headed radicalism of the French Stalinists, who in concert with every other section of the Comintern were almost daily predicting either a new world war, an economic collapse, or a military or some other rightist coup, Trotsky replies: 'There is no doubt that when a crisis does develop, the current leaders will declare that their prognosis' was fully justified, that the stabilisation of capitalism did not occur, and that the class struggle took on sharper form. Clearly, such a "prognosis" costs very little. One who predicted daily the eclipse of the sun like others who foretold ever-impending military coups, coalitions or a combination

of both) would finally live to see this prediction fulfilled. But we are unlikely to consider such a prophet a serious astronomer. The task of communists is not to predict crises, revolutions, and wars every single day, but to prepare for wars and revolution by soberly evaluating the circumstances and conditions that arise between wars and revolutions. We can almost see the expletives leaping at us from the pages of Workers Press. But even worse follows:

... it does not follow (from the convulsive nature of the epoch) that it is possible to close one's eyes to the actual development and to repeat three incantations: "contradictions are sharpening", "the working masses are turning left", "war is imminent" — every day, every day, every day. If our strategic line is determined in the final analysis (emphasis in original) by the inevitability of the growth of contradictions and the revolutionary radicalisation of the masses, then our tactics, which serve this strategy, proceed from the realistic evaluation of each period, each stage, each moment, which may be characterised by a temporary softening of contradictions, a rightward turn of the masses ("heresy" will scream the sectarians and empty-headed Leftists) a change in the relation of forces in favour of the bourgeoisie, etc. If the masses were to turn leftward uninterruptedly, any fool could lead them. Fortunately or unfortunately, matters are more complicated, particularly under the present inconstant, fluctuating, "capricious" conditions.'

Brilliant and well directed though these shafts were, Trotsky did not leave matters at the level of literary polemic against the absurdities and criminal adventurism of third period Stalinism. The third strand in this volume, and one binding together the other two, was his constant quest for a principled political foundation on which to unite the various groups and individuals seeking a road back to Leninism from the false path of Stalinism. Many of the writings in the volume are concerned with securing the organisational measures which made possible the formation, in the summer of 1930, of the International Left Opposition, which in the course of the next three years, gathered around itself and educated the cadres that were to lay the foundations of the Fourth International.

Although we find ourselves in many ways in a very different political setting, Trotsky's analysis of the problems of the USSR (taking into account his later acknowledged false use of the analogy of Thermidor and Bonapartism) and of the Comintern retain all their force today. Leftism, adventurism, sectarianism, scorn for the immediate demands of the workers and the democratic demands of the masses, empty, pseudo-radical and a-historical schemas of the class struggle instead of tactics that express and illuminate at each stage the strategic line all these and more diseases still plague us today, but now masquerading as, of all things, 'Trotskyism'. Each of these departures from and substitutes for communist methods and programme feeds on the betrayals of reformism and Stalinism, and yet at the same time, draws its political inspiration from either of these two counter-revolutionary currents in the workers' movement. And precisely for this reason they provide no viable alternative road ahead for those millions of workers who continue to struggle through their existing organisations. This volume can play an inestimable part in not only helping to reorient the best among this confused milieu, but provide a source of strength to serious and theoretically inclined militants in the broader workers' movement.

# What about the Labour Party?

## TROTSKYISM & ENTRISM

**PART TWO**  
by  
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## I. Today some change their tune

Our first issue has aroused a good deal of discussion. It was quite a surprise for many to learn that the traditional strategy of British Trotskyism, for the present stage of its growth, is expressed through participation, in a principled way, in the Labour Party. This is what our documented account established, and Trotskyists already have long experience of this work.

For years past the leaders of the I.M.G. and the S.L.L./W.R.P. have each in their own way taught their followers to despise the Labour Party rank-and-file and the workers who support it. I.M.G. said in 1970 "Let them Bleed"! The W.R.P. calls them "corporatists". In the last few months, however, the tune has changed a little. The question today is: "What lies behind the new speculations of the sectarians about the Labour Party? Are they moving towards principled participation in it? Is their new tactic any more soundly based than the old one?"

Much ingenuity has been spent, by people who know what Trotsky advised us about the Labour Party, to pretend that he meant something else, to twist principled participation in the Labour Party into meaning that a small, "open" organisation outside the Labour Party "puts people in". Internal Bulletin No. 3 of the Workers' Socialist League is an awful example of this "bogus entrism". It does not, of course, speak for all the Workers' Socialist League, but it expresses in a developed form the thinking of the W.R.P. leadership and that of several smaller groups. We do not know who wrote it, so must make do here with calling him "Malvolio". Shakespeare created Malvolio in his comedy "Twelfth Night". He is a pretentious fraud. He gets above himself, he dresses up in smart clothes that do not go with his limited outlook and homely countenance. He talks nonsense in a high-flown style.

The reader might well ask why we intend to spend so much time dissecting the views of such a small tendency. We will agree at once that 'Malvolio' himself is of no consequence whatsoever, but we firmly believe that the arguments he advances against the entry tactic will become the stock-in-trade of all those groups, factions of groups and individuals who are attracted by the upturn of opposition to the bureaucracy in the Labour Party, but are unable or unwilling to discard their hardened sectarian conceptions. A 'bit of both' will become the face-saving formula through which the sectarians will adjust to the radicalisation in the Labour Party without discarding the false political tactics and strategy that placed them outside it.

Confronting and dissecting the falsehoods of Malvolio is therefore an essential preparation for the further development of our own entry work. We will meet them by the dozen and even hundred, both inside and at the twilight frontiers of the Labour Party. We must know how to detect them, to prevent them from derailing our own work, from leading us and the entire Left current into blind alley adventures— and to defend them when their own escapades land them in situations from which only a trained entrism can extract them.

No one can be blamed for not knowing all about the past history of our movement. They have to blame for that the people who have hidden it, whose role we shall consider later. There are hundreds of comrades who are taken in by the confident tone which the Malvolio's adopt. Workers think that a chap who talks as if he knew all about it must really know something. This article is not to score off Malvolio. It is to alert those whom he might mislead. This is the only reason for bothering with him. His views are neither original, profound nor correct, but they may be the beginning of a new, centrist tidal wave. The Malvolio's are our targets because they mislead others by pretending to knowledge which they do not possess and by distorting the authorities.

He speaks for all those who want to cling on to their sectarian conceptions of party building, while at the same

time claiming to be "entrists", while tail-ending the advanced workers who are now joining battle with the Labour Right Wing inside their traditional organisations.

Such people endanger the Labour rank and file. Bringing into the Labour Party the same incorrect ideas and methods as until recently enabled them to turn their backs on it, they will alternately capitulate to the Right-Wing and set themselves up to be trapped in Right-Wing provocations. They will confuse and disrupt the movement which they hope to lead, and, when the going gets tough, they will change their minds back again, quit the fight, and run back to their old sectarian haunts.

Drafting this article has meant going through the reams of useless verbiage which the open sectarians and the shame-faced sectarians, the "bogus entrists", have produced in the last forty years. Malvolio's is the most recent, but the most abject is the work attributed to Gerry Healy, "Problems of the Fourth International", written in 1966. There is a dreadful sameness about all this stuff. They all fancy themselves as original thinkers, and you know what you are going to find before you get there. One after another they exhume the dreary clichés about the "independence of the party", muddling up politics with organisational independence. Over and over again they slander the principled workers in the Labour Party as "capitulators" or "liquidators". "Bogus entrism" is a form of sectarianism which is catching on today. The need to be interested in what is going on in the Labour Party is obvious today even to the naked eye of every impressionist. It no longer needs a Marxist analysis of the history and development of the British Labour movement to prove that there is a crisis in the Labour Party. The sectarians ignored the crisis in the Labour Party until it hit them out of the front page of their daily paper. Now they wonder if there might not be pickings there for them. Whichever way out they are, their method remains the same. It is impressionism. It is opposed to that of Marxism. It is all to justify maintaining their little apparatus.

One last word before we break open Malvolio's argument. Let us repeat: we would not criticise anyone for not knowing what he had no chance of knowing. Malvolio pretends to know—talks big as if he knew—when he doesn't, while it is the W.R.P. leaders who are really to blame. They go back a long way. They have plenty of historical documents in their archives. They have fabricated a whole false history to justify themselves.

Now, however, time is leaving the falsifiers behind. Most of what Malvolio and his like need to study in order to correct their mistakes is in the public domain. It is in libraries or archives where they can see it - if they try. The material can be got at without a great deal of trouble now. If Malvolio opens up discussion with us he may find his way to knowledge which will save him repeating his mistakes.

## II. One example a warning to many

Malvolio starts with a sermon about the necessity for a Marxist Party. It is not in order to offend him that we tell him that, in this connection, the sermon is irrelevant. We are laying the foundations for one, which requires more than reciting the crimes of the Social Democracy. We are attacking it in its stronghold, which is a lot more useful, though more difficult, than trying to kill it with our mouths from outside. Malvolio tries an old trick. He quotes the reasons for a politically independent party as if they justified public, organisational separation from the Labour Party. This has been the stock-in-trade of bankrupt sectarians from Cooper and James in 1936, though Haston in the W.I.L. and the R.C.P., to Healy in more recent times. Nothing original, but how many comrades has it de-railed down the years?

We speak frankly here, without any wish to distort Malvolio's ideas. Why should we? What have we to gain? We want to make quite sure that he understands what he is doing. We want him and those who rely on his ideas to

have no chance to pretend that they do not understand our position. We want them to grasp what the argument about "entrism" really is about. It is really about HOW to build the party. To judge from his document, he has simply missed the point.

Either talk about entry in terms of building the party, or do not talk about it at all. Of course, there have always been some incurable sectarians. Oehler and Ver-eecken defied the eloquence even of Trotsky. They made a fetish public organisational independence. Like those who make a fetish of staying inside for ever, they could cling to our movement for a time, often with great devotion, creating the greatest confusion and then announce that we are hopeless and abandon the movement. We think this will not be the end of Malvolio and his co-thinkers.

Inevitably he belabours positions which the principled workers in the Labour Party do not hold, possibly on the Healy-ite principle that it always pays to throw mud because at any rate some of it may stick. His document lacks life precisely because he does not address himself to the problems of the real world. The comrades want to know HOW to undertake the hard and roundabout journey through our present stage, so as to emerge with the basis for an organisationally independent, "open" party. The recital of general phrases, picked magpie fashion from even Lenin and Trotsky, sends them empty away.

Year in and year out the sectarians have tried to make out that Trotsky was not, of course, wrong, but that what he said did not apply to their place and time. In 1936 some of C.L.R. James' people were honest (though foolhardy) enough to come straight out and say that the Old Man did not know what he was talking about. Malvolio, on the contrary, excels as a card-sharper.

There is a dirty little trick that he tries to use against Lenin. He must break himself of the habit of dishonestly playing with words, or it will grow on him. He lifts a quotation from Lenin, and tries to make it mean what Lenin did not intend it to mean. Is this criticism "unfair"? Are these "Healy-ite methods"? Let us see. He argues for a public, "independent" party now by quoting from "What Is To Be Done"? "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers." Therefore, the W.S.L. should stay out of the Labour Party, and maintain a public, independent organisation.

This kind of thing will not do for Marxists. It may be all very well for those who learned their controversial methods in the W.R.P. We feel sure that Malvolio knows that the Labour Party exists "outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers", in the sense that it is not concerned directly with relations at the point of production. A few lines lower down the same page, Lenin explains that he was not talking about groupings in the Labour Movement at all. He is quite clear: "The theory of Socialism. However, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia".

From this quotation, it might not look as if the Labour Party or entry came into Lenin's argument at all, but they do, though in a way which our friend Malvolio overlooked or tried to conceal. He knowingly remarks: "Lenin's 'What is to be done?' was the basis of the split (he underlined the word) between Bolshevism and Menshevism. He is fighting opportunism — and polemicising against Bernsteinism in France, which closely resembled social-democracy as we know it today".

The split to which he refers, that between Bolshevism and Menshevism, took place politically in 1903. After that the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks remained together in the same party for over eighty years. They did not separate

organisationally until the end of 1911. And they remained in the same International as Bernstein right up to 1914.

Another point, while we are at it. It was the German Social-Democracy of which Bernstein was a leader, not the French Socialist Party. Read the entire section from which Malvolio quotes, and you will not find that Lenin mentions either Bernstein or the French Socialist Party, even by implication. And more: the French Socialist Party in the early 1900's when Lenin wrote "What Is To Be Done"? was very different from the German Social-Democratic Party, and the British Labour Party had not yet come into existence. Nor has it ever "closely resembled" either of them. If Malvolio believes that, no wonder that he has never understood the particular reasons which Trotsky gave in 1934 for the French Trotskyists to enter the S.F.I.O., the French Socialist Party.

But what do little inaccuracies like this count with a man who takes liberties with Lenin? As Lenin wrote, in "What Is To Be Done"? having someone like Malvolio in mind: "One may become a demagogue out of purely political innocence". Let us do Malvolio the kindness of hoping that he wrote like this, not deliberately, but only through having been badly trained and not knowing any better.

He shrewdly noticed that in the New Park edition of "Trotsky on Britain" there are only five pages on "entrism" Aha! that obviously proves that the Old Man did not think entrism an important question for Britain. What a way to argue! Does he think the comrades cannot read "Trotsky on Britain" for themselves, where practically everything that the Old Man wrote about Britain is about the relations between the Marxists and the masses who follow the reformists?

This idea, incidentally, that entry is not an important question in Britain is an odd one to meet a document the second sentence of which proclaims: "We consider that the question of entry, non-entry or limited entry into the Labour Party poses much wider questions than are talked of in . . . (the document against which he is polemicising)" Let Malvolio make up his mind.

A serious worker — not a mere smart alec — would take advantage of his polemic to encourage his readers to study Trotsky's writings. Note how this good, insular Englishman, full of British insular bulls. . . handles his literary sources. The international discussion on entry is to be found in "Writings: 1933 - 34", "Writings 1934 - 35", and "Writings: 1935 - 36". Pathfinder Press fortunately took their responsibilities seriously. Judging even by column-inches, any comrade who takes the trouble to look will find plenty about entrism there. He will find several different entries, discussed each in the setting of its own national peculiarities — all different. Why did Malvolio not mention these? Purely political innocence?

But, perhaps, after all, Trotsky was writing forty years and more ago? Of course, only a simpleton, or a deliberate confusionist, could argue that we can directly and mechanically apply today what our movement wrote in the 1930's about, for example, the S.F.I.O. or the British Labour Party. None the less, he would be a bold man who rejected today what Marx wrote about extended reproduction and the falling rate of profit, in Capital, over a hundred years ago, on the ground, as the silly social-democrats argue — that "things have changed": To avoid confusing his readers' minds, Malvolio has the duty of explaining (having cleared his own mind first) just what it is of the "old Trotskyism" he wants to junk. What does he think of the immortal words of Brian Behan, about "rattling the dead bones of Trotsky"?

One blushes to read him. There is his pitiful little tale: ". . . the Transitional Programme makes no mention of any form of entry work — and certainly does not lay it down as a principle. . . ." Ha! Ha! he has got them there! It seems that Malvolio does not know that it was only Pablo who ever tried to lay down entry as an immutable com-

mandment. At the same time, there is at least one aspect of the Founding Conference which his eye has missed. Let him look at the Statutes of the Fourth International: Statute II reads: "In all countries the members of the Fourth International are organised into parties or leagues (our emphasis) which constitute the national sections . . ." Why the distinction between "parties" and "leagues"? Because the prospect of entry — in the right places and the right times — was in everyone's mind in 1938, for the future as well as for the past. Had anyone suggested at the Founding Conference that there were to be no more entries, he would have been looked at in wonderment. Even C.L.R. James, an inexcusable opponent of entry did not so much as raise the question.

Nearly two years later, the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International (held in U.S.A.) mentioned entry specifically in the British context. "The official British section of the Fourth International, the Militant Labour League, achieved substantial progress by its work in the Labour Party", and makes not the slightest suggestion that this work should be terminated. But then it would never have occurred to the Emergency Conference to question entry in Britain, where we were merely applying the traditional tactic developed by Trotsky during the 1920's. The resolution of the Opposition on the Anglo-Russian Committee, first published in March 1927, speaks of "the necessity for the British Communists to enter the Labour Party and to fight against being expelled from that organisation, since the experience of the past five years fully confirms what Lenin said on this question at the Second World Congress of the Comintern and in his "Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder". The amendments of the Opposition to the E.C.C.I. resolution on the situation in Britain, dated October 1927, speak of "the irreconcilable and relentless struggle against the left lackeys of imperialism, both in the trade unions and in the Labour Party. . . ." both these documents are in "Trotsky's Writings on Britain" in the section of the lessons of the General Strike. If Malvolio has read them, why does he conceal them? If he has not read them, what business has he to be pontificating to others about the Labour Party?

The Transitional Programme did not mention "entry" It did not mention the United Front, either. It was not concerned primarily with tactical questions. It dealt with the political act of founding our movement. The process of building our movement is a protracted and many-sided one. Adopting the Programme did not conjure parties out of the ground. Malvolio does not complain that the Founding Conference failed to talk about the United Front. Does he think that Healy is right? Or has he just not noticed what task the Founding Conference set itself?

Foolhardy kittens, full of their own cleverness, sometimes rush in where older, more experienced cats hold back. Boldly our Malvolio challenges the entrists: "The question is: How do we make an assessment of the objective, historical situation in which the tactical question of entry is posed"? This is indeed the right question. Putting it frankly like that simply shows up what a poor fist he made at answering it. His answer consists simply of denunciations of the reformist leaders. Now anyone trained by the W.R.P. can slaughter the Labour Rights and Lefts — with his mouth. It is like the poem about "The Jackdaw of Rheims" in which the bishop's curse leaves everyone "not a penny the worse". To go on repeating what was established in 1919 at the First Congress of the Communist International, that the Labour and Trade Union leaders are counter-revolutionaries — how does this shed new light on what we need to do now? Whether or not we participate in a principled way in the struggles within the Labour Party is not determined by what Healy — or Malvolio — say about the leadership. We are not infiltrators. We are in the Labour Party because that is the right place to be, to place us in the right alignment with the other militants whose day

to day struggles bring them into opposition to the counter-revolutionary leadership.

Malvolio would do better to address his mind to such a question as: "Why did 11½ million people vote Labour in October 1974"? "Why has the individual membership of the Labour Party declined, in a series of waves, by 40% over the last twenty years, while the affiliated trade union membership stays almost unchanged at around six million?" "What explains the present ferment in the Labour Party?" These questions have to be asked and answered. They are just part of the back-log of intellectual work, which the sectarians have neglected, in their self-satisfied ignorance. The Marxist Bulletin exists to tackle the living reality of the Labour Movement, and is doing so.

So nothing came out of Malvolio's "assessment" of the "objective, historical situation in which the tactical question of entry is posed" but abusive phrases. So soon after leaving Healy, he could not know the right questions to ask, and for that he could not be seriously blamed. What progress has he made since last autumn? His Internal Bulletin No. 3 did draw a conclusion from his "assessment". It is a conclusion which does not follow from his argument, but which we should not overlook. He phrased it as follows: "We are opposed to simply liquidating the Workers' Socialist League and its paper in the name of "entry" into the Labour Party on no programme other than joining the 'masses' who are supposedly already there"

Did Malvolio really mean precisely what he wrote there? To take seriously what he wrote, you would conclude that there evidently is some programme on which he would turn the members of the W.S.L. into the Labour Party, and liquidate the W.S.L. and its paper. That could go a long way beyond what any Trotskyist has ever suggested. That could be liquidisation for you, with a vengeance. What a pity he did not tell us the programme on which he would be prepared to liquidate.

Possibly he wrote more loosely than he intended, because he thinks loosely. Let us be charitable. No one who proposes to do principled work in the Labour Party has suggested that the Workers' Socialist League should be politically liquidated. Marxist Bulletin would be the last to propose sending its members into the Labour Party without a programme or an organisation and without at least the perspective of a paper. Let us accept that he did not really mean what he said, though there is a warning in the hint that there could be some programme, unspecified, on which some kind of entry, unexplained, could be devised. Under cover of all the talk about the counter-revolutionary leadership and the independence of the party, what is being cooked up here? Precisely what is the political basis for entry which he has in mind? Precisely what organisational consequences will flow from it? Will the Socialist Press come out as an organ of militants inside the Labour Party? How long must we wait for these concrete questions to be cleared up?

We think that Malvolio and his friends are wanting to ride two horses at once. They are flirting with the idea of paying lip-service to Trotsky by "putting a few people" in the Labour Party and pretending that that is entry, while they carry on their sectarian propaganda outside at the same time. There are fifty-seven varieties of illusion about "combining 'open work' with 'entry'" They all have a seductive ring, and they are all a trap. The people who propose them hope to eat their cake and have it. They are not clear in their own minds about what they propose, nor are they honestly bringing it into the open. The sooner these illusions are exposed the better, because they are once again gaining currency among the sectarian groups which the ferment in the Labour Party has caught unprepared.

### III. ". . . Only a Tactic?"

There are "entrists" who do not really want to enter. We have met them. They hope to avoid having to make contact with the rank and file members of the Labour Party.



They make out that entry means no more than going as a trade union delegate to a management committee— to move resolutions. This notion is a model of how not to think of principled participation in the Labour Party. It is a variant of the idea that "entry" is to raid the Labour Party, to win members out to an "open" organisation. It is an abstention from serious, systematic work to break up the reformist apparatus and its grip.

Malvolio, the most recent re-inventor of this notion, cobbles up some sort of "theoretical" defence for it, from what Trotsky said in his discussion with Robertson and Alexander, the comrades who visited him from England, in November 1935 (see *Once Again the I.L.P.*).

This was where the Old Man first raised the question of our leaving the I.L.P. and undertaking systematic, principled work in the Labour Party and he naturally wanted to check his own opinion against that of the English comrades. Most of them still thought at the time that they could win the I.L.P. They had been fighting for eighteen months to turn the I.L.P. towards the Labour Party. One of the ways in which they did this was to campaign for the I.L.P. members to undertake serious trade union work instead of mucking about with the Stalinists in phoney "single-issue" meetings and "united front" activities.

Now Malvolio wants to twist what the Old Man proposed. It is quite untrue that the Old Man proposed trade union work as an alternative to entering the Labour Party, as anyone can see who reads *"Once Again the I.L.P."*

He can only confuse himself and others if he tries to make out that Trotsky did not consistently advocate turning our work towards the rank and file of the Labour Party, and, in 1935, entering the Labour Party as a group. Trotsky did not propose on that occasion to replace Labour Party "entry" by some otherwise unheard-of scheme counterposing trade union work to entry. Malvolio has still to learn not to jump at the first incident that seems to suit his factional requirements and tear it out of its historical setting. That may be all right among centrists, but among Marxist it will not do. His method is a model of how not to mobilise the lessons of history for the guidance of the comrades today.

Those who want to pass off as "entry" an occasional appearance at the Management Committee meeting really are thinking of spending their time running around in a little "open" group and producing an "independent" paper. This is not a proper entry at all, and, in any case, is ultimately a waste of time. The trade unionists in such a group can do their trade union work more effectively today if they are known as militants in the Labour Party, than if they are identified with some obscure and untried sect. The existence of the open "independent" group simply compromises those of its members who are supposed to be trying to influence the Labour Party rank and file from within. They must either keep quiet about it, or get themselves marked as agents of an organisation alien to the Labour Party, when the very people whom they want to influence will help the bureaucracy to chuck them out.

Many years ago, a comrade in Yorkshire posed to us this question. He was less sophisticated but more honest when he asked, "Why not a bit of both"? This chap was one of Healy's betes noirs at the time!

The Yorkshire comrade seems to have called "a bit of both" what Malvolio calls "limited entry" Malvolio has not told us just what he means, perhaps because, being a clever chap, he likes to hold the cards close to the waistcoat. However, we have met him before, under other names. The notion of "a bit of both" has come up in many forms, over the years, all related like bastard brothers, by Sectarianism out of ignorance. Not one of them is genuine "entrism" — any more than "deep entry" of those at the other end of the spectrum, lost in the Labour Party, lost to Bolshevism, reciting their abstract principles and avoiding the struggle with the apparatus. "Limited entry", or "A bit of both" is a fig leaf. It conceals a abstract, formal

attitude to the rank and file of the Labour Party, taken up from the outside. "Deep entry" also is a fig leaf. It conceals the same attitude, but taken up from the inside. From outside, it means abstaining from taking part in the life of the Labour Party. From inside it means adaption to the apparatus. Neither method faces up to the job of principled participation.

Malvolio and the "deep entrists" tell us, with feeling, that "entry" is a tactic and not a principle, that what we need is an "orientation" to the Labour Party. The problem for us all is — just what does this phrase mean? To make sure that no slick talker confuses our comrades, we use Trotsky's principle: "The truth is always concrete". We challenge the Malvolio's who spout these phrases. What precisely do you mean by an "orientation" to the Labour Party? Anyway, what do you know about the Labour Party? What do you know about the past disputes and experiences of our movement in relation to the Labour Party? What right have you to talk? Show us all your credentials. Then we may be able to judge whether your "entry" is genuine or bogus.

Those who heel over towards sectarianism and pay lip-service to a bit of "entrism" usually have at the back of their minds that "real" revolutionary work consists of "building the party" by selling papers in the streets, and that "entry work" is some sort of diversion or soft option. At the same time, those who in the labour Party heel over towards opportunism usually think that the "real work" consists of making contacts among M.P.s and ingratiating themselves with people in the apparatus. Both kinds of bogus "entrism" feel that they must make verbal genuflections to Trotsky, neither kind understands him.

#### IV. What do we mean by our "Tactics"?

In the real world, tactics consist of the activities in which our strategy, our programme and our principles come to life, pass from words to deeds. Our principles, programme and strategy can come to life in different activities appropriate to the stage of the class struggle at a particular time. Our tactics are the only way by means of which the vanguard relates to the class. Tactics, therefore, are not clever ruses by which you get the workers to do what you want them to do, while you abstractly preach your programme and principles.

In the debates of little circles, of course, the day-to-day activities can seem to acquire a life of their own, to get detached from and float away from their reasons for existing as applications of strategy, programme and principles. Much recent "single-issue" activity by the small groups, much of what passes for "united front" activity in which handfulls of people join each others' demonstrations, is done by people who have lost sight of the real object of the exercise. Since their tactical activity is not anchored down in a strategy based on understanding the British Labour Movement, they have no means of deciding what are useful and what are useless things to do. "Tactics" become a metaphysical abstraction. That is why we see so many enthusiasts dashing from one thing to another at the command of the infallible leader of one or another of the sects, and, then, naturally wondering what is being gained from all this expenditure of perspiration, falling either into scepticism or a personal crisis.

In a Marxist organisation comrades of the rank and file do not always have to wait to be told what tactics to adopt, or to look over their shoulders at the General Secretary and guess from his enigmatic jowl whether what was right yesterday will still be right tomorrow. The rank and file of a marxist organisation is educated in its programme and strategy; they understand it and can apply it. The strategy of a sect is not founded on the reality of the Labour Movement. It is a metaphysical abstraction thought up in someone's head. It can be realised, of course; it shows itself in the real world in whatever nonsense comes into the

head of the comrade with the loudest voice or the brassiest neck. It is realised in the newest bright idea with which the General Secretary woke up this morning, or picked up in conversation with somebody or from a newspaper headline.

Sometimes a good analogy can help to make a point clear. Let us think about the tactic of the "United Front". Like the "entry tactic", it also is not mentioned in the "Transitional Programme". It was expressed, in the form in which Bolsheviks now accept it, in the latter half of 1921, in the Communist International, when the first post-1918 revolutionary wave had been beaten back — and for that reason. (The important texts are published in English, and we also have what Trotsky wrote in "The First Five Years of the Comintern") Trotsky did with the united front in 1921 what he did with the "French Turn" in 1934 and with entry into the British Labour Party in 1936. He educated the whole movement when he explained how, as tactics, they were the practical expression of Bolshevik programme and strategy.

In 1921 many of the Communist Parties in Europe were of substantial size. None of them, however, except one, commanded a majority of the workers in its country. The reason for developing the tactics of the "United Front From Above" was simply to let everyone see that the Communists maintain the unity in struggle of the working class, prepare to win the majority and overcome the sectarianism and propagandism with which the penetration of the mass movement was opposed by certain leaders of the German, French, Italian. . . . and British Communist Parties.

So, when we say that "entry" is "just a tactic", let us keep the scorn out of our voices. Let us do it justice. Remember: in Trotsky's polemic against Shachtman and Burnham in 1939-40, he argued that the defence of the Soviet Union stands in a tactical relation to strategy of the world struggle for socialism. You can shout about Socialism as long as you like, but you cannot get it if you do not defend the Soviet Union. So, if the defence of the Soviet Union is "only a tactic", was Trotsky wrong to make such a fuss about it? Are all our debates with the "State Capitalists" a minor matter? Tell us, comrade Malvolio! Let the sectarians, the strategists without tactics and the impressionists without strategy, answer that one.

Trotsky's various and different proposals for entry in 1933-37 were the practical, tactical expression of strategic considerations. They put forward what had to be done when we recognised how objectively weak and relatively isolated the Communist vanguard was. These were the same features, only vastly worse, as had made necessary in 1921 the formulation of the tactic of the "United Front from Above", a tactic which will be of the greatest use to us when we have organisations big enough to apply it.

Those who chatter today about "entry as the only tactic", or "entry is not an important question", seem to think that we enjoy the support of important layers of workers, at least in the major capitalist countries. They overlook that this goal has still to be reached, anywhere. Malvolio and his like replace what is with what they would like to have. Consequently, they reject the tactical means by which Trotsky and the international leadership can help us to lay the foundations for the independent, "open" parties of the future. The strategic aim, the building of parties, requires in Britain that the tactic of entry must be employed. Our situation is determined for us by past history; if we want to build a party there is no other way to do it. The duty of principled participation in the Labour Party, of developing a programme of action there to help the advanced workers to fight the reformist leaders and dismantle the apparatus which defends them, cannot be evaded with mindless prattle about "the independence of the party", "liquidationism" or "a bit of both".

What motivates these hopelessly disoriented people who dream of conjuring up "there own" miniscule labour movement as a substitute for penetrating the real one which the workers have taken a century and a half to build? Hundreds like them in the past have chanted the same ritual incantations about "revolutionary intransigence", about "liquidation in social-democracy" — like devout Catholics shuffling their beads — and what has happened to them? Can Malvolio cheat the laws of history, which were too strong for Haston or Grant? Doesn't he know what became of them? Did their pathetic, sectarian credo save them from the snares of social-democracy? Did they save anyone else from "liquidation" the Labour Party is dotted with middle age ex-sectarians from the Revolutionary Communist Party who turned their backs on Marxism and made their peace with reformism. Inside the most muscle bound sectarian there is a supple-spined opportunist waiting his chance to spread his wings in the sun . . . as usually in the end he does.

There are few bold, out-spoken sectarians, especially in Britain. Whereas in other countries sectarians can more plausibly oppose their rostrums to the real movement of the working-class, in this country they have to pretend to be Marxists and pass themselves off as part of, rather than opposed to, the Marxist movement. None of the sectarian groups in Britain which claim some connection with Trotskyism dares say openly that they are approaching the workers in the name of their own organisation because they believe that they can build their party by winning the workers' support in actions undertaken independently of their traditional mass organisations. We know, however, that when we told Healy that that is what he is trying to do, we had buckets of abuse poured over us about "abdicating the fight for leadership" etc. etc. Trotsky on the contrary wrote with boundless scorn for the complacent idiocy of those who thought they could resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership by proclaiming themselves to be its solution. Answering the charge that entry into the S.F.I.O. involved, necessarily, capitulation to the Second International, Trotsky replied: 'We merely admit honestly that our organisation is too weak to establish for itself a practical independent role in the struggles that are looming ahead of us. At the same time, as good revolutionists, we do not want to stand on the sidelines'. '(The league Faced with a Turn) and to the question, does not the entry into the S.F.I.O. imply the danger of opportunist adaption or of degeneration?' Trotsky answered: 'Undoubtedly. Yet it would be naive to think that one can escape this danger through isolation' (Ibid) And unlike the advocates of bogus "independence" today, Trotsky understood the distinction between a league and a party, between organisational independence itself (often confused with the independence of the all-seeing and all-powerful apparatus) and the political independence of the Marxist vanguard, which can take many organisational forms. "But the proletarian party must be independent", insisted the opponents of entry. Quite so. But the league is not yet a party. It is an embryo, and an embryo needs covering and nourishment in order to develop" (Ibid).

When Trotsky returned to this problem a little later in the same month (June 1934), he had to deflate gently those opponents of entry who imagined that a small group became a party by proclaiming itself as such, and by upholding with unbounded intransigence, the principle of 'organisational independence':

'Irreconcilableness of principle has nothing in common with sectarian ossification, which heedlessly passes over the changes in the situation and the mood of the masses. From the thesis that the proletarian party must be independent at all costs, our english comrades concluded that it would be impermissible to into the I.L.P. Alas! They forgot that they were far from being a party, but were only a propaganda circle, that a party does not fall

from heaven, that the propaganda circle must pass through a period of embryonic existence before it can become a party. Our English comrades (the majority) doubtlessly paid dearly for their mistake in perspective, and we with them.' (The League Faced with a decisive Turn) This was written 41 years ago. And still the Malvolios — and those that mis-educated them — deliver their verbose sermons on the evils of entry as a path to the liquidationist hell. With the salutary examples of Haston and Grant in mind, we ask Malvolio and his tutors to ponder these lines by Trotsky: ' . . . anyone who says "I never will belong to the social democracy! Capitulation! Treason! etc." is nothing but a sentimental wretch who perhaps knows some greenhouse Marxist formulas, but who is frightened by living trees, and especially by a forest.' (The Stalinists and Organic Unity, July 1934).

What Trotsky writes here bears directly on our present debate. For our Malvolio's do not seem even to have asked themselves whether the decision to found the W.R.P. was correct. How can they, when they defend as correct the lurch which Healy took nine years earlier away from the Labour Party, in the direction of illusions about "strong, independant revolutionary parties", a path which ended inexorably in launching the W.R.P. in November 1973.

### V. Who has falsified our charts? Who has led us off course?

Comrades who have given themselves the trouble of grasping what Trotsky and the International Secretariat taught the Marxist movement of the 1930's about entry may well wonder at the amount of time and effort which the sectarians oblige us to devote to them, in the face of the long history of the controversy and of our experience. Yet the question needs answering: How is it that there are hundreds of comrades around the Left, who have been reared in the school of "no entry", or "limited entry" or "deep entry", but mostly nowadays are being confused with the "bit of both", that is, the school of shame-faced sectarianism?

No doubt Malvolio, when he parted from the W.R.P., felt purged of all the wrong things he had been taught there. Unhappily he still has the sectarian virus circulating with his blood. Let us ask him to join us in a look at his own political history, which, it seems, he has not yet fully understood. He believes that the S.L.L. was right in 1964. He believes Healy's mythology about the history of Trotskyism in Britain. To be sure, the witch-hunt against the Young Socialists in 1964 was part of the preparation of the Wilson leadership for office. What is untrue is that the S.L.L. had to turn away from penetrating the Labour Party towards "independance", or that it had no other course. The S.L.L. leadership was already isolating itself from the rank and file of Labour. It was already forgetting the principles in defence of which it had fought Brian Behan a few years before. Consequently, it could not extend the struggle to defend the Young Socialists into the rank and file of the Labour Movement. It made a virtue of the results of its own mistakes. They should have been trying to retain their footholds in the Labour Party, to put two people back in for every one expelled, to train the young comrades in trade union work in readiness for a new development of the crisis in the Labour Party. Instead, they did Transport House the kindness of hoisting the "independant" banner and marching off into the blue horizon, soon to be followed by Tony Cliff, as well as by what is now the I.M.G. and a host of smaller sects.

All this past history is coming out into the open now and will be thrashed out, but there is one question which Malvolio and his friends ought to face straight away. If Healy was right in 1964, and if Malvolio agrees that he was right in 1964, how come they fell out? How does Malvolio come to be outside the W.R.P.? He may well reply: "Don't

you know? Healy is a BAD MAN. He treated us BADLY". The leaders of every little group tell their tale of personal squabbles in the last, last-but-one and last-but-two group they were in; what they do not get to the bottom of is the political reasons underlying the personal mis-behaviour of the Healy's, the Cliff's and the rest, whose organisational methods, let us agree, have nothing in common with Bolshevism. What is the political reason why Malvolio could not live in the same organisation as Healy, Banda and their cohorts — if Healy was right in 1964?

Let us give Malvolio a hint while he is scratching his head. Sectarians always maintain an un-Bolshevik regime in their own groups. Sometimes it is free and easy, based on personal friendships and mutual tolerance. Sometimes it is a reign of terror based on the oppression and destruction of comrades who do not see it as an expression of anti-Marxist politics. Maintaining a sectarian position, no matter how you do it, means turning your back on reality. It means that your tactics are divorced from your strategy and that what you are doing does not square with what you are supposed to be doing. Yet reality breaks in whenever the rank and file comrades leave the office and try to sell papers to workers. The contact with reality provokes an unseemly personal brawl, in which what should be a political discussion of fundamentals turns into exchanges of slanders and even blows, and is prematurely cut short by walk-outs or expulsions.

If Malvolio had had a majority in the W.R.P., would he have taken up a different attitude from Healy's towards the Labour Party and "entry"? It now appears that he believes that there was no principled difference between him and Healy, since they agree on the basic, sectarian line. They both have the same position towards principled participation in the Labour Party: that is, they do not understand it and they oppose it. Malvolio does not understand that 1964 led implacably to 1974. But there must be some political basis for the split. Please tell us what you think it was!

### VI. "Entry and the National Peculiarities of Different Countries"

Our international leadership was concerned in the years 1933 to 1937 with no less than seven separate and different applications of the tactic of "entry". Each was carried out in a different political setting. Each took on a different form. Yet all of them, Britain (twice, each time different), France, Belgium, Poland, Spain and U.S.A. were for the same underlying purpose. They were to fuse the internationalist programme with the workers' vanguard, taking into account the national peculiarities of each country, and enabling the group to enter the stage through which alone it had a chance of emerging as a genuine party, and not a party in name only.

Many years later, however, the original mind of Archbishop Gerry-Healy cleared away all these complications at a stroke. He wrote, a polemic against Pablo, entitled, "Problems of the Fourth International" We must admit that he rather startled those who knew something about the matter when he pontificated: "Entry cannot be satisfactorily carried out unless there is a strong, independant party, functioning actively in the daily experience of the working class". And, just to make sure that there was no misunderstanding: "The essence of the entry tactic is that the revolutionary party and its leadership must consciously function within the working class independently of entry. At the time of writing, in 1966, the Master was trying to take up a position of "orthodoxy" as against Pablo's notions of "deep entry", "entry sui generis" and so on.

Do the "limited entrists", the "bit of both" merchants, find fault with Healy's formulations? If they disagree with them let them detail the grounds of their differences; let them say where and why. If they do not disagree, let them come out of their holes and say so like men.

Contrast Healy's words with the historical record!

They are as absurd as they are pretentious. We know him too well to hope that he will join in a principled discussion. Slander is more his style. The comrades of the W.S.L., on the other hand, are trying to get the W.R.P. indoctrinated out of their systems. They should think again about the blind alley into which the "limited entry" will lead them. Whatever be their minor differences from Healy, whatever slanders he pours over them, they will commit themselves to the same current as is sweeping the W.R.P. down its suicidal course, if they agree with him on entry. They will share with him the responsibility for destroying hundreds more militants.

Healy's wording has at least the merit that it is succinct: he focuses all his errors in a few words. Here is not the least of Healy's services, that he here gives us a chance to scotch, once and for all, his and all the other bogus entry fantasies.

Two quick, practical points must first be made. What he wrote against Pablo flatly contradicts his own experience! What short memories he must think people have, to be sure! Where was the "strong, independent, revolutionary parties etc." when his Grace carried out the entry of the Club into the Labour Party in 1949 - 1958? The Communist Party, perhaps? If that is what he means, why was he to coy to say so? Again, in the 1930's, we did not, of course, have "strong, independent, revolutionary parties etc." When we entered, first the I.L.P. and later the Labour Party, Healy knows as well as the writers that he belonged, first, to the "Militant Group" and later to the "Workers' International League", in 1937 - 1939. We concede that he may have been slow to realise that the "Militant Group" was developing, under Trotsky's inspiration, an entry tactic; after all he only stayed there a few months. Possibly he did not realise that the "Workers' International League" also was trying to do so, as its documents show. We can understand that he would not know that the Trotskyists entered the I.L.P. in 1934 without the benefit of a "strong, independent, revolutionary party, etc." After all he was not in our movement at the time, so no doubt the I.L.P. entry did not amount to much without him. (he seems at that time to still have been in the Y.C.L., but his own account of his movements is obscure and confused, and there is little independent evidence to go on).

But even if we leave aside the 1930's, his "entry" in 1949 - 1958 was beyond dispute a success. Cannon congratulated him on it. The S.L.L. came out of it. Where was the "strong, independent, revolutionary party" in 1949 - 1958? Are we to see in the S.L.L. the "strong etc, etc." that he speaks of? If so, why was it deliberately called a "League"? Why did it seek affiliation to the Labour Party? If the S.L.L. was such a party, why did its leaders go through the elaborate, highly dramatised charade of "transforming" what was already a "strong, independent revolutionary Party" into the W.R.P.? Since it is Healy and his shame-faced pupils in the W.S.L. who have landed themselves in this hopeless tangle of self-contradiction, let us hope that they will sort it out in such a way as to make sense to the militants - without over-doing the "philosophy."

But so deeply committed are the W.R.P. leaders to their present sectarian course that they now find it necessary to distort Marxism on an entire range of political questions, a distortion which necessarily leads them to falsify the history of our movement. This is nowhere better demonstrated than in their approach to the question of the nature of the Labour Party and, consequently, what tactics Marxists should adopt towards it. This problem has been with us since the very origin of the Communist movement. We cannot therefore do justice here to all the complex arguments and tendencies which have evolved on the question in the last half-century.

## VII. Once and for All: Lenin and Trotsky on the British Labour Party

The W.R.P. has taken a sectarian lurch on the question of the Labour Party. Let us look once more at what Lenin and Trotsky wrote about it and about the British workers' movement. Here we can exhume a controversy in the fore-runner of the W.R.P., the S.L.L., and see Healy attacking the position which today he defends with such zeal.

We can best approach the problem by looking critically at the exposition by the W.R.P. of what it claims to be the Communist position on the Labour Party. In "Workers Press", January 5 1975, Jack Gale (who cut his first teeth as an entrant in the Leeds Labour Party) wrote what passed for a reply to an old woman comrade M. who had written a private letter to Gale, criticising formulations which he had used on the nature of the Labour Party at a public meeting of the W.R.P. Ironically, Gale and M. fought on the same side against the ultra-lefts in the faction fight of 1960, in the course of which it was Brian Behan who developed the line that the Labour Party was not a workers party, and that the S.L.L. should proclaim the "open party". (One suggested name for this fore-runner of the W.R.P. was "Revolutionary Workers' Party").

Just before we go into Gale's revision of the Marxist position on the Labour Party, we may note that Gale departs, or helps Healy to depart, from the traditions of communist polemic. M's letter was a private letter addressed personally to Gale. Gale is perfectly justified, as a W.R.P. member, in showing it to the W.R.P. leadership. The Party is quite within its rights to publish a reply. But in doing so it should permit the readers of "Workers' Press" to read the whole of M's letter, not to mention the vast majority of members of the W.R.P. who had not seen it. All that "Workers' Press" allows them to see of M's letter is one isolated excerpt. Can it be that Gale and Healy are frightened that if they publish the whole letter their own untenable position on the Labour Party will be exposed? This is more than likely the case. Gale makes much more of the fact that M. selects a quotation from Lenin on the Labour Party dating from 1908. Gale asks 'Why did she not choose to quote Lenin on the Labour Party in 1920?'

Gale is understandably anxious to invoke Lenin's authority in his bid to prove that the Labour Party is in no sense a workers' party. We can appreciate this concern, since following in the footsteps of Palme Dutt, John Strachey and company, the Healy leadership has been denouncing for the last two and a half years the leaders of the Labour Party (most of all the Lefts) as 'corporatists'. Clearly a 'corporatist' (fascist) party cannot be in any sense a workers party and certainly not a party one should do entry work in.

Let us look at the quotation preferred by Gale, and let us look at it in the spirit of its author, critically: it comes from a speech made to the second Congress of the Comintern, on 6th August 1920, the subject being 'on affiliation to the British Labour Party'. The excerpt selected by Gale runs:

"Whether or not a party is really a political party of the workers does not depend solely (NB) upon a membership of workers, but also (NB) upon the men that lead it, and the content of its actions and its political tactics. Only this latter determines whether we really have before us a political party of the proletariat. Regarded from this, the only correct point of view, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie"

That, for Gale, settles the matter of the class nature of the Labour Party. But it did not for Lenin, nor the Comintern, nor Trotsky, nor indeed Healy. Lenin made this speech -

a polemical one directed against a British delegate — on 6th August 1920. On 4th July of the same year, in preparation for the Comintern Congress, he drafted the 'Theses on Comintern's Fundamental Tasks', a section of which he devoted to the vexed question of the British movement. Lenin's Theses, while coming out clearly and firmly for total organisational as well as programmatic and political separation from the Second International, made a single exception in the case of Britain, where he argued for the embryonic Communist Party to fight on specific terms for affiliation to the Labour Party:

"... the second congress of the Third International should declare in favour of Communist groups and organisations, or groups and organisations sympathising with communism, joining the Labour Party in Great Britain, despite its membership in the Second International. As long as this party ensures its affiliated organisations their present freedom of criticism and freedom to carry on work of propaganda, agitation and organisation in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet government, and as long as this party preserves the character of a federation of all trade union organisations of the working class, it is imperative for communists to do everything and to make certain compromises in order to be able to exercise their influence on the broadest masses of the workers, to expose their opportunist leaders from a higher tribune, that is in fuller view of the masses, and to hasten the transfer of political power from the direct representatives of the bourgeoisie to the "Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class" so that the masses may be more quickly weaned away from their last illusion on this score."

(Vol. 31, P.199)

We should note two things. Firstly, that Lenin saw in the British Labour Party features which set it aside from all other parties of the Second International, namely that it permitted freedom of tendencies: and secondly, that it was a 'federation of all the trade unions of the working class'. Now if we treat everything Lenin said and wrote as holy writ (a distinctly non-Marxist approach) then we would be hard put, in the light of Lenin's considered opinion on the trade union basis and nature of the Labour Party, to explain his remark in the already quoted polemic against the British delegate to the Second Congress, where he says the following:

"... I should like to mention a slight inaccuracy on the part of Comrade McLaine, which cannot be agreed to. He called the Labour Party the political organisation of the trade union movement, and later repeated the statement when he said that the Labour Party is 'the political expression of the workers organised in trade unions'. I have met the same view several times in the paper of the British Socialist Party (and we shall see it recurring —with, in the author's opinion, some justification, in the publications of the Socialist Labour League, forerunner of the WRP). It is erroneous, and is partly the cause of the opposition, fully justified in some measure, coming from the British revolutionary workers... Of course most of the Labour Party's members are working men..."

(Vol 31, P.257)

The quotation then continues with the extract cited by Gale.

We are not waging a battle of quotations. It is necessary simply to present a balanced evaluation of the method which Lenin employed in order to understand the Labour Party at different stages of its development. For example, Lenin wrote in February 1913, in an article about the Labour Party Conference of that year, that the "British Labour Party... represents something in the nature of a broad workers' party. This is a compromise between the Socialist party (the B.S.P.) and the non-socialist trade unions". This is another quotation which Gale chooses to ignore. It does

not "fit" his sectarian model, so it has to be rejected, along with Lenin's dialectical method of analysis and programme of action in relation to the British Labour Party.

The leadership of the Leninist Comintern had cause to address itself on two occasions to the problem of the class nature of the Labour Party. It did so in a way that makes it yet more difficult for Gale to sustain his sectarian line on that organisation. In December 1921, the Comintern Executive circulated to all its sections a directive on the application of the united front tactics elaborated at the recent third congress of the CI. Section 10 dealt with the specific application of the tactics in Britain:

"In England the reformist Labour Party has rejected communist party affiliation although other workers' organisations are accepted. Under the influence of the growing desire among the workers for the united front, the London workers' organisations recently passed a resolution in favour of the affiliation of the CPGB to the Labour Party. England is of course in this respect an exception because as a result of the peculiar circumstances the English Labour Party is a kind of general workers' association for the entire country. It is the task of the English communists to begin a vigorous campaign for their acceptance by the Labour Party'.

Four months later, in March 1922, the Executive Committee of the Comintern met to discuss the so-called 'English Question', and formulated a resolution on the problem guiding the CPGB in its work, especially towards the Labour Party. Point 7 of this resolution contained the following definition of the Labour Party, one that Lenin, had he followed to the letter his polemic against McLaine two years earlier, would have been bound at least to modify:

"The Labour Party is the political organisation of the trade unions. It includes various political tendencies within the workers' movement, such as those represented by the ILP, the Fabians, the Guild Socialists etc. etc. But the defensive struggle of the working class against the increasing oppression of the bourgeoisie requires that the Labour Party should include within its ranks all the political aspirations of the workers' movement. The Labour Party cannot claim that it unites the working class in the political field if it does not also include the Communist Party"

In this instance, the Labour Party is characterised as a trade union party, imperfectly expressing the aspirations of the working class by virtue of its exclusion of the CP. It is nowhere in this very important resolution characterised as a bourgeois party after the manner of the August 6th 1920 speech by Lenin, nor anywhere else in Lenin's work that we have been able to find.

Gale's purpose is clear. He wants to pluck an isolated citation from Lenin to boost his own sectarian line on the Labour Party. He chooses to ignore all those statements on the question by Lenin, Trotsky, the Leninist Comintern and his own organisation which round out, and in the author's opinion, correct the one-sided analysis of the Labour Party quoted by Gale.

Let us move on a little to 1925, the year when Trotsky wrote his short book, 'Where is Britain Going?' Gale and Healy, given their conversion to the Behan conception of the Labour Party, will be hard put to explain how Trotsky came to write the following:

"The proletariat has forced the trade unions to create an independent party. But the matter will not rest there... A great deal less time will be necessary to turn the Labour Party into a revolutionary party than was needed for its creation."

(Ibid, P.35, 1960 edition)

Gale deduces from an article written by Lenin during the first world war (The Collapse of the Second International) that in Britain it was from then on the task of Marxists to 'destroy' the Labour Party. Yet a decade later, Trotsky, in

a quotation studiously ignored by Gale, is saying that it is the task of Communists to 'turn the Labour Party into a revolutionary party'! Was there a contradiction between Lenin and Trotsky on this question? We think not, though there existed obvious differences in the manner of their presentation of the problem. Trotsky did not say that the task of the communists in Germany was to transform the SPD into a revolutionary party, nor any other section of the Second International save the British. Gale fails to grapple with this side of the matter — the special nature of the British Labour Party, and the consequent flexibility and even uniqueness of approach towards it by the Comintern. Trotsky did not of course argue that the Labour Party would automatically evolve into a revolutionary party, (a development which is, of course totally excluded today — despite what the "deep entrists" may claim — and has been totally excluded since the defeat of the General Strike in 1926 at the latest.) Trotsky saw the role of the young British Communist Party as one of the decisive factors:

"In order to take power, the proletariat must necessarily have at their head a revolutionary party. In order to make the trade unions fit for their future role, they must be freed of conservative officials, of superstitious blockheads. . . . A reformist, opportunist Liberal-Labour party can only enfeeble the trade unions, thus paralysing the activity of the masses. A revolutionary Labour Party, based on the trade unions, will together with them become a mighty instrument for their restoration to health and their uplift . . . . Of course, for of a certain comparatively slowly, but after that an inevitable change will take place: The Communist Party will take the (leading) place in relation to the Labour Party which at present is occupied by the ILP.

(Ibid, pp 122-127)

Nowhere in this work did Trotsky pose the question of "destroying" the Labour Party as such. Neither did Lenin in any of his writings on the subject, despite the extreme sharpness of his formulations. Only Gale employs this formulation, revising as he does so the entire heritage of Marxist teaching and experience in relation to the British Labour Party.

Gale also informs us, with evident glee, that "nowhere in this report (the article of 1908 to which M. referred) does Lenin call the Labour Party a workers' party". And then Gale adds: "Always precise, he refers to it as the political representative of the trade unions".

In 1920, however, Lenin himself rejected this formulation — in the very speech on which Gale seized in the hope of proving that the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party.

Because he is grinding Healy's sectarian axe, and not attempting an honest balanced evaluation of what is a very complex problem, Gale lends himself in yet another contradiction. He asserts that in 1908, Lenin refused to term the Labour Party a workers' party. Yet in his already quoted war-time article, Gale cites Lenin where he says:

"In reality, the opportunists' formal membership in WORKERS' PARTIES by no means disproves their objectively being a political detachment of the bourgeoisie, conductors of its influence, and its agents in the Labour movement". (emphasis added)

In other words, these parties to which Lenin is referring — the parties of the Second International — are workers' parties with a bourgeois, opportunist, counter-revolutionary leadership.

To stress either feature at the expense of the other is to make a concession either to opportunism or sectarianism. By this highly selective use of quotations, Gale makes Lenin appear as an ultra-left, as we shall also see when we turn to the WRP's distortion of Lenin on election strategy and tactics.

There is a final quotation of which we cannot resist reminding Gale. He must know it since his own organisation has only recently republished it in the last of the three-

volume collection of Trotsky's writings on Britain. It occurs in the article 'Once again the ILP':

"The war crisis does not alter the fact that the LABOUR PARTY IS A WORKERS PARTY, which the governmental party is not. Nor does it alter the fact that the Labour Party leadership cannot fulfill their promises, that they will betray the confidence which the masses place in them". (emphasis added)

As late as 1935, then, Trotsky held the Labour Party to be a workers' party. And, like Lenin, he grasped the contradiction between its worker base and the trade union origins, and its treacherous, opportunist, bourgeois leadership. Gale will have none of it:

". . . . the opportunists of 1974 want to stress that the Labour Party is a 'workers' party' (Gale finds the suggestion so ridiculous that he has put the term in quotation marks) in order to establish a link between the Wilsons, Healys, Jenkins, Foots and the working class. Aren't they leaders of a workers' party?"

The notion is just too preposterous for Gale. Yet it is true. That is precisely why Trotsky insisted that the crisis of humanity is the crisis of leadership. Gale capitulates to the Wilson, Healy and Foot by implying that they are no longer a danger to the working class, since they are supported only by the bourgeoisie.

Unfortunately for the day dreamers of the WRP, there is a link between the Labour leaders and the working class. It is one that six decades of imperialist crisis and war, reformist betrayal and the persistent work of Marxists have as yet been unable to sever, or even seriously weaken. Or does Gale believe, as the 1969 SLL conference resolution so blithely put it, that no section of workers would 'ever again' look to Labour for leadership? Is Gale arguing that Trotskyists no longer have as their task the breaking of the workers from their reformist leaders? He writes as if this had already happened, spontaneously. Perhaps Gale still does not support the resolution for which he voted in 1969, and which was brutally refuted by the vote of 12 million workers for Labour a year later. For he declares today:

"But the Labour bureaucracy does not draw its strength and political outlook from the working class. It draws it from its alliance with the bourgeoisie".

Such word play is highly dangerous. For the fact is and only blind sectarians refuse to admit it — that the working class in considerable numbers does find its own illusions and prejudices reflected in the reformist ideology of its leaders. To argue otherwise today implies that the working class is quite spontaneously evolving its own socialist consciousness, and doing so without greatly disturbing the domination of the bureaucracy, or without lending its support in significant numbers to the 'revolutionary alternative', the WRP.

Does saying that Labour is a workers party, (as Trotsky did in 1935) necessarily involve or imply an opportunist outlook? Does saying that the Labour leaders derive support (however critical) from the workers, and to a certain degree, reflect their reformist illusions, place one in the camp of anti-Marxism? Gale obviously thinks so. Let him then expose, in his inimitable style, the opportunist author of the following lines:

"The contemptible, mercenary and servile bureaucrats of the trade unions and the Labour Party express all that is humiliating, serf-like and feudal in the British working class".

Let Gale make hay with that one, and when he is finished, we might tell him who wrote it. Then he can try his hand on this:

"Morrison, Clynes, etc. represent certain prejudices of the workers".

Another case of an opportunist wanting to "establish a link" between the working class and the Labour leaders? If the bureaucracy owes its position solely to the support of the bourgeoisie, then the reformists are already exposed, and, and have been exposed for decades:

## The crisis of leadership has already been resolved.

Do we have here, decked out in the language of what passes in the WRP for Trotskyism, the third period Stalinist theory that the reformist parties (in Britain, the Labour Party) have ceased to be in any sense workers' parties? Palme Dutt, pioneer of the third period in the CPGB, argued that Lenin's analysis of the Labour Party no longer applied after 1928, that the party had become a straight-forward 'third capitalist party', and that the task of the communists was to smash it. After 1928, and then up to 1954, the Labour Party was dubbed social-fascist, much as the WRP today uses the term 'corporatist'.

It was also argued, in a style that has again become fashionable amongst sectarians, that the Labour Party was fast losing its hold on the workers, that its only support derived from the ruling class, and that therefore, all that had to be done to win the workers to communism was confront the 'social-fascists' as the 'new leadership' of the working class. All this sounds familiar, as indeed it is. Gale is simply attempting to smooth the rough edges of what is essentially a policy derived from the third period, and from the 'Left Communism' of a decade earlier.

## Lenin vs. Gale on Elections.

The 'Left Communist' aspect comes through in Gale's rather lame apology for the combination of sectarianism and opportunism which served the WRP as an election policy.

This is how he perverts Lenin to protect the WRP from M's criticisms:

"Thus he (Lenin) wrote — not having had the advantage of her advice about what 'other parties claiming to represent the working class' should do: 'We should put up our candidates in a very few but absolutely safe constituencies (a precept not followed in the Swindon bye-election of 1969, when the vote for the Young Socialists' candidate Frank Willis was greater than the Tory majority over Labour!) . . . We would take part in the election campaign, distribute leaflets agitating for communism, and in all constituencies where we have no candidates we would urge the electors to vote for the Labour candidate against the bourgeois candidate'. This is exactly what the WRP has done."

No, it is not, and the WRP leaders well know it. For they have quite deliberately omitted an entire section of the quotation, where Lenin outlines what he thinks should be the election policy of the British Communists. The relevant passage from Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism" reads:

"The (British) Communists should propose the following 'compromise' election agreement to the Hendersons and Snowdens: let us jointly fight against the alliance between Lloyd George and the Conservatives; Let us share parliamentary seats in proportion to the number of workers' votes polled for the Labour Party and for the Communist (not in elections, but in a special ballot) and let us retain complete freedom of agitation, propaganda and political activity. . . If the Hendersons and the Snowdens accept a bloc on these terms, we shall be the gainers, because the number of parliamentary seats is of no importance to us, we are not out for seats. We shall yield on this point. . . We shall be the gainers, because we shall carry out our agitation among the masses at a time when Lloyd George has 'incensed' them, and we shall not only be helping the Labour Party to establish its government sooner, but shall also be helping the masses sooner to understand the communist propaganda that we shall carry on against the Hendersons, without any reticence or omission.

"If the Hendersons and Snowdens reject a bloc with us on these terms, we shall gain still more, for we

shall at once have shown the masses. . . that the Hendersons prefer their own relation with the capitalists to the unity of all the workers. . . If the Hendersons and the Snowdens reject a bloc with the communists, the latter will gain by winning the sympathy of the masses and discrediting the Hendersons and Snowdens: if, as a result, we do lose a few parliamentary seats, it is a matter of no significance."

We have only now, a few pages of closely argued text, reached the point where Gale feels it is safe to begin his quotation from Lenin, which begins, 'We should put our candidates . . .'

Gale has ignored entirely the stages through which Lenin saw communist election policy in Britain passing. First it was necessary to unify on a principled basis, all the groups adhering to communism and the Third International. The next step in Lenin's opinion, should have been to propose to the Labour leaders a bloc in the elections against the two capitalist parties, the Tories and Liberals. This bloc could, so far as the Communist Party was concerned, only be concluded on the terms outlined by Lenin — complete freedom of agitation and criticism.

Then, and only then, after the CP had demonstrated to the workers that it sincerely sought the unity of the working class against capitalism, did Lenin raise the possibility of the CP running its own candidates, against Labour; in the event of the Labour leaders turning down the CP proposal for an election bloc against the Liberals and Tories. This is evident from even a cursory reading of the section in question. For does not Lenin write, just before the paragraph quoted by Gale, 'If the Hendersons and Snowdens reject a bloc. . . '? When Lenin then goes on to propose putting up candidates 'in a very few but absolutely safe constituencies', he is discussing the step that flows from the rejection of the bloc proposal to the Labour leaders.

Lenin's initial plan was to have the seats divided between the two parties on the basis of their respective support in the class. Both parties would then call on all workers to vote for the selected workers' candidate in every seat, whether he be a Labour candidate or communist. Thus in no case would the workers' vote have been split between the Labour and Communist Parties. This was the essence of Lenin's bloc proposal. The second eventuality, the only one considered by Gale (and for a very good reason) involved the CP running against Labour, in safe seats. In this instance, the workers' vote would be split, but the preparatory steps advised by Lenin (the bloc proposal to the Labour leaders) would have demonstrated in advance that it was not the CP, but the Labour leaders, who were responsible for this division of the workers' vote.

Gale quite shamelessly vulgarises Lenin's highly sophisticated conception of communist election tactics and strategy, and reduced it to running in safe seats! Why does Gale do this? He has, we can be sure, read the whole of 'Left Wing Communism'. He knows what Lenin wrote on this question. The relevant passages were literally staring him in the face as he scanned the pages looking for an isolated paragraph that could turn Lenin into a posthumous supporter of the WRP's sectarian, 'Left Communist' election policy.

The answer is quite simply. Had the WRP, as Gale claims, done 'exactly' as Lenin recommended in 'Left Wing Communism', then it would first have approached the Labour leaders, and proposed a bloc with them against the Tories and the Liberals, both in the February and October elections in 1974. Gale knows it did not do this, neither on the terms outlined by Lenin nor any others. Perhaps Healy feared the outcome of a ballot of workers determining which party they preferred to vote for in the General Election. We just don't know the reason, because the matter was never discussed in the party, at any time. The WRP announced its candidates, and that was that. Healy in fact began his election strategy where Lenin's entered its final

option — the point where the party runs its own candidates against Labour AFTER the Labour leaders have turned down the proposal of a workers' bloc.

Gale, the old entrlist and opponent of Behan, has now, under Healy's tuition, turned into Gale the ultra-left, Gale the distorter of Lenin.

But things were not always thus in the movement that now bears the pretentious title of "Workers Revolutionary Party".

### VIII. The Socialist Labour League on "Entry".

Gale got his early training as an entrlist in the Leeds Labour Party. Why is he so coy about his essential tactical weapon in the arsenal of Trotskyists? Here is what he says about entry:

"Of course, this (i.e. the position which he alleges Lenin to have held on running candidates against Labour) does not mean that Trotskyists should never under any circumstances and conditions, work inside the Labour Party. They have done so." Why so reticent, Comrade Gale? Would it not have helped the newer recruits to the movement to be told precisely how, when and why Trotskyists worked as "entrlists" in the Labour Party? To begin with, here are some dates that might prove helpful. From 1936 through to 1944 one or another of the various Trotskyist groups was carrying on entry work in the Labour Party.

In 1944, with the founding of the Revolutionary Communist Party, there was a turn away from entry work, although it continued on a small scale. The Haston-Grant leadership was responsible for this sectarian orientation, which flowed basically from their insular attitude towards the International. In 1947, with the support of Pablo, Healy assumed the leadership of those forces that had been working for entry over the previous period. In 1949 the RCP was wound up. Haston the anti-entrlist soon defected to the right wing of the bureaucracy, where he remains to this day. The Healy tendency became the majority, and entered on to a phase of faction work which ended only in the summer of 1964 when he took the SLL's supporters out of the Labour Party youth section to establish the independent 'YS.

Healy's abandonment of entry work was later emulated by the Pabloites who formed the IMG, and the state capitalists of the IS. Healy, Ali and Cliff all declared the Labour Party to be 'dead', and abandoned the corpse to the 'daep entrlists'. This opportunist tendency is now reaping the harvest that could and should have been the SLL's had it not been dominated by a leadership that surrendered to Healy's impressionistic methods and organic opportunism. The latter expresses itself through attempts to reach the workers by short-cuts, sometimes by bids to by-pass the traditional organisations of the class (the current phase of which the WRP is the embodiment) or at others by opportunist relations with the left social democrats and centrists, as occurred in the hey-day of the Bevanite movement and later, CND.

When we come to make a balance sheet of entry work in the Labour Party, it will be noted that of the 40 years or so that Trotskyism has existed as an organised political tendency in this country, at least 26 were years of either full or partial entry into the Labour Party, and another two into the ILP.

Up to 1964, in many ways a watershed in the evolution of the movement that is now the WRP, of the movement's 30 years, all but four had been spent in the Labour Party. Surely, this calls for a little explaining? We should ask Gale is there any connection between the emergence to total power of the Healy-Banda bloc in the early 1960's and the subsequent sectarian line of the leadership on the Labour Party?

The answer lies partly in the archives of our movement, especially as they help to throw light on how the

leadership of our movement evaluated the class nature of the Labour Party at a time when it was carrying on serious entry work within it, and when any concessions to the sectarianism on this question would have been suicidal.

But even more remarkable than the respective periods spent inside and out of the Labour Party are the concrete political conditions under which these two different tactics of open and entry work were carried out. Entry, it will presumably be agreed, is a tactic that can be expected to bear its ripest fruits when the reformist leadership, left as well as right, is put on the spot after being placed in the government by the upward thrust of the worker's struggles against capitalism. Now the workers expect promises to be translated into deeds, election programmes, however modest, into legislation. It is at this precise point in the evolution of the crisis of the reformist apparatus, where it finds itself trapped in a vice between the demands of the workers who place it in the government, and the insistence of the capitalist class that it stands firm against these same demands, that the Trotskyists are best placed to win the advanced workers, and to expose the reformists to thousands and even millions more.

That means being in force in the Labour Party, while at the same time, maintaining and developing an open, full, expression of Trotskyism through the publication of a theoretical journal which campaigns among the most advanced elements of the working class and intellectuals for the rebuilding of the Fourth International. The dialectical interdependence of these two fields of work cannot be stressed too much or too often. The former without the latter must lead to opportunist adaption to the bureaucracy through its left elements; whilst simply to pulish at this stage, a Trotskyist organ without seeking to penetrate the Labour Party, is to lapse into propagandist sectarianism, of which we have more than enough samples in Britain already.

Entry, we submit, will prove most rewarding in a period of upturn in the class struggle when the reformists have been placed in power, and provided the Trotskyists remember why they have entered the Labour Party in the first place — neither on a "raid", nor to transform it into a revolutionary party; but to detach from it the vanguard of the class, and to construct on the basis of a profound dislocation of the apparatus, a section of the Fourth International in this country. As we shall demonstrate, this was the perspective of the British Trotskyist movement up until the early 1960's, when, with the onset of the election of the Labour government in October 1964, Healy suddenly abandoned it. This was a truly historic reverse for the movement, not only in this country but internationally. The pre-war entry experiences had all been made with Labour in opposition, and in the war, with a Labour minority in the coalition. In neither situation was it really possible to test out before the whole class the inability of the reformists to match up to their own promises. That required Labour being put into power with a clear majority and a clear mandate for action. In 1945, the working class gave Labour both. But what were the Trotskyists of that time doing? Under the leadership of Haston, they had set up, in 1944, the Revolutionary Communist Party, jettisoning all but the token entry work and had presented themselves to the working class as an 'alternative leadership'.

The working class therefore passed through the vital experience of its first majority Labour government with the forces of Trotskyism almost entirely in voluntary exile from the party through which this experience was being made. Incredible, but true. Entry work was only really got under way after the election of the Tories in November 1951, by which time the Bevanite movement had emerged as the pace-maker of the left, and in which the Trotskyists correctly chose to work as a tendency. But the lesson has to be learnt — the Bevanites did not only articulate the moods of workers frustrated with Labour's failure because of Bevan's personal stature, but also because the Trotsky-



ists had wasted valuable years in the RCP wilderness when they should have been consolidating their base in the Labour Party for just such a development.

Entry work was carried out right through the 13 years of Labour opposition, when all manner of lefts and fakers could win a following, reasonably certain in the knowledge that the day was far off when pledges would have to be honoured. Such periods are difficult ones for the Trotskyists, as they are not in politics to make false promises, but build revolutionary leadership, which involves quite often telling workers unpalatable truths. Trotskyists come into their own when the reformists are placed in the hot seats of government.

The moment of truth for Wilson — and ironically for Healy — arrived in October 1964, when after three successive and increasingly larger defeats, Labour won the General Election. Now a decade and a half of entry work, and all the accumulated experiences of the pre-war entry work, not only in Britain but internationally, should have been drawn together in order to settle accounts with the lefts who had just entered Wilson's cabinet or silenced their former criticisms of Labour policy.

But what was Healy doing? Healy was marching his forces out of the Labour Party into the desert of 'independent youth movements' and 'independent leaderships' 'independent only in the sense that they lived — and withered — independently of the real life struggles of the working class. Never since 1964, the year when the Wilson leadership embarked on its decade of domination in the Labour Party, a decade in which it occupied office for more than six years, has the Healy leadership seriously turned back towards entry in the Labour Party, though verbal gestures were made in that direction from time to time. And all that ended with the 'transformation' of the SLL into the WRP. Quantity had indeed turned into quality, though in this instance, Hegel's famous law was operating regressively. 15 years of work had been thrown away by an impatient leadership hell bent on taking a short cut to power. Healy's short cut has in fact led the movement into the cul-de-sac of sectarianism that led to the 'transformation' of the SLL into a 'revolutionary party' in November 1973.

## IX. Once Again: Back to the Archives

Despite minor concessions to centrism (which do not immediately concern us here) one of the best expositions of the case for entry into the Labour Party was made in draft resolution 'Towards a Revolutionary Party in Britain', which dates from 1957, and was produced by a leadership in which Healy and Gale were already prominent. Its every line is a devastating refutation of the sectarian conceptions that led to the 'transformation' of the SLL into a 'revolutionary party' in November 1973:

"The overriding crisis of our period is the crisis of leadership. Specifically in Britain, that boils down to the problem of winning the mass of the working class from a social democratic to a revolutionary leadership. The problem in the next stage is that of winning a sufficient layer of the working class to form the basis of a revolutionary party whose strength and influence provides the real and necessary foundation for it to enter decisively into the political life of Britain as an alternative to social democracy. Such an alternative does not simply arise by the formal posing of an alternative organisation. A revolutionary leadership is something more than an office, full-time workers or even a paper. It is an organisation able to participate in and draw support from the working class at every stage and level of struggle — an organisation that can move masses, whose members have positions of influence and leadership in decisive sectors of the mass movement". (P. 10)

Having demolished 'W.R.P.-ism', which fails to match up

to a single one of the pre-requisites listed here (by Healy himself?), the document then makes out the case for a long-term perspective of entry into the Labour Party, out of which would come the forces necessary for the formation of an independent revolutionary party:

"Such an organisation will be built, but it will be built by the advanced guard of today sharing with the working class its main political experiences, expanding, and winning positions of leadership in the struggle against social democracy on the central battle-ground—inside the Labour Party. . . . Whether the Marxist movement emerges from the Labour Party as part of a broad centrist movement (here the writer had Bevanism very much in mind: Ed.) and rapidly extends and deepens its influence in the new (centrist: Ed.) organisation, or whether developments of the Labour Party crisis will give conditions for the emergence of a fully formed revolutionary party immediately from the Labour Party, will become clearer in the future. We repeat what is certain: that in the tumultuous period of struggle in Britain the central political experiences of the working class will be geared to developments in the Labour Party". (Ibid, pps.12-15)

In 1957, at any rate, the perspective of Trotskyism was evidently a fully entrism one, with objective developments posing the possibility and basis of a genuine revolutionary party, crystallising out of a profound split in the Labour Party. Unlike the W.R.P. leadership, we believe that this perspective is still correct, and that it is in the best traditions of the principles advanced and developed by the Leninist Comintern and subsequently by Trotsky on the "entrism" question. It is a perspective that would have ensured that today we would be splendidly placed as the crisis in the Labour Party deepens — had the leadership resisted being diverted from it. The Healy leadership jettisoned this course. They were, perhaps, mesmerised by transient successes, which, as has since been proved, have attracted mainly random individuals on the periphery of the workers' movement or not linked with it at all. Big rallies (the vast majority of the participants in which vanished the day after never to be seen again), big names, convinced the Healy leadership that the "revolutionary party" would arise, not out of the objective crisis and split within the workers' traditional mass party, but from confronting it from the outside — and that, at a time when the workers were not breaking from their leaders but were placing them in the Government!

We must speak frankly. The W.R.P. is an abortion, a miscarriage due to sectarian impatience, and not a healthy product of the crisis of social democracy. The W.R.P. episode cannot fail to come to grief in an even more dismal fashion than its forerunner, the RCP. And we predict there will be more than one anti-entrism who will aspire to the mantle of the renegade Haston.

Similar ideas to that already-cited document are to be found in the 'British Perspectives' resolution for the 1957 conference of the movement, known then as 'the group':

"The workers' struggles will not by-pass the Labour Party, there are no other parties which it would wish to support. But the workers will come into the Labour Party expecting action and will look to the Bevanites to provide the leadership . . . . A flexible tactical approach to this emerging centrist current is essential (no denouncing the Bevanites as 'corporatists': Ed.) if we are to ultimately assume our rightful place as leaders of the British working class. We rejected sectarianism in the struggle for entry and in carrying through that phase it was essential that the revolutionaries combine the greatest flexibility in Labour Party work with correctness of programme, not scorning to appear in the company of right-wing reformists for the purpose of getting close to the rank-and-file. In the same way our tactical approach to Bevanism must be based on the necessity to swim in the leftward stream".

Imagine what Workers Press would say if "Marxist Bulletin" employed such a phrase to describe our tactics towards the Tribune Group, or workers supporting Benn! Or if we said, as does this resolution, that we "are not concerned at this stage to have a polemic battle with centrism and we make known our political differences only when necessary and in the most friendly manner". The writer thinks that these formulations depart from the Leninist tradition in its dealing with Centrism. But nevertheless we endorse the statement that "out of the centrist ferment will emerge the Revolutionary Party of the British working class".

If Healy was right on that count, then the WRP should never have been founded. Neither should he have abandoned the Labour Party in 1964, when it was 11 years further away from such a centrist ferment than it is now.

In 1958, the document 'The New Period: Our Prospects and Tasks' continued in this tradition, stressing that 'the central political experiences of the working class will be geared to developments in the Labour Party'. The point was made that 'the fight for revolutionary demands, the building of revolutionary leadership is impossible without roots in this mass party of the British working class'. Please note, 'party of the British working class'!

Although sectarian illusions about 'independence' just began to creep in around the time of the formation of the S.L.L. in the spring of 1959, the movement's position on the Labour Party remained sound, as is evidenced by a circular to members in that year entitled 'After the General Election', a document which includes the following remarkable passage:

"In the first two years of the (communist) party's existence they (its leaders) failed to seek footholds within the Labour Party. In that sense they by-passed the Labour Party. Had it not been for their political experience which Lenin clearly understood, as can be seen from his booklet 'Left Wing Communism' they would have moved towards the Labour Party and assisted in completing the task they had begun in industry by strengthening the left-wing forces in that organisation. The SLL will guide these workers towards the struggle inside the Labour Party and avoid the mistake of our predecessors of the early 1920's."

Today the WRP attempts to draw workers out of the Labour Party into its own closed circle of activity, futile where it is not destructive. So much for the lessons of history!

The SLL's position on the Labour Party and entry at the time of its foundation is set out in the book 'The Battle for Socialism' by Peter Fryer. This book was not just the work of Fryer, as its author pointed out in a brief introductory note — "I express my thanks to the comrades who have helped me writing this book by either reading all or part of it and suggesting improvements, as Michael Banda, Brian Behan, Gerry Healy, William Hunter, Patricia McGowan . . . and Brian Pearce have done. . ." (Ibid p.v) With this in mind let us review the book's position on the class nature of the Labour Party, and the role of Marxists within it. On page 84, the Labour Party is described as 'a working class party with leaders who have abandoned socialist aims and policies. . .', while on page 131 we read that the treachery of the Labour Party leaders has made no difference to the essential character of the party they lead. It is the mass party of the organised working class, created by the trade unions to represent Labour in Parliament. . . It is not only a reformist party, but also the political expression of the trade unions'. Fryer's comments on entry would prove no less perplexing for the rank and file WRP members today:

"Marxists have not learned the ABC of their science if they do not face the mass organisations of their class — the trade unions and the Labour Party — participate in their activities, and in so doing test their own policies. The building of a new revolutionary leadership will be a 1000 times more difficult if

the revolutionary movement does not have roots in these mass organisations. . . The leaders of the Labour Party follow the pro-capitalist policies of the right wing trade union leaders — but the party they lead is rooted in the working class. Through it the mass of the workers assimilate their political experience, irrespective of whether they become individual members of it. . . It is no good turning one's back on the Labour Party because its leaders are reformist. Before the workers will accept Marxists as political leaders they have to test out various charlatans and demagogues. While they are doing so it is worse than useless to build one's own pure ivory tower of immaculate 'Marxism'. The place for Marxists is in the class struggle — and that includes the class struggle going on in the Labour Party. . . Marxists are not members of the Labour Party because they entertain any illusions about its leaders or about its possibilities as an instrument of working class power. They have no such illusions (though the WRP October 1974 election slogan 'force Labour to carry out revolutionary policies' suggests that this is not the case with some of the present party leadership). On the contrary it is the most effective way of dispelling such illusions. Co-existence with the right wing in a common organisation for a certain period can heighten the struggles against that right wing and, step by step, expose its treachery before the workers in practice — not by abstract denunciations from without but by concrete demonstrations from within of the lessons of each struggle and each betrayal. . ."

Fryer laid down four conditions for entry work: "(1) The British ruling class is in crisis, and is less and less able to rule than in the past; (2) the majority of the working class is organised, in some form or other, in the Labour Party; (3) the right wing leadership is in crisis, and the majority of the party's active rank and file want a more left wing policy (4) the revolutionary vanguard is a very weak minority." (pps. 151-152)

Whilst one can argue that the conditions for entry cannot be set out in the form of a blue-print, it is certainly true that conditions Nos. 2 and 4 would be paramount in deciding the issue in so far as entry work in the British Labour Party is concerned. And on these two alone, we must conclude that the WRP should not have been formed, and that the place of Trotskyists is fighting the reformist leadership where it hurts them most — in the trade unions and the Labour Party.

The middle and late 1950's were a period of on-going and rich discussion inside the Trotskyist movement about the Labour Party question and the tactic of entry into it. In this respect also the internal political life of our movement was different from what it became in the later years of the fore-runner of the WRP, the SLL, and in the WRP itself. It had in fact, been possible to recover from the past and to develop the correct positions which have been outlined from the texts already quoted, the positions for which we fight today against the Healy's and Gale's. The exchanges between C. Maxwell and the entrists are good examples of free and honest polemic, such as flourished in our movement before Stalinist methods of resolving political differences cramped and finally stifled them. Maxwell argued in "Forum", the Internal Discussion Bulletin, for February 1957, that the entry tactic per se was wrong. He denied that "there will be in the final analysis a split in the Labour Party from which a mass centrist party will emerge". This was, of course, the perspective on which the Trotskyists had been basing their work in the Labour Party during the rise of the Bevan movement. Maxwell, like Gale today (and other sectarians in the past) tried to invoke the authority of Lenin to justify his rejection of entry, and his claim that the Labour Party was capitalist, though he used other quotations than those selected by

Gale. G. Johnson's reply merits re-reading today. It rejects both the "raid" and "a bit of both" perspectives, not to speak of Healy's (*sui generis!*) entry being carried out by an already existing "strong, independent, revolutionary party".

'It is ridiculous to say that by staying in the Labour Party we lose our freedom to speak against the bureaucracy. In fact, it is the only place where we can speak against the bureaucracy with any effect. It may be possible to talk to a worker about the Labour leadership from outside, but he will not go in and fight against them inside the Labour Party unless we are there to fight with him and give a lead. We can lead a fight inside the Labour Party. Of course, we have to be careful not to stick our necks out — and we are more able to do this the more we understand the tactics. But it is possible to be censured at one meeting and lead a successful fight on rents at the next! . . . Anyone who suggests an open party must present a studied orientation for that party. Even if we had a party our demand in this period would have to be "Labour to Power". In that case, and in the event of a Labour Government, all working class activities would take the form of demands on the Labour Party. . . . But we would be able to press these demands from outside only. We would not be able to fight inside. . . . Our perspective is to stay with the workers, share their political and industrial experience, provide clarification and leadership. Social Democracy will be blown up from the inside. This is patient work. We would all like to see more recruits to the group. But our progress cannot be measured solely by the numbers we are recruiting now. It must be measured by our integration in the mass movement and the degree of clarification we provide. In fact, it would be wrong to look at our Labour Party work as simply a matter of recruiting members to the group. . . . We are playing for big stakes, not just for a few members now.' (Forum, March 1957)

Maxwell was also answered by T. Harris, who took him to task for mis-using, à la Gale, quotations by Lenin:

'The Labour Party, Lenin declared, is a "thoroughly bourgeois party" he defined it as such on the basis of its leadership, the content of its activities, and of its political tactics. But like all definitions, it is true only within limits. Only absolute formalists will use this definition of Lenin's to identify the Labour Party with the "thoroughly bourgeois" Tory Party for the purpose of practical politics. The Tory Party has its base in the capitalist class. From the point of view of its mass base, the Labour Party is a WORKERS PARTY (emphasis in original)

The Labour Party is a contradiction. Marxist practice begins today with an understanding of how that contradiction will develop. A polarisation of classes in society must inevitably result in a polarisation inside the Labour Party, a heightening, to explosion point, of the conflict between its base in the mass of the working class and the bourgeois agents who dominate it".

Once again, we find ourselves in fundamental agreement with the thrust of these remarks, the essence of which is the long-term split perspective of entry, as against "raids" or "a bit of both" on the one hand, and, on the other hand, "deep entry", Pablo's "*sui generis*" entry.

## X. Brian Behan — and the W.R.P.

This brief — but representative — survey of the archives brings us up to 1960 and the struggle with Behan. Healy would do the movement a service if he reproduced all the documents pertaining to this faction fight. They would show that he has himself adopted Behan's sectarian line and pushed it even further than its author intended it to go, while the line which Healy and the S.L.L. majority then defended against Behan is today denounced in "Workers' Press" as "revisionist".

We should note also: this episode in the movement's history has now become such an embarrassment to the

Healy leadership that Banda had to mis-represent Behan's real position in the pamphlet "A Menshevik Un-Masked". Banda wrote there: "In the sixties, a group around Behan — mainly building workers — opposed the discipline of the party and its line in the unions, and marched out under the tattered banner of rank and filism". (p. 6)

This statement is a series of lies. Behan and his supporters marched out under the Left-ist banner, that of launching the "open revolutionary party". Healy and Banda were opposed to that line at the time. Behan went on, in fact, to set up an "open revolutionary party" — the so-called "Workers Party". There was no dispute over the trade unions. The dispute was about the Labour Party, its class nature, and whether it should continue to be the centre of the work of the S.L.L. Healy said it should: Behan disagreed.

Finally, Banda knows perfectly well that Behan was not the only champion of rank and filism at the time. The entire movement had, beginning in the Autumn of 1958, and carrying right through the next year, devoted considerable time and energy to setting in motion a rank and file movement. This can easily be verified from a study of the movement's press of the period, and the main internal documents. And we should add, the term 'rank and file' was specifically used to denote the type of movement being built. But enough of Banda's rather tiresome falsehoods. The main question is how did the SLL majority react to Behan's sectarianism?

As early as March 9th, 1960, Healy tentatively answered Behan's line when he wrote, in an internal political letter, that 'the main political orientation of the SLL is towards the Labour Party' and that 'even if the Labour Party split on the question of Clause 4, this does not mean that the wing headed by Gaitskell could automatically transform itself into a capitalist party'. This latter statement is exceedingly interesting, and faces both its author and Gale with a difficulty. For even if a right wing rump led by Gaitskell could not have been correctly described as a 'capitalist party', then surely that implies two things. One, that the Labour Party as it was then (1960, 46 years after its leaders supported the first World War) and is now, a workers' party with all the necessary qualifications. Secondly, that the quotation selected by Gale from Lenin is, on its own, insufficient to give a rounded-out analysis of the Labour Party, for in it Lenin described the British Labour Party as a capitalist party without any qualification.

We could, if we wanted to, play an unkind trick on unsuspecting WRP members. We could distribute to them, disguised as a WRP political letter, entire sections of Behan's main document 'Draft Programme of the Minority Faction', and be reasonably sure that the majority would presume it to be the work of the current party leadership. It abounds in chatter about the 'construction of independent parties' and the workers being in the last stages of freeing themselves from the grip of reformism: of entry providing a 'cover' for the left reformists, and the need to prepare for an 'open independent youth organisation.' That is why we insist that Healy, having expelled Behan with the support of the great majority of the cadre and the experienced 'entrists' who had laid the foundations in the SLL, then became the executant of Behan's programme.

The central document of the majority of the S.L.L. in 1960 was that submitted by the London Executive Committee, entitled "It Is Time To Decide". This document traces Behan's sectarianism to his Stalinist training in the Communist Party. In turn, it correctly recognises that this bears the more specific imprint of "Third Period" Leftism, especially in the attitude of the Communist Party to the Labour Party. It is ironic that this analysis can be turned, in the light of what has followed, with equal force against Healy. Against the Stalinist line that the Labour Party is a political backwater, the document insists:

"The main arena (of the struggle against reformism:

Ed.) can only be in the mass organisation of the working class: the Labour Party. . . . One reason for the formation of the S.L.L. was to recruit such workers (i.e. those from the Communist Party: Ed.) as fast as we could and arm them with a strategy based on taking the industrial struggle from the trade unions into the Labour Party, which is the political reflection of the trade unions, there to seek political solutions".

Again that phrase: "the political reflection of the unions".

"Newsletter", The fore-runner of "Workers' Press", devoted considerable space to the conflict over the class nature of the Labour Party. The controversy naturally and inevitably raised once again the question of "entry", of the "split perspective" and of under what conditions Trotskyists carrying out entry should terminate this tactic and seek to establish an organisationally independent revolutionary Party. The statement issued by the London Executive Committee of the S.L.L., and published in "Newsletter" for May 14, 1960, just after Behan was expelled, refuted his case for launching the "open party" with a formulation that echoes down the corridors of time. How "Workers Press" would denounce it today as bowing before the spontaneous movement and feelings of the workers! We uphold it today as being of the very essence of the Trotskyist perspective of entry as a tactic related to the strategy of building an independent revolutionary party of the Fourth International:

"We consider that the time for the formation of a revolutionary party in Britain will arise when the people who support the Labour Party and the Trade Unions arrive at the conclusion, through their own experience, that such a party is necessary. That time has not yet come".

## XI. Launching the W.R.P.

And it had not come in the November of 1973, either, when the Healy leadership "transformed" the S.L.L. into an "open party", repudiating everything that had been fought for in defence against Behan's sectarianism — less than three months before the British working class once more gave its mandate to the Labour leaders to implement their basic demands. Everything that has happened in the class struggle since November 1973 — and not least the derisory vote given to the W.R.P.'s election candidates — underlines the truth of the positions which the S.L.L. majority defended in 1960; that the act of creating a genuine independent revolutionary party is the outcome of an objective process of maturation within the proletariat, that it flows from the conclusions drawn by the class itself, especially its most advanced elements, that the traditional leaderships are incapable of either defending its past gains or advancing to the conquest of new ones.

The W.R.P. was, therefore, launched on a foundation radically at variance with the best traditions, not only of the Trotskyists movement in Britain, but of the entire Fourth International. The arguments put forward by the Healy leadership to justify the W.R.P. adventure should be looked at in the light of this international tradition. Unlike the radical "new vanguard" of the W.R.P., we do not surrender the positions which the founders of our movement fought for and defended against the opportunists and sectarians. The argument presented in a resolution passed by the Central Committee of the S.L.L. on February 1, 1973, ("Perspectives for the Transformation of the S.L.L. into a Revolutionary Party") can be summarised as follows: . . . the reformist leaders are about to betray the working class. Therefore, "the most decisive question is to build the alternative to them now. . . . This what it means to say that the transformation of the S.L.L. into a revolutionary party in 1973 is a historical necessity".

But the building of revolutionary parties had been a "historical necessity" for more than half a century before 1973! Reformists had been betraying for just so long — which is in fact just the reason why revolutionary parties are a historical necessity.

Likewise, when the same resolution says that "in defending the gains of the movement, its mass organisations, the trade unions, the working class will need a revolutionary party above all else", we will of course agree whole-heartedly, and go even further, pointing out that this had also been the case in Britain ever since World War One. What the resolution failed to establish were the grounds for choosing November 1973 as the month and year when founding such a revolutionary party became a practical possibility to be carried out, rather than a perspective to be worked towards. After all, it was 40 years before the founding of the W.R.P. that the International Left Opposition issued in summer 1933 its call for the New International and for the building of new revolutionary parties in each country. What made 1973 the year when the accomplishment of this task could be said to be within the reach of the S.L.L.?

Was it because the advanced workers themselves were breaking from the Labour Party, as in the entry perspectives of the 1950's? Was it that they were creating the objective conditions necessary for a deep-going split inside the Labour Party, and, therefore, for the creation of a revolutionary party rooted in important sectors of the proletariat?

Nowhere was there any attempt to present such a perspective, not merely because the objective conditions for it did not exist in 1973, but principally because the "split" perspective had long since been jettisoned by the Healy leadership, along with that of entry as the tactic whereby the split in the Labour Party can be brought to fruition.

Instead we had subjective desires — a poor substitute for the objective struggle of the workers:

"In this situation the transformation of the league into the revolutionary party is a necessity. The first requirement for the working class is such a party. . . . But the league in its present form remains inadequate to the great tasks confronting it. It must be expanded in size with hundreds of new members, and it must be transformed into a real PARTY (emphasis in original), which the class can see as a real alternative, able to provide the leadership required on all questions".

Thus the W.R.P. staked its bid for leadership as a rival apparatus to that of the Labour Party, with the opportunist consequences which became all too obvious in the course of the last two election campaigns, when the purchase of a copy of "Workers Press" or attending a Y.S. disco. were accepted as sufficient to warrant membership of the party that was to resolve the crisis of leadership in Britain.

There is no easy explanation of why the Healy leadership came to be where it is today. . . . and even Behan defended the entry tactic for a time, having learned it formally from comrades in the S.L.L. who had passed through the hard school of struggle against the sectarians of the Revolutionary Communist Party and even of the pre-war movement. Behan wrote in "Newsletter" (June 13, 1959) that the Right had defeated the Left inside the Labour Party (no quotation marks around Left in those days!) for a variety of reasons, among which he mentioned the tactic of the Right "forcing the Left to go outside the Party and set up independent parties". Behan then pointed out that, while the Communist Party and the I.L.P. alike were right to "fight for their right to have policies and journals and organisations in the Labour Party", they were both "wrong when they turned their backs on the Labour Party and left the field clear for the right. This sectarian policy helped the Right wing".

Behan then summarised his case against the sectar-

ians, past and present, with the following words, which proved to be ironically prophetic, not only as regards himself, but for those who a year later opposed his defection to sectarianism, only to join him, belatedly, in 1973:

"Unlike the Communist Party, the S.L.L. does not seek to pull the Left out of the Labour Party into a small sectarian organisation. We answer the reformists attacks by remaining inside the Party and carrying forward the fight against the reformists and for a socialist programme"

The S.L.L. Conference at which Behan's sectarian platform was debated received full coverage in "Newsletter". The issue of June 11, 1960, reported that "with only one vote in favour and one abstention, conference rejected the policy put forward by a delegate from the Behan faction, which called for the launching of an independent party and characterised the Labour Party as a capitalist party". Gale voted for this resolution, as did Banda, Slaughter and the rest. Today such views are regarded in the W.R.P. as conclusive proof that those who hold and defend them against the sectarians are "liquidationists", "revisionists", "centrists" and "renegades".

We can leave it to the documents and resolutions presented here to establish just who has renegaded on the principles of our movement, who is engaged in liquidating its cadres in sectarian adventures in the tradition of the later Behan of 1960, who is revising the programme of Bolshevism, and who is exhibiting all the signs of centrist vacillation as he jumps readily from one half-digested position on the Labour Party to another.

The reader captures the fine flavour of the argument against Behan, and the essence of it, by going back to the reports of the discussion. The documents in question are hard to come by, and until they can once again be discussed by those concerned, the following excerpts might help:

Alasdair MacIntyre (a supporter of Behan): "We... think that although Labour Party faction work should continue, the most important challenge for the Labour Party, and the one which is most likely to move policies inside the Labour Party is not one of total entry, but one of open challenge from outside."

(Here we recognise the "bit of both" bogus entrism, and Healy's own "sui generis" entry, carried out by a "strong, independent revolutionary party". In 1960, however, Healy rejected such sectarian conceptions. Thus his rewriting of the S.L.L. entry experience in 1966 is revealed as false from beginning to end.)

Granville Stone (another Behan supporter): "... in my opinion the Labour Party is not a working class party. It is the left arm of capitalism, a petty bourgeois party anti-working class, despite the fact that it has some workers in it... We have got to ask ourselves whether such a method (entry Ed.) will build the revolutionary party. I think history proves otherwise... the policy of total entry has led to a watering down of revolutionary principles... (for example: Ed.) "Newsletters" support for nationalisation and for workers' participation in industry (now denounced as "corporatism" but for which Healy had argued in a long article in "Newsletter" of December 6, 1958 page 323) and the suspension of payment of compensation to the former owners of coal mines".

Granville Stone's views on the Labour Party, thus, are those of the W.R.P. today.

Alex McLarty (for the majority): "Because the minority does not understand the historical developments leading to today's reality, they become impatient, they look for a quick approach, a road out, and therefore their inadequate theoretical understanding makes them attempt to revise the policy of the Marxist movement... they don't understand that for years

now there have been groups up and down this country who roar and shout the very same slogan (the "open party": Ed.) at the street corners. But the reasons why these groups cannot build up is precisely because they have no historical principles or continuity of any sort whatsoever".

Cyril Smith (for the majority): "... the Labour Party Regional Officer told me that there would be no quarrel with the Trotskyists if only they would form their own party. They want us out of the way for the same reason that we want to be in there, because we think that in the political experience of the working class, as it takes place in this important organisation, the Labour Party, we have got to have Marxists there to take part, and to give leadership in the development of the Left Wing".

Thus today, if we follow Smith's exemplary logic, there is "no quarrel" between the Labour Party bureaucracy and the W.R.P. The turn away from entry of which notice was given in 1964 and which was consummated by launching the W.R.P. in 1973 has helped to ensure that never the twain shall meet — not in real conflict, at any rate. What Transport House wanted to do, tried to do but could not do has been accomplished for it by the present Healy leadership. The Labour Party has been "cleansed" of Trotskyists. Are you satisfied with your handiwork, Healy, Banda, Slaughter, Gale, Smith?

## XII. "Entry" and the "United Front"

More and more comrades, fortunately, are finding their own way to unravel the problems and lessons of our history. More and more understand (as real Trotskyists have always known) that "strong, independent, revolutionary parties", when we have them, will not rely on entry as their means of relating to the rank and file of the reformist parties. They will do so in quite a different way. They will struggle for the United Front. "When and where we already have got "strong, independent, revolutionary parties", the question of entry will not arise in its present form at all. The purposes for which we today conceive of it will already have been fulfilled and passed away.

Our "strong, independent, revolutionary parties" will fight openly for agreements between the party leaderships for common offensive and defensive actions to be undertaken jointly by the members of both parties. Even after we have first broken from the reformist party, and terminated our entry, a new left wing will develop in what is left thanks to the crisis and to the pressure of our existence as a force of attraction. In the joint activities, the parties will retain their political and organisational independence, and their right of mutual criticism, and we shall be in a position to enforce these conditions precisely because we shall be stronger than we are today.

One would think that this point was an elementary one for a man like Healy, who would claim, without pausing to think, that his work is based on the First Four Congresses. One would think that only centrists or anarcho-syndicalists, who reject the First Four Congresses, and leap themselves into a swamp by so doing, could misunderstand the Lennist United Front. How comes Healy to make such a bloomer? As Freud explained, "the unconscious never lies". We may well doubt that he accepts, or even understands the ideas of Lenin, Trotsky and the Communist International from 1920 to 1922 on the United Front. Stalinism educated him in the 1930's in quite a different tradition, and it shows.

Any reader of 'Workers' Press' could see this in the way it dealt with the General Elections of 1974. It issued ultimatums to the Labour voters: "Break with your leaders — vote for us — accept our programme". The voters showed what they thought of this approach, which has nothing in common with the "United Front of Lenin and Trotsky, and with the IIIrd and IVth Congresses.

The whole point of the Leninist United Front is that it does NOT demand in advance that the workers break with the reformist leaders, before experience has convinced them that the programme of the revolutionaries is in their interests. The whole point of struggling for agreements between the parties as such, involving the rank and file of both in common struggle for immediate aims, is that this is the only way to convince the workers that the reformist leaders will not and do not want to fight, and to expose them. The reformist leaders, naturally, try to evade such agreements; they join them only when the Marxists oblige them to do so by their persistent agitation for unity in action, or, when they hope to be able to manipulate the Marxists and come out with a better image.

The ultimatum, self-defeating policy of the "United Front from below" — "Join us or else!" — became the rule in the Comintern only at the 5th and 6th Congresses, after the death of Lenin and Stalin's rise to power. We are all still paying for it. It helped to strengthen the grip of the Social-Democratic leaders on the German masses and to open the road to Hitler in the years up to 1933. It defeats the whole aim of the Leninist United Front, because it demands in advance that the workers accept the programme of the left centrists who claim to be revolutionaries, when what is needed is to convince them by their experience, to take them to Bolshevik conclusions through the experience of common struggle.

Everything that "Workers' Press" writes today about the leaders of the Labour Right or Left, everything that we hear at the W.R.P. meetings, confirms that this Stalinist distortion of the Third and Fourth Congresses has a firm grip on Healy's thinking. This in turn complicates the discussion of the differences in the cadre, since none of them can get to the bottom of what their differences are.

### XIII. Healy and "Higher Abstraction"

It is easy to see why in 1966 he tried to deal with Pablo in this particular way. He had just been letting the S.L.L. be pulled away from the Labour Party rank and file, away into "independence". He had to justify the turn. He had to be "proved" right. This meant alleging that the youth work had been a great success, and alleging further that such success was due to the "independent" line of the S.L.L. But was the youth work the great success it is claimed to be? That is just what has not been, and has to be, proved. It may be good enough for Healy to demand that everyone believes what he says just because he says it, but Marxism teaches us to eschew "saviours from on high".

Philosophers would recognise the error in formal logic of his argument: it is known as "assuming what you need to prove". He may talk as if "everyone knows" that the youth work was a success, forgetting that it was Stalin who, when he had something particularly appalling to announce, used to begin: "As everyone knows. . . Trotsky is a counter-revolutionary agent of Hitler".

Maybe someone like the fallen cherub Jack Gale, will be tempted to retort: "But look at the facts. We sold so many papers; we recruited so many people". Sorry, Jack: bad company is making an impressionist out of you. The National Committee of the S.L.L. warned you against this kind of thing back in 1963. In "Opportunism and Empiricism", there is a passage headlined — correctly — "Facts are Abstractions". It reads: "when we attack empiricism, we attack that method of approach which says all statements, to be meaningful, must refer to observable or measurable data in their immediately given form. . . Only higher abstraction, in advanced theory, can guide us to the meaning of these facts".

(Trotskyism v Revisionism, Vol. IV, p.81)

Higher abstractions have never yet been formulated, advanced theory has not been developed, to answer the question: Would the forces of Trotskyism have been stronger, materially as well as politically, if the S.L.L. had

not turned its back on the Labour Party rank and file in the early 1960's a turn which Cannon noticed even while Healy was still preening himself on defeating Behan, an operation which he carried through thanks to the old entrists elements in the league whom he was soon trying to destroy. Only the Marxists outside the W.R.P. who have done their best to get the history of the league discussed in the terms of advanced theory and not of impressions, address their minds to the possibilities which the complex and contradictory processes inside the Labour Party opened up. Healy has not made the slightest effort to provide the theoretical framework within which his members can discover that are the important facts about their own history. Thus, of course, he gives credibility, not only to those who regard his interest in dialectics as ritualistic word-spinning, a cover for sectarianism, but also, unfortunately, to those sceptics who write off dialectics as idle play of the mind.

The members of the S.L.L. — W.R.P. have to accept what Healy tells them and take his word for it because they had no means of testing it. The unfortunate Malvolio has been caught in this trap. Let us repeat — if he had debated whether Healy might not have been wrong in 1964, if he had then looked even further back for the sources of Healy's sectarianism, he would not now be confusing the minds of the members of the W.S.L. with his stuff about "limited entry".

There is another question here too. Healy has discussed with no one the "advanced theory" which, according to the 1963 resolution of the National Committee, he would need to enable the "facts" about the youth work to be evaluated. None the less, he has made up his mind about them. Evidently, Consciousness is determined by being for everyone else — but not for Healy. Where others must rely on "advanced theory", in his case Inspiration is enough. In his case, and his alone, truth is the same as what goes on in his head. He is the super-man, above and outside history. Empiricism equals Idealism, as all Marxists know. Even though Healy does not recognise the Marxist theory of knowledge, it recognises him. We recommend this practical example for Slaughter's next lecture on "philosophy".

There has, as Malvolio well knows, been no honest accounting of what the S.L.L./W.R.P. leadership has been up to in recent years. Marxists have to be content with the simple explanation that Healy has adulterated Marxist theory with inspiration and dialectical materialism with idealism. Whatever he may say about either entrism or the Young Socialists is all party of the same demagogy. Let us avert our eyes in pity from the megalomaniac who can seriously assert that the S.L.L. was a "strong, independent, revolutionary party", functioning actively in the daily experience of the working-class in 1960-1964, when he did not even announce that it was a party until 1973.

His argument was false, superficial and unwise. Yet it had a purpose to serve. He framed the argument when he was attacking Pablo, in such a way as to suggest that there are only two conceptions of "entrism" to choose from. Either you choose Pablo's totally wrong liquidationist notion of "entry sui generis" — or there remains nothing but the 100% correct Gerry Healy. Are there, then, no other possible forms, has entry never taken any other forms, than that of Pablo, or of the 1966 Healy? Of course there are! That Pablo got it wrong does not mean that Healy got it right. Healy simply wrote out of existence all our past experience, including his own, and including what Trotsky had had to say, with one sentence: "There are still alleged supporters of Trotsky who wrongly insist that it is necessary for our parties to go through the Social Democratic or Communist Parties at some time in their development." That is where he left the question, as if different countries did not have national peculiarities and the problem was settled for all time.

#### XIV. The International Consequences of Healy's Mistake on 'Entrism'

Those who try to harness History to their donkey-carts find her calling in person sooner or later to present her bill, though she may go, as the poet says, on "limping foot". Pablo could have made mincemeat of Healy's 1966 argument — wrong as Pablo was, — had he thought it worth his trouble. Healy by then could no longer argue correctly about entry even with Pablo, let alone anyone else. In "Problems of the Fourth International", Healy presented entry in terms of his factional requirements, and of them only. Please, Comrade Malvolio, look where this puts you. You say that you are concerned with the international responsibilities of the W.S.L., and that is right. Healy's doctrine is educating his satellites in a conception of party-building which will lead them to disaster. Is it not likely that one day in some country his associates will face a situation like that which faced him (and the writer) in 1949, when it was right for us to enter a mass reformist party, without the benefit of the "strong, independent, etc. party"? The experts on "philosophy", like Slaughter, might well apply the dialectical method about which they write. There is the practical task of reviewing the rich variety of situations which might call for entry, whenever the national historical peculiarities require it as the road to build the party. They might well educate their young comrades in the history of the pre-war experience of entry. They might well help them to identify similar situations today. What good is all the writing about "Marxist philosophy" when Healy junks his own past and, like the Stalinised Comintern, shoves his line down everyone's throat, regardless of time and place.

#### Signposts into Trotsky's writing on Entrism

There is nothing uncertain or arcane about Trotsky's views of the matter. The least that "Problems of the Fourth International" could have done was to reproduce the important statement of Trotsky. Since his under-study did not do so, we must make good the omission.

Marxists are not, of course, quotation-mongers. We quote with two objects. The first is to bring what someone has said into an argument as evidence. The second is to stimulate the reader to go back to the original document and read the rest of it, so that he can make sure that we have quoted honestly, and not tried to use the quotation as evidence of something it does not prove. We want to present the essence of the thought of Trotsky and the old international leadership. We want our debates to deepen Marxist culture. They are not a brawl in which the antagonists get marks for scoring "hits", or throw in any missile that comes to hand, appropriate or otherwise. The method of the burglar, who breaks into the archives to pick up the bits that catch his eye — this promotes scepticism in matters of theory and history. Workers tire of the wearisome struggle against distorted or irrelevant quotations. You may score a "hit" — but what good does it do you or anyone else?

What about this one, then? It comes from: "The Present Situation and the Tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninists", which is published in "Documents of the Fourth International". (pages 60-65). The opening section is headed: "From a propagandist group to mass work". The whole document is about the situation of the Trotskyist movement internationally. For example, it argues: "The International Communist League cannot act as an independent of the proletariat: it is only the instrument for the creation of independent parties". "Its instrument must be employed in accordance with the situation in each country". "It is necessary to establish proper relations with the mass organisations". It is necessary to find the correct point of departure corresponding to the concrete conditions of the proletarian vanguard in the person of its various groupings. And for this it is necessary to see oneself not as a make shift for the new party, but only as the

instrument for its creation. . . While preserving in its totality an intransigence on principle, it is necessary to free oneself radically from sectarian hangovers which subsist as a heritage from a purely propagandist period".

And there is more to help us. We have already benefited from the work of the "Geneva Conference", the First International Conference of the Fourth International, of July 1936. "Documents of the Fourth International" reproduces its thesis, "The Evolution of the Comintern" (p.113-131.) Look at paras. 35 and 36, p. 129-130. In a section headed Mass Radicalisation, the author remarks: "The contradiction between the militant masses who are pushing to the left and the new treacherous part played by the Communist parties offers the organisations of the Fourth International great tasks and possibilities. Some of these organisations have, in the immediate past, joined the Socialist parties and have won over the best elements there to revolutionary Marxism. In countries with tremendously accelerated inner-political developments (France, Belgium), this proved to be a short stage. In other countries (Poland, England) this experience is not yet completed. In others again (America) they are still at the beginning. But no matter whether the sections of the Fourth International are working independently or within the Socialist Parties, they must direct their attention to the fact that at present the Third International is attracting workers from the Second International. Therefore, the most essential struggle against social-imperialism — socialism or Communism in words, and imperialism in practice — is the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy. The most important task is to make clear to the workers the present day character of the Comintern as an agency of imperialism, to make it clear to them that a change-over from the Second to the Third International means jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

The roads and methods of this work will be manifold and various, dependent on the whole development and the peculiarities of each country. It is of decisive importance to utilise every possibility to force the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy into open antagonism to its social supporters, the revolutionary working class. It is important everywhere to watch developments with open eyes, to collect material, to follow carefully all contradictory tendencies, in order to be able to act opportunely and effectively". Is there not some good advice here for you, Comrade Malvolio? Why not study the British Labour Party?

Trotsky refutes in advance, from the richness of theory and experience, the whole circus of bogus entrists which owes so much of its remaining vitality to the S.L.L./W.R.P.

Then there is the closing paragraph of the "Interview with Collins" in the summer 1936: "It is even possible to consider at this stage an independent existence outside the mass organisations?", and Trotsky answers his own question, "Any such sectarian, sterile and formalistic interpretation of Marxism would disgrace an intelligent child of ten". That is the end of the paragraph which reads:

"While it is necessary for the revolutionary party to maintain its independence at all times, a revolutionary group of a few hundred comrades is not a revolutionary party and can work most effectively at present by opposition to the social-patriots within the mass parties. In view of the increasing acuteness of the international situation, it is also essential to be within the mass organisations while there is the possibility of doing revolutionary work within them".

("Writings: 1935-36" p. 76)

There are, of course, always some who talk about entry as if it meant raiding the Labour Party, snatching the bodies of individuals, to get them out selling the "independent paper". Others, as we know, dream of staying in the Labour Party, "up to the seizure of power". Neither of these makes any sense. Trotsky laid down no fixed time-scale in advance. We have his review, "Towards a Decision",

which is a review of a book by a Czech Trotskyist ("writings: 1938-39, p. 57). The author of the book had written: "We do not think that it would be correct to create a new Trotskyist Party. . . the world proletariat must create a new and therefore a Fourth International. However, it will be created not outside the big proletarian organisations, but through them and on the basis of them. In this view we differ from the official Trotskyites" With great comradeliness and patience, Trotsky replied: "We have never been principled opponents to the formation of fractions of the Fourth International within reformist or centrist parties: on the contrary, for many countries we consider this stage unavoidable. The experience passed through in several countries brought undoubtedly positive results, which nevertheless did not by far transform our sections into mass parties. How long our co-thinkers can or should remain a fraction of the Czech Social-Democracy is a question of concrete conditions and possibilities and not at all of principles. That is why the motives which prompted the author to counterpose his group to the "official Trotskyites" are not clear to us. In our opinion it can only be a question of a division of labour, or a temporary distribution of "spheres of influence" but in no case a counterposing of two organisational methods. . . ." However, if the author "wants to say that revolutionary Marxists, those who make up independent sections of the Fourth International as well as those who temporarily work as fractions within the two other Internationals, are obliged to concentrate their main efforts within the mass organisations, and in the first place in the trade unions, we would be in full and unconditional solidarity with him. Those "partisans" of the Fourth International who under one excuse or another remain outside of mass organisations can only compromise the banner of the Fourth International. Our roads are not the same.

This was written about the same time as the Founding Conference took place, with Trotsky obviously expecting, not that there would henceforth be an end to entry, but, on the contrary, a whole new set of experiences of it.

When polemicising against the group of Raymond Molinier in the French section, who in 1935 adapted themselves well to the life in the S.F.I.O. and made concessions to the centrists, he went after their argument that entry must necessarily be prolonged. There was nothing dogmatic about it, no mechanical prescription of a stay of any particular or predetermined duration. "Entry into a reformist-centrist party in itself does not include a long perspective. It is only a stage, which, under certain conditions, can be limited to an episode. . . One must not, under pretext of reaching the ranks, make principled concessions to the top centrists and left centrists"

("Lessons of the S.F.I.O. Entry": "Writings: 1935-36,p.31)

He warned the dogmatists and pontiffs of his own time: "We can permit ourselves to enter the opportunist parties because we have educated cadres; because we are inplacable towards professional confusionists of the S.A.P. kind; because we are doing all our work, either as an independent organisation or temporarily, as a fraction inside the opportunist parties, under the banner of the Fourth International, that is to say, without any conciliation with the ideas and methods of the Second and Third Internationals. . . It is wrong to claim that we should not enter a social democratic party unless we are accepted as a statutory fraction and allowed our own organs, etc. No doubt it would be excellent if we had all that. But outside of France where the S.P. has quite a peculiar structure and tradition, we never find such conditions. Nor are they decisive. As the Belgium example shows, entry is conditioned by political and not constitutional motives. It is not a matter of entering a particular party with band playing but of having real possibilities of doing revolutionary work inside the Party. Inside the Stalinist Parties our friends must work in a completely illegal way. The same is admissible equally

for reformist parties. For us it is not a question of decorous politics but of revolutionary politics".

(See: "Perspectives in Poland" Writings: 1935-36, p.21)

## XV Why not apply for affiliation to the Labour Party?

Some of those who hope to eat their cake and have it propose to substitute for a principled work in the Labour Party an application to the bureaucracy to accept their society as an affiliated organisation, so that it can make its position clear. What a bright idea someone has had! We regret that he has not thought enough about it. You would have to campaign for your application to be supported by the rank and file — that is, assuming that you were not to get in by kind permission of the Right Wing. But such a campaign will bring you to the notice, first and foremost, of the gendarmerie at Transport House and the regional offices. They will turn your application down anyway, having decided thirty years ago that there were going to be no more socialist societies affiliated with their own programmes. (Didn't you know?) Your group could then not get in surreptitiously, having already put the finger on itself. Nor would the rank and file of the Labour Party be impressed when you protested about being turned down. Anyone who knows them can tell you what they would say: "How many of you are there? Not a lot of you, is there? Why don't you come in the same way as everyone else? What's the matter with you? Get some ideas of your own, have you? Well, come along and muck in with the rest of us."

How seriously is this talk of "applying for affiliation" to be taken? If yes, it is a silly mistake, which will make genuine entry harder, committed by people who have the illusion that revolutionary work means shouting who and what you are at every verse-end.

If the idea of applying to the National Executive of the Labour Party for affiliation is seriously meant, it is a non-starter. If, as we suspect, it never was seriously meant, then we denounce it. It is no more than a childish manoeuvre, intended to convey a false impression that Malvolio is turning to the Labour Party when he really is not doing so. It is no more than yet another sectarian dodge to muddy the waters of the debate about HOW the party of Bolshevik-Leninism is to be built.

Those who reject the entry which our weakness and the British scene make necessary are really rejecting the strategy of building the party of Bolshevik-Leninism. They want to build something, but what is it? We do not know. They have not told us HOW their methods contribute to building the party of Bolshevik-Leninism. They do not tell us which way they are looking. That is, probably, because they do not know — which is a characteristic of centrists.

## XVI Our last word, for the present to Malvolio

If we have a genuine party, there would be no sense in a general entry into the Labour Party, on a basis such as would be correct for a small group. If we have only a small group, there is no sense in pretending that we are a genuine party and trying to act like one. A genuine Bolshevik-Leninist Party is not created by the act of will of a dynamic minority, any more than that at the fiat of a general secretary whose omniscience stops at the outer door of his premises.

A genuine revolutionary party of Marxists will result only from great class struggles and from the consequent tensions, crisis and splits in the workers' traditional organisations. The Marxists intervene in these processes. We learn from them and help them to bear fruit. We do not try to substitute our own illusions and impatience for them. If we are only a group, there is no sense in not entering the Labour Party and participating in the life of the rank and file in a principled way. We trust the Malvolio and those



who think like him are now at least aware that there is something new for them to learn about what principled entrists can do and have done. We trust that they will go on reading this document, uncomfortable as it may be for their prejudices. Anyway, Malvolio likes thawcking about; let us see if he can take it as well as dish it out.

There are, of course, those who think that "entrism" means flitting into the Labour Party when workers seem to be taking an interest in its internal life, as today, and flitting out again when the workers seem disillusioned with not being able to get at the Right Wing. Some comrades express this point of view in the over-simplified expression that we must be in the Labour Party "in order to be with the workers". At best this line of talk is bowing before the spontaneity of the masses: at worst it opens a direct entrance to liquidationism. People who use it discredit Trotskyism and play into the hands of the bogus entrists. Why? Because serious, stable workers hold their ground in the Labour Party year after year against the reformists. They look for reliable allies. They do not want people who will run away just when the right wing gets on top.

The "Workers Press" has a few M.P.'s who occasionally make statements for it. This does not pass as "entrism" either. The militants in the Labour Party were there before Healy's recent re-discovery of them. They know better than to take orders shouted to them from outside.

"Being with the masses" is like "only a tactic" and "an orientation to the Labour Party". They are all three formulae for covering up tailism. Marxists participate in the Labour Party in a principled way because it embodies three-quarters of a century of political experience of the British working-class. That experience, when it is assimilated will provide the "higher abstraction, in advanced theory" which "can guide us to the meaning of the facts". Whether individual membership and activity rises or falls is irrelevant to the expression of our strategy in entry. We did not bow to the moods of the workers when individual membership of the Labour Party was falling in the 1950's; we do not use the rise from 1961 to 1964 as the basis for our attack on Healy's turn away from it.

So much for the bogus entrists, to whom the Labour bureaucracy and the Stalinists have so many reasons to be grateful. The rest of this article, which will appear in spring 1976, will be about a Marxist programme of action for those who participate in a principled way in the Labour Party. We must close here with just a word about a chap who always seems to turn up in discussions about work in the Labour Party. This chap thought it might be a good idea to go to his local Labour Party meeting. He found them talking about garden-gates and cakes for a social. Maybe he has been trained by sectarians. Maybe he was a bit of a snob. Anyway he soon left and did not go back, because he could not bear such backwardness.

For thick-heads and idealists the story ends there. But not for Marxists. He could have stayed awhile, listened,

and even gone back. He might have realised that when they were talking about garden-gates, they were gunning for a corrupt councillor or fighting "cuts". He might have asked what the social was for, and would have been told that it was to run an election against the Tories and the National Front for which a few quid had to be raised. Was he impenetrably smug? If not, he would have noticed, and thought about, what brought these people to the Labour Party and how their class-feeling was in constant conflict with individual careerism. He could have started from the everyday things that were important to them, and could have raised the level of their discussions, by bringing in the spirit of the Transitional Programme. He might then have led some of them into battle against the right wingers and the apparatchiks, whose business it is to keep the debates on a parochial level and prevent the class-hostility from showing.

He would, of course, have had to show a little humility, hold his tongue for a while and give people a chance to talk to him. He could find out any other militants there might be around. In other words, he could take the first real step out of wonderland into the real world in which the workers live politically. Spare us the snobbish nonsense about garden-gates and cakes for the social.

What happened to the chap who did not go back again to his local Labour Party because it was too backward? For some time he devoted himself to "building the party", in the futile search for the imaginary revolutionary army, waiting round the corner for his little group to come along and lead it. After a while he came to a conclusion. We do not know what it was, but it must have been one of three possible ones. He may have decided that whatever he did made no difference, but that he liked the life of a sect. He stayed in the group, giving his time and money, putting up with the pressure, leaving the thinking to others and infecting with routinism everyone around him. Secondly, he may have decided that he was serving no useful purpose in letting the professionals bully him — for, as we saw, a sect usually needs its professional bullies — and that he just lacked the moral fibre of a Bolshevik. Even then he was not lost; an injection of theory and a turn to principled work in the Labour Party could have saved his self-respect. Thirdly, he may have decided, like thousands before him, that the working class has no revolutionary role in history, that working to advance its cause is a waste of time, that either the world cannot be changed at all or that some force other than the working class will change it. And that would be the end of him, all because no one warned him that he was going into the Labour Party to learn as well as to teach.

Has our cautionary tale explained why Marxists go out after sectarians whose ignorance and complacency squanders the human resources of our movement, and why we purify our movement from them as from a pestilence?

The following correspondence addressed to the WRP has to date received no reply.

From: Executive Committee  
BULLETIN GROUP

CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
Workers Revolutionary Party

Dear Comrades,

On Monday July 28, 'Worker's Press' published an article headed 'New dictatorship threat in Portugal - Military Trio take the reins' which contains the following paragraphs:

"To expose the Stalinists, the demand must be raised in the working class for the united front of workers' parties, led by the Socialists and the CP, to bar the way to military dictatorship, insist on social and economic policies to solve the social and economic problems, and call for fully representative workers' committees throughout the country to carry them out."

The Bulletin Group welcomes the call for the United Front in Portugal, which is in marked contrast to the capitulation to both the Stalinists and the AFM by virtually all those in Britain who claim to be Trotskyists. The demands for a workers united front, and a workers' government, for which you have also called, are fundamental to both the defence of the class and also to the advance of its struggle towards state power.

We welcome too the statement in the article of Thursday July 31 headed 'Carvalho in ultra-left attack on SP', that: "To say (the Socialist Party is the main enemy of the left) is to repeat the ultra-left idiocy of Stalin's Third Period policies which opened the door to Hitler's take-over in Germany in 1933 by branding the Social Democrats as 'social-fascists'."

On July 10 Jack Gale wrote: "The Stalinists have throughout played the key role in every attempt to confuse and divert the working class and stab it in the back. The provocation they carried out over 'Republica' - organising a take-over by Stalinist printworkers of the only remaining Socialist Party paper - has played a crucial part in holding back the working class in the present struggles."

This analysis provides a basis for the defence of the Portuguese revolution, but it is necessary to go further. The defence of 'Republica', the defence of the Portuguese Socialist Party, and the defence of freedom of the press from control by the bourgeois state must be fought for.

This fight is a prerequisite for the working class to establish its political independence, necessary to its struggle for power, and inseparable at the present time from the call for a United Front and a Workers' Government. The Bulletin Group calls upon the WRP to use all its resources in campaigning in the British Labour movement for the defence of 'Republica', the Portuguese Socialist Party and against the attack on democratic rights underway in Portugal.

If the Workers' Revolutionary Party undertakes such a campaign, they can be assured of our unconditional support to it.

Yours Fraternally,  
Executive Committee  
BULLETIN GROUP

August 12th 1975

14/10/75

To The Central Committee,  
Workers' Revolutionary Party,  
186a, Clapham High Street,  
London, S.W.4.

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to inform you of the following resolution:-

"This first Annual Conference of the Bulletin Group deplores the anti-Trotskyist press attacks and police action against the Workers' Revolutionary Party. Both are attempts to curtail the democratic rights of not only the Workers' Revolutionary Party, but the entire workers' movement.

"The Bulletin Group will do everything in its power to alert the working class to the dangers implicit in these moves and to rally support for the Workers' Revolutionary Party's campaign against the police raid on its School.

Could you please let me have a supply of petition forms for our members to take into the working-class movement. Please send them to my address which you know.

Yours fraternally.

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.

Please write to:  
The Editor, Marxist Bulletin,  
c/o Unit 6c, 8 Green Lane,  
Fordingbridge, Hants.

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