

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
MARXIST GROUP-BRITISH SECTION OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

Volume 2 Number 3 Winter/Spring 1975
Double Issue 40p. \$1.25.

Mandel on
WORKERS' SELF MANAGEMENT

**THE CLASS
STRUGGLE
IN EUROPE**



*THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND
THE BRITISH RULING CLASS*

PORTUGAL~
ONE YEAR
OF TURMOIL

CHILE-THE
COUP AND
AFTER

International

Volume Two Number Four
Winter - Spring 1975

	EDITORIAL	1
	One year after the miners' strike	
	SPEECHES TO FRENCH WORKERS' CONFERENCE	3
ERNEST MANDEL ANTON UDRY	Self-management: dangers and possibilities	9
	The class struggle in Europe	
ALAN JONES AND DAVID TETTADORO	The economic impasse of British imperialism	17
TONY HODGES	Portugal and the revolutions in Angola and Mozambique	27
	DOCUMENT	35
	Chile: the coup and after	
	DISCUSSION ARTICLE	41
BRIAN SLOCOCK	Portugal: one year of turmoil	
	REVIEW ARTICLES	47
S. JAAFAR JOHN ROSS	Arabia without sultans	48
	Pablo on the workers' government	
	REVIEWS	50
BRIAN ROSE-SMITH CARL GARDNER CHARLIE VANGELDEREN	The police and the law	50
	Pensioners under capitalism	51
	How British Trotskyism began	
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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Individuals (Britain): £2 for 4 issues.
Individuals (Overseas): £2/\$6 for 4 issues (seamail).
£4/\$12 for 4 issues (airmail).
Libraries and Institutions (Britain): £4.50 per year.
Libraries and Institutions (Overseas): £4.50/\$13 per year (seamail).
£9/\$26 per year (airmail).

BACK ISSUES

Volume 1: Original editions of all issues out of print.
Photostat copies available £4 per issue.
Volume 2: Number 1: out of print (photostat £6).
Number 2: 50p/\$1.50 postage included.
Number 3: 50p/\$1.50 postage included.

ADDRESS

International, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BT.

Editorial

ONE YEAR AFTER THE MINERS STRIKE

The miners have accepted the latest pay offer by the National Coal Board, an offer which everyone recognises to be outside the Labour Government's social contract. Only one year ago, the Tory Government was putting the country on a three-day working week and causing millions of pounds in production to be lost, in an effort to put an end to the struggle of these same miners for a claim which was outside the terms of Phase 3. The Tories hurled all their resources against the miners, failing, despite economic sabotage and 'taking the miners to the country' in a general election, to stop the strike which was to bring down Phase 3 and the Tory Government along with it. By contrast, Wilson's Labour Government meekly capitulates to the miners without the slightest sign of a fight.

The bureaucrats at Congress House and Transport House will continue to insist for some time to come that the miners will prove to be nothing more than a 'special case', leaving the social contract intact. But this fiction will become less and less credible in the coming weeks. As leading right-wing trade union bureaucrat Frank Chapple put it when speaking of the current wage claim of his own union members: 'We shall want —no, we shall insist on— exactly the same interpretation of the social contract [as the miners]'. Frank Chapple doesn't want to 'welch' on the social contract like Mr Scargill, but he knows full well that the working class are going to take Scargill's advice ('We have smashed the social contract...other trade unionists should press through the breach'). The miners are not the first group of workers to break the contract, but they are the first of the big battalions to do so. Obviously Labour's social contract awaits only its official death certificate.

1974 — DEFEAT FOR CAPITALIST STRATEGY

The political consequences for the capitalist class of their defeat at the hands of the miners in 1974 were extremely severe and far-reaching. As we explain in detail in this issue of *International*, their victory signalled the end, not just of one Tory administration, but of the whole strategy articulated by Heath for dealing with the fundamental structural difficulties of British capitalism. Heath attempted to give a long and dangerously overdue boost to the fortunes of British industrial capital —at the expense of the financial wing of the British bourgeoisie— by leading Britain into the EEC and turning to a frontal assault on the organisations of the working class in an effort to decisively drive down workers' living standards. The project came to grief in the face of the immense organisational strength of the trade unions, a strength consolidated over the course of twenty-five years of full employment. The Government fell, leaving the Tory Party in pieces, and leaving the bourgeoisie with no coherent policy and no viable instrument for challenging and defeating the working class.

The consequences of this year's miners' victory for the Labour Government and its incomes policy are no less severe. Certainly the Government is not about to be overthrown. But the breakdown of the social contract and the search by the Government for an alternative policy to curb the working class —accompanied by the public promptings of Prentice and others— signal a sharp acceleration of a crisis which is already shaking the Labour Party to its foundations. For the Labour Government finds itself in a situation where to meet the immediate needs of either the working class or the bourgeoisie tears the Labour Party apart.

When Wilson was catapulted to power in February of last year, he had no choice but to orient the Party toward meeting —with some notable exceptions— the most immediate demands of the working class movement. The left wing of the Party was placed in charge of dismantling the machinery of confrontation left over from the Tories —the Industrial Relations Act and the pay laws. Concessions over rents were made, and the left were promised a referendum on the EEC and an opportunity to nationalise profitable firms. The successful upsurge of the working class against the efforts of the Tories to construct a strong state machine, inevitably shifted the policy of the Labour Party to the left, placing in the ascendancy that wing of the party which is prepared to break with the *immediate* interests (although not the historical interests) of the bourgeoisie.

But this implied going against the burning need of the ruling class for an *effective* form of pay restraint. Ever since the 1960s, the 'voluntary' incomes policy —under which the trade union bureaucracy carried out pay restraint by a combination of pressure and repression of their own members— has proved singularly ineffective. The economic crisis had become too deep and the combativity of the working class too high to allow the bureaucracy to effectively contain the struggle. Wilson knew the social contract could not hold up for long. But Wilson had no other choice. The working class had just smashed a Government whose main plank was confrontation. It would not tolerate a similar course being taken by Labour. Moreover, Wilson had learnt a lesson from his brief turn to confrontation with *In Place of Strife* in 1969: unlike the Tory Party, the Labour Party, even though it represents the historical interests of capitalism, *is based on the organisations of the working class*. So long as the strength and combativity of those organisations remains intact, a turn to confrontation threatens to bring a Labour Government down.

But it is not possible to ignore the most vital needs of the ruling class for long, without either provoking the ruling class to overthrow the Government or running into a revolt by the right wing of the party —the Callaghans, Jenkinses,

Prentices and Healeys who are in favour of obeying every day-to-day diktat from the Bank of England and the International Monetary Fund. Sooner or later Wilson must turn to some form of statutory pay restraint. If he does not, then the right wing of social democracy will come out in open revolt. On the other hand, a move in this direction will inevitably lead to a revolt by the left. Either way Wilson faces the prospect of his Cabinet being shattered, his Government falling, and a prolonged internal crisis in the Labour Party.

LABOUR'S TEST

Wilson finds himself in this near impossible position for good reason. For this particular Labour Government is passing through a unique experience. All previous Labour Governments have come to power either following a wave of working class defeat, or in periods of relative economic upswing. This time, precisely the opposite conditions apply. The combativity of the working class is high, and, as we argue in this issue of *International*, the economic plight of the ruling class is sharper than at any time since the 1920s and 1930s. The Labour Party is therefore being subjected to a rigorous test by the working class.

Furthermore, the position occupied by the Labour left is more central than at any time since the War. On this occasion, left wing social democrats are integrally involved in the day-to-day running of the Government itself. This is one of the 'fruits' of the industrial upsurge of the last ten years, an upsurge which has resulted in the left shifting its power base away from the declining constituency organisations to the trade unions. This is a different internal structuring of power in the labour movement from that which prevailed for most of the post-war period. This means that as well as the Labour Party in general, left-wing social democracy and its political formulas are also being tested in a quite particular way.

This situation undoubtedly opens up new opportunities for revolutionaries in Britain. But first it is worth looking at the special significance of many of the political issues around which the battle between the masses and the Government (of which the conflict between left and right in the Government is a pale reflection) is developing.

THE POST-WAR 'CONSENSUS'

What is significant about the developing struggle between the masses and the Government is not just that the level of struggle—measured both in terms of the number of days lost in strikes and the amount of political opposition from within the labour movement—is higher at the beginning of Wilson's present regime than it was at the end of his last. What is also important is that many of the issues over which these struggles are escalating affect, to one degree or another, matters over which the British bourgeoisie issued certain long-term 'guarantees' at the end of the last war in an effort to ensure class peace. In other words, they affect the central pillars of the post-war 'consensus' between the classes. More significant still, sections of the working class are fighting these issues out in a way which objectively contradicts the traditional line of struggle urged by social democracy.

Firstly, the ruling class pledged that there would be no return to substantial levels of unemployment following the experience of the 1930s. Yet today levels of 1½ million unemployed are openly contemplated. Furthermore, the working class responds by taking over factories and either setting them to work through experiments in self-management and workers co-operatives, or demanding their nationalisation to ensure jobs. Despite all the attacks on picketing, the police and the courts are neither physically nor politically strong enough to reverse the trend.

Secondly, the ruling class had also submitted to demands for a welfare state. Yet among the first groups of workers to fight the Government were the nurses and ancillary workers of the NHS. They threw into relief the real material decline of the health services and the accompanying resurgence of private medicine. The health workers have not stood idly by and allowed this 'social' issue to be

dealt with by Parliament alone. Many have taken the very advanced initiative of placing embargoes on private hospital facilities.

The crisis of the welfare state as a whole interlocks with the strains and pressures to which the working class family is subjected by the general social crisis. The bourgeoisie promoted the idea that the individual worker and his family should be able to enjoy the benefits of increased consumption. Shorter working hours and increased leisure time therefore implied that the state should take over part of the burden of domestic tasks—care of the aged, for example. The deterioration of the welfare state throws these burdens back onto the family. In fact this is precisely why Thatcher the milk snatcher is also the most vigorous promoter of family 'decency and morality'. And all this takes place at the same time as increasing numbers of women, whose oppression within the family has gone unrecognised for so long, are beginning to become more and more involved in a fight for equal pay, nurseries, and abortion and contraception facilities.

Thirdly, mass struggles have continued to break out against the consistent attempt of the bourgeoisie to dismantle bourgeois democratic liberties. These reactionary moves have not been halted by Labour's presence in office. The state has been strengthened at the expense of the workers movement, both with and without the help of the Government. Attacks on picketing have continued, Labour's refusal to release the Shrewsbury Two giving the judges a green light to proclaim all non-industrial picketing illegal in the Prebbles case and the police an opportunity to arrest ten more building worker pickets in Newcastle. Army-police exercises continue, and Labour has introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act (which will be applied to far wider groups than Irish exiles in Britain), emphasising once again the centrality of the Irish struggle in Britain's affairs. Nor has the Government done anything to stop the growth of the fascist right, whose racism, sexism and anti-Irish chauvinism threaten to gain some purchase on the working class.

Perhaps most crucial of all in the immediate period is the issue around which the confrontation between the left and the right is shaping up: Britain's entry into the EEC. For this shakes up some of the most basic ideological formulas in which the British working class has lived out the 'long boom'. The Communist Party, the left wing of social democracy, and broad sections of the masses interpret Britain's entry as an attack on 'national sovereignty' and on democratic liberties (the 'sovereignty of parliament'). The consequences of Britain's entry will go beyond the formal outcome of the referendum. For the conclusions which many workers will draw are twofold. First, that the British bourgeoisie is no longer prepared to sail in the same leaky boat to the beaches of Dunkirk with the humble British worker, that its adherence to the traditions of 'national class unity' is a pretence; secondly, that the British bourgeoisie are beginning to dump the 'democratic traditions' of British class rule.

THE LEFT AND THE EEC

It is in the struggle over the EEC that the crisis in the Government will come to a head. This is not at all accidental. Entry into the EEC would mean that the European capitalists as a whole, via the Brussels bureaucrats, would be able to intervene against the Labour left's strategy of trying to use the British bourgeois state against employers in the field of economic planning, state take-overs, regional policy and so forth. A defeat for the left in the referendum would therefore throw the left wing of the Government on to the defensive. It is perhaps Wilson's hope that a defeat of this kind would so demoralise and disorient the left that Wilson could then move in a decisive way to a statutory incomes policy—a tactic which, however, will only post-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 52).

SPEECHES TO THE WORKERS CONFERENCE OF THE FCR

THE FRONTE COMMUNISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE now reconstituted as THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE, French section of the Fourth International held a workers' periphery conference last summer. The following speeches by Anton Udry and Ernest Mandel were written for this conference:

Self-management - dangers & possibilities

by
Ernest Mandel

The political formation of revolutionaries of my generation and the one immediately preceding it, was deeply affected by our experience of the Russian revolution. For the first time in history the working class of a vast country had taken power, abolished the domination of capital, and begun to construct a new society—a society which, before the eyes of the world proletariat, could become a new society, a socialist society.

Revolutionaries today are, of course, still aware of the historical significance of the Russian revolution and of its impact on the twentieth century. At the same time, however, because of the bureaucratic degeneration which has superimposed itself on the conquests of the October revolution, it no longer acts as a concrete inspiration to the international workers' movement, and particularly to the proletariat of the imperialist countries.

The difference is sharply illustrated by an opinion poll which was recently conducted in France to investigate what proportion of the population were in favour of socialism and which 'model' of socialism they would choose. More than half those interviewed wanted a socialist society but less than five per cent declared themselves for a society modelled on the Soviet Union. In a country where the French Communist Party (PCF) receives some twenty per cent of the popular vote, these figures are extremely revealing. Even amongst militants of the pro-Moscow Communist Party, the form of social organisation which prevails in the Soviet Union has evidently lost its appeal as a model—an ideal to be extended throughout the whole world.

What is more, it is precisely this sort of development which gives the neo-reformist parties of Western Europe a basis on which to justify their right opportunist policies. They declare that the Russian road to socialism is not applicable to Western Europe but, in so doing, they deliberately seize the opportunity to confuse two quite distinct issues. By reducing the 'peaceful road to socialism' and the model on which to build socialist society to one single question,

they attempt to win workers to an automatic acceptance of the former through their rejection of the latter.

The great influence of the concept of workers' self-management in the Western European labour movement also flows from the same basic fact. It is influential precisely because the majority of wage-earners want a socialist society, accept the necessity of transforming the framework of society, and are instinctively—and, in the case of a small layer, consciously—searching for an alternative to the Soviet model.

SHOULD REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS SUPPORT SELF-MANAGEMENT?

The idea of self-management is, from the very start, a confused one. What most people instinctively understand by it, is a society in which relatively small groups, like workers in a single factory, organise all aspects of the running of their individual units. Health workers or teachers, for example, would thus organise at the level of their hospitals or schools, while consumers would be organised in boroughs or districts.

Quite clearly, this simplistic view of self-management is not of Marxist origin, but rather has its roots in Proudhon and anarcho-syndicalism. This goes a long way towards explaining why the initial reaction of revolutionary marxists has been, almost everywhere in Europe, one of suspicion and even outright hostility. Confronted with the choice between 'bureaucratic socialism' and 'self-management socialism', we have tended to reject both alternatives in favour of a third one of our own.

In retrospect, it seems to me that this was an intellectually, psychologically and, above all, politically incorrect reaction based upon an underestimation of the resonance which the conception of self-management would find in the West European labour movement and particularly in its left-wing. This is why, several years ago, we agreed to change our line of attack. Now we say that not only do we *fully*

support the idea of self-management but that it is, in fact, *we alone* who are for *real* self-management. Other projects which have been put forward of piecemeal self-management or by Proudhonist and anarcho-syndicalist currents constitute no more than a mere facade of real self-management. They simply give workers the *illusion* of self-management while actually obscuring a whole series of fundamental questions about the dynamics of economic and social existence in our epoch.

Our basic position, then, is that we squarely reject the type of bureaucratic socialism in which the working-class does not really exercise power, and fully support the idea of self-management to the extent that it embodies one very simple and fundamental premise: the workers must exercise power at all levels of society — at the level of the factory, at the level of the economy, in the non-productive spheres of social life and, above all, at the level of the state.

SELF-MANAGEMENT CANNOT BE REDUCED TO WORKERS MANAGING THEIR INDIVIDUAL FACTORIES

This leads us to a fundamental critique of those who advocate socialist self-management within individual factory units which, in practice, essentially amounts to no more than workers organising production and the allocation of the social surplus at the level of their factories. Proponents of this sort of self-management are, at best, utopians and, at worst, the sort of leaders who, realising what this sort of 'self-management' means, use it for their own ends.

The best example of this is, indubitably, that developed by the Titoists in Yugoslavia, who have created an illusion of self-management which they equate with the distribution of decision-making powers among the mass of producers and consumers. On the one hand, they insist (and this is the very latest version of Titoism) that self-management is taking place not only at the level of the factory but even in each workshop and on each assembly-line, while, on the other, they insist even more strenuously that this must be counterbalanced by the ever-greater concentration of political power in the hands of the Yugoslav League of Communists and in their hands alone.

It is clear in this case that the fragmentation of the workers' economic power is a necessary precondition for the bureaucracy to retain a monopoly of power. These are just two sides of the same coin. It is precisely through posing such a totally atomised caricature of self-management on a scale which renders it impotent, that the bureaucracy can deprive the workers of political power at the level of the economy as a whole and concentrate it in their own hands.

This is why we maintain that to restrict self-management to single factories, let alone workshops or assembly-lines is to reduce it to a mere facade.

WE SHALL INHERIT A TECHNOLOGY WITH A POWERFUL CENTRALISING TENDENCY

The present level of the productive forces corresponds to a specific technology. We are not worshippers of this technology and, at the risk of seeming revisionist, I would say that, unlike comrade Lenin, we do not admire Taylorism or the assembly line and, above all, that we do not consider this to be the only possible form of advanced technology. It is a bourgeois myth that there is no alternative to the technology presently utilised in production. It is true that this technology is the one which provides the highest return on capital, but this does not make it the only one possible. It is quite possible to conceive of a scale of technologies based on any particular level of political and economic development. For the engineers and technologists of the colonial revolution this is often posed as an immediate problem. For example, in Cuba, where there aren't enough oil-based resources, the economists, inventors, engineers and chemists were faced with the need to develop in place of a petro-chemical industry a

sucro-chemical industry, that is to say a chemical industry based upon the waste products of sugar. Similar examples of technological innovations and revolutions are to be found in any other colonial or semi-colonial country.

It is, however, clear that while (in common with the anarchists) we hope one day to have a technology which allows relatively reduced units (to use Engels' formulation) of twenty or thirty thousand producers and consumers to live not autarchically but in such a way that they can control most of their affairs autonomously, present-day technology does not allow for this.

To look at a couple of examples: electrical generating stations which employ two or three hundred workers and technicians supply electricity to half a million people; one single machine can produce enough paper to satisfy the needs of one and a half to two million people. It is quite untenable to suggest that the economic problems related to this production can be resolved at the level of two or three hundred people just because they happen to work in this particular factory. In the case of this sort of factory, the way in which its production is distributed and the needs it must satisfy does not only concern the producers but also all the workers who are going to consume its products. There is absolutely no reason why workers in an electrical generating station should be given the right to dictate decisions concerning electricity which will be consumed by millions of workers.

There exists thus today, in the technology (and the working class will inherit from capitalism on the day it takes power, a powerful centralising tendency, a tendency which is neither inevitable nor eternal and which can probably be pushed right into the background in the course of constructing a classless society. It is, however, precisely the technology which we inherit from capitalism with which we will have to start building a new society. In this context, it is absolutely utopian to want to fragment economic decision-making to the level of what can be decided in a single factory.

THE CHOICE IS NOT BETWEEN 'BUREAUCRATIC CENTRALISATION' AND 'DECENTRALISED SELF-MANAGEMENT'

Very many economic decisions concern whole series of social groups infinitely larger than a single firm; these decisions must be taken at the level of these groups — in other words, they must be centralised in a democratic way. We are proponents of democratically centralised self-management or, to put it another way, of planned self-management, not because we are centralisers by nature but because it's a matter of an objective necessity which corresponds to the realities of economic life.

This centralisation is inevitable because it is inherent in the anarchy of the present system, and independent of our desires. The choice we actually have is a fundamental one: unless economic centralisation is carried out in a conscious, that is to say planned and deliberate, way, it will arise in a spontaneous, anarchic way behind workers' backs.

The choice, therefore, is not between 'bureaucratic centralisation' and 'decentralised self-management'. The real choice which will confront us in the economic sphere after the overthrow of capitalism will be the choice between democratically centralised self-management based upon socialist planning and a so-called 'socialist' market economy in which the laws of the market continue for the most part to *enslave* the workers.

For this reason, we attack the Proudhonist proponents of self-management restricted to such and such a factory. We contend that they are lying to the workers when they say that it's enough to give workers decision-making power at the level of the factory to create a real deproletarianisation. What is the point of giving workers the power to make decisions when this turns out to be a mere sham and when the decisions taken at factory level are continuously revised and overturned by the operation of market laws — that is,

by the spontaneous centralisation which occurs through these laws when it is not effected through the planning of the economy as a whole.

Let's look at a simple example: investments in a particular branch of industry – the production of shoes. There are only two alternatives. On the one hand, one can try to draw up a socialist plan. An assessment is made of needs (making allowances, of course, for a certain amount of stock and export) and of productive capacity. If there is a discrepancy between the two, then the productive capacity must be increased; that is to say, investment must be increased so that needs can be satisfied.

On the other hand, one can neglect to draw up such a plan. Each factory producing shoes or, for that matter, electric motors, decides its investment autonomously with the familiar consequences of over- and under-production. There is only the most infinitesimal probability that the decisions taken separately in twenty or thirty factories will accurately satisfy needs. This is why a so-called 'socialist' market economy, in which self-management is limited to the level of the factory, is doomed to reproduce a whole series of the evils of capitalism, including its greatest attack on the working class – unemployment. It is only necessary to look at the Yugoslav example to see that this is the case.

This is why we are in favour of democratically centralised and planned self-management, or, to get to the root of the problem, of economic power exercised at the level of the class as a whole, and not exclusively, or even mainly, by each tiny sub-group of that class.

THE SURVIVAL OF COMPETITION MEANS THE DIVISION OF THE WORKING CLASS.

However, the matter does not rest there. Not only is self-management limited to the level of the factory, workshop or assembly line, an illusion from an economic point of view, in that the workers cannot implement decisions taken at this level against the operations of market laws, but, worse still, the decisions taken by the workers become more and more exclusively restricted to decisions about profits, as can be clearly seen in Yugoslavia. The fundamental principle underlying self-management, which is the *liberation of labour*, whereby workers dominate the process of production, decide for themselves the speed of the assembly line and the organisation of work in the factory, and which is part and parcel of the sort of socialist society we are trying to build, is *unrealisable* in an economy which allows the survival of competition.

As the Yugoslav example shows only too clearly, the survival of competition imposes certain unavoidable imperatives on the units of production. They are faced with an unenviable decision. On the one hand, they can accept the logic of rationalisations: reduction of the labour force, speed-up, and so on. On the other, they can reject this logic, thus condemning certain units of production to operate at a loss and to pay wages far below average rates.

The only solution to all these questions is to regulate industry at a social level, thus allowing for an effectively planned economy consciously run by the working class as a whole, and for the process of deproletarianisation to advance.

CLASS POWER NOT 'GROUP-POWER'

The basis of the problem which I have attempted to elucidate is, thus, quite simple: for us, the notion of the class power of the proletariat exists in a very real sense precisely as *class power* and not the *power of groups*. To a large extent, these two conceptions are mutually exclusive. The more power is given to groups, the less is the power of the class as it is split into groups fighting amongst themselves.

So here we have another consequence of the reintroduction of competition on the road to socialism: given a market economy and autonomous decision making by productive units, there will be competition with groups of workers from different factories competing with each other,



Watches from the Lip factory at Besançon being sold at the Renault plant in Billancourt. Lip workers organised their own distribution and used the proceeds to finance their struggle.

often very fiercely. From the outset factories do not have the same productivity so, if they compete with each other and each factory retains what it calls the 'fruits of its labour' what it is in fact keeping is its *revenue* determined by its initial financial situation. Whether its initial endowment in terms of fixed capital, tools, machinery, equipment and even local situation was a matter of luck or of social factors, there is no possible justification for those who are fortunate enough to work in above average factories to enjoy an economic advantage over those who are employed in below average factories.

If the decision-making and advantages of each particular factory are left to the workers of that factory to deal with (even if, as in the case of Yugoslavia, a token 'national solidarity tax' is levied), a situation of blatant inequality is created within the working-class, and when there exist *blatant inequalities*, it follows that the collective struggle of the working class as a whole for its common interests is broken down by the internecine struggles of different groups of workers.

It is, thus, to deceive the workers to lead them to believe that they can manage their affairs at the level of the factory. In the present economic system, a whole series of decisions are inevitably taken at higher levels than the factory and *if these decisions are not consciously made by the working class as a whole, then they will be made by other forces in society behind the workers' backs.*

AT WHAT LEVEL SHOULD DECISIONS BE TAKEN?

It may seem that what I am saying is similar to the arguments used by the CGT (the French Communist Party trade union) in its polemics against the CFDT (the socialist trade union) and socialist self-management current. This is not at all the case. It is not a matter of counterposing an ideal of 'bureaucratic centralisation' to the myth of 'self-management in one factory'; rather, it is a question of challenging the apparently inevitable choice presented by the limited framework of the debate between bureaucratic centralisation and decentralisation in a market economy. It is a matter of defending the real marxist solution of democratically centralised self-management.

We do not support centralisation for its own sake. We don't at all believe that centralisation implies the necessity of a new division of labour within the working class between a small group of managers, professional administrators and bureaucrats on the one hand, and the majority of the working class on the other, incapable of centralising its own management in a democratic way. We support democratically centralised, planned self-management also as a manifestation of workers' democracy organised around

interconnected workers councils as broadly-based as possible to involve the maximum number of workers in the exercise of power.

If we reject the idea that the most democratic form of self-management is that based on the individual factory, it is because it is only in a complex structure where self-management takes place at all levels of economic and social life, that it is possible to involve the maximum number of workers at different levels of decision-making. We have a very simple formula to apply in this context: *decisions must be taken at the level where this can be done most effectively*. It is unnecessary to call a European congress of workers' councils to work out a bus time-table for Coventry; the workers of Coventry are quite capable of working that out for themselves without the interference of any bureaucratic institutions. There's no need to organise a national congress of workers' councils to organise production in a particular workshop: the workers in that workshop are quite capable of sorting that out on their own.

On the other hand, when it comes to making decisions about investment in the shoe industry, or how to fight pollution of waterways, then a national or even international congress of workers' councils is necessary, since this sort of decisions can only be taken at a national or international level. This is what we mean when we talk about the articulation of decision-making bodies. In economic matters each decision must ideally be taken at the level at which it can be most effectively and efficiently implemented.

DEFINING A FRAMEWORK OF RELATIVE CONSTRAINTS

Obviously, there are certain constraints which detract from this conclusion. I have been very critical of the Yugoslav example, but it is not necessary only to speak badly of it. By comparison with the Stalinist experience it represents a great step forward and one which allows us to give a convincing answer today to that form of bourgeois demagoguery, which is still the most prevalent 'refutation' of socialism, that the workers cannot and, what is more, do not want to run their own firms. Look at Yugoslavia, one can reply, they've now been doing it for 20 years! We have a lot of criticisms and we would do it differently, but all the same, they have proved that it's possible.

In this sense, Yugoslavia presents us with a very positive experience and one which we mustn't be pushed into condemning more strenuously than the bureaucratic organisation of industry in the Soviet Union. This said, however, the Yugoslav example allows us to distinguish a whole series of necessary constraints for the effective functioning of an articulated system of self-management of the kind I have outlined above. Let us take two examples.

I have just said that the organisation of production in a particular workshop must be the concern of the workers in that workshop. This remains true but it is necessary to be more precise: this must take place *within a framework of social labour legislation which will have been established by a national, or even international, congress of workers' councils*. If the workers in a workshop want to work a 54 hour week, I see no reason why they should be allowed to; a certain framework must be worked out nationally to limit the amount of local variation.

The same goes for the Coventry bus system. When I said that the workers of Coventry would have a free hand in deciding how to run their own transport system, this must obviously be seen in the context of the total allocation of funds for public transport in England as a whole and, more specifically, for that particular part of England. If this condition were not imposed, then a decision taken on the question of transport in Coventry could impose a whole series of *de facto* priorities on the national plan. This would, in turn, limit the sovereignty of the working class as a whole in the allocation of resources. These constraints, therefore, are absolutely indispensable to the

exercise of workers' power *as a class* rather than the power of various sub-groups which could neutralise, or even undermine, the power of the class as a whole.

'IMAGINATION TO POWER'

Despite the concrete examples, what I have just said might still seem rather abstract. This is because we are all prisoners of a particular ideology and a particular way of looking at economic existence and even everyday life; our education has accustomed us to the *actuality* of capitalist society. We are all prisoners of conceptions of the way life is organised which correspond to the reality of *capitalist* society.

The students at the Sorbonne in 1968 wrote on the walls the slogan '*l'imagination au pouvoir*' (imagination to power). They expressed what is for revolutionaries a very profound axiom: it is necessary to exercise an enormous amount of imagination today, in the context of capitalism, to begin to conceive of a totally different form of economic reality in which a whole series of social attitudes, which don't even exist today, will become part of the everyday life of the producers who constitute the vast mass of the population in the advanced capitalist countries.

Let us again look at an example. The comrades who wrote the manifesto of the *ex-Ligue Communiste*, revising Lenin's old formula, explained that socialism is Soviets plus automation. For my part, I would go even further and argue that in the second half of the twentieth century, socialism is Soviets (that is to say workers' councils), automation and television. In television, we have at our disposal an instrument of direct democracy quite unthinkable for Marx, Lenin or even Trotsky, for the simple reason that none of these comrades could know anything about television and none of them could have invented it!

Today we live in a world at a specific level of technology and we must assess the extent to which its various forms could be put to the service of workers' democracy—of a totally different form of economic organisation. It would be eminently possible, for example, to organise a national conference of workers' councils in the shoe industry, the proceedings of which could be simultaneously relayed to all factories in that sector. It would then be possible, if one of the delegates said something which didn't correspond with the mandate given him in his particular factory, for the comrades in that factory to pick up the phone, ring up the conference, and say, 'comrade, you're lying' or equally, 'you are betraying us, you're not putting our line and we intend to deal with you immediately.'

Here we have the basis for a qualitatively more advanced implementation of an old conception of Marx and Lenin: the possibility of *recalling* elected delegates who fail to stick to their mandate. Previously, such a recall could only be effected after an interval; with the use of television outlined above, it would be possible to exercise the right of recall *not after the event*, but *instantaneously* by simply lifting the phone and giving a report directly to the people at the conference.

One only has to consider the techniques which the bourgeoisie uses today in its TV shows, quizzes and parlour games as a means of passing the time and of 'tranquillising' the masses, to realise the amazing potential of television as an instrument of real mass-communication. Just think how such techniques could be applied to the organisation of economic and everyday life. What a phenomenal instrument of direct democracy it could be! To my mind, there is absolutely no reason why our conception of self-management should be any less democratic than one based on self-management at the level of the individual factory. Quite the converse is true, for our conception is related to the taking of the really *fundamental decisions*.

MEASURES TO UNDERMINE BUREAUCRATIC TENDENCIES

We deliberately prioritise the question of reducing the working-week and of workers' participation in economic and social life and decision-making, rather than make it a priority to involve all of them in harder and harder and more and more exhausting manual work, as certain Maoists propose.

These comrades tell us that a real workers' power has been established in China just because the workers participate, *from time to time*, in meetings to discuss questions of management, and the management participates in manual labour *for one day a week*. What this implies, in reality, however, is the perpetuation of a division of labour between those who produce and those who manage, and it is precisely this division which constitutes the basis for bureaucratisation and which we want to overcome as quickly and as completely as possible.

This is why we prioritise a radical reduction of the working day (in industrially advanced countries, at least, half-day working should be introduced immediately after a socialist revolution) so that the workers will have the time to seriously occupy themselves with the management of their own affairs.

This, of course, does not mean that any particular worker should spend his whole time rushing from conference to conference; this would mean that he would not be working anymore and, consequently, would again perpetuate the division of work and management. Quite the contrary! To the measures elaborated by Marx in his writings on the Paris Commune and by Lenin in *State and Revolution* as means of fighting bureaucratisation, we should add a new one in our socialist constitution: on all the highest organs of economic and political power, that is to say, the national and international congresses of workers' councils, there must be a *certain minimum proportion of workers still involved in production who only attend the congress for a few weeks of the year*. In order to constitute an effective weapon against bureaucratisation this proportion must be fixed at a very high level — between, say, two thirds and three-quarters of the delegates.

This last point is well illustrated in relation to Yugoslavia. Often the majority of delegates on workers' councils at factory level have been workers. At regional congresses, delegations from the workers councils often include some 30 to 40% of workers actively engaged in production. When *from time to time* there is a national congress of workers' councils — maybe every fifteen years (Yugoslav bureaucrats are evidently very cautious!) — only two or perhaps three per cent of the delegates will be really clericals, clerical workers or supervisory staff. This isn't necessarily the result of some plot; rather it is the inevitable result of a 48-hour week and of leaving intact a form of economic organisation quite uncondusive to any ongoing involvement of workers in the management of their affairs.

A reduction in the working day, however, is not the only necessary material precondition for the workers to take the running of society and the economy into their own hands. There are several others which are very important.

A COMPLETELY NEW TYPE OF EDUCATION IS REQUIRED.

Radical changes will be necessary in education. The whole framework of the educational system will have to be transformed so that the whole of the working class is assured of at least a certain minimum of social, cultural and all-round technical education. It will be necessary to completely rethink the whole social role of education.

Today, there exists a particular model of education in which one spends either between ten and thirteen years or between sixteen and twenty-five years being educated. This isn't a model fixed for all time; it is quite possible to con-

ceive of a completely different sort of education spread over the whole of adult life, involving a continuous development in workers' abilities and skills.

To give credit where credit is due, this is one of the few spheres in which the Soviet economy has introduced significant changes; it is certainly the case that the Soviet Union is the most advanced country in the world when it comes to the amount of effort put into generalising education and training of workers. The intentions behind this achievement, unfortunately, were not so inspiring: the Soviet system is geared to the promotion of *individual* workers who are in this way permanently detached from the working class; what else is the situation of a worker who, upon finishing his studies, becomes a technician and aspires to the bureaucracy. The social and ideological climate of Soviet society is not conducive to the endurance of a sufficient degree of class solidarity for a worker who has gained some technical qualifications to consider himself still, above all, as a member of the working class. Thus this technical education, although more widespread in the Soviet Union than anywhere else in the world, exists, even there, at the expense of class solidarity and exclusively for the sake of permitting the promotion of individuals.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

The second crucial question, then, is that of the social and, above all, political dimensions of self-management. Immediately, we are posed with a problem: is self-management compatible with the existence of working class political parties? Can it be reconciled with the sorts of political struggle which we know within the framework of bourgeois democracy?

In tackling these questions, before we even consider anything else, it is necessary to dispel for once and for all the stalinist myth that each social class can only be represented by one political party, and, hence, since only one party can represent the proletariat, that there is only room for one political party, in the process of building socialism. This sort of sophistry has nothing in common with Marxism or Leninism. For a start, it is clearly shown by history that since social classes are not politically homogeneous they are often represented by not one but several different parties; furthermore, the process of building socialism is an entirely new one, giving rise to completely new problems of economic, political, social, cultural, biological and moral policy. To believe that any one person — whoever it might be — can produce all the necessary answers out of a hat is just to deceive oneself and, what is more, to demonstrate an incredible naivety.

On the contrary, we must vindicate the conception of competing ideas and tendencies, of political struggles for choices and options not envisaged in the 'sacred texts' of marxism. If we got together all the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, and some of Rosa Luxemburg's for good measure, we'd have quite a little library but we would by no means find all the answers we needed there. Enormous problems are thrown up in the process of constructing a socialist society and it is only going to be through political struggle, theoretical and ideological debate and practical experience that these will be resolved. For this reason, socialist political democracy is absolutely essential to minimise wastage, to reduce the numbers of errors made and, above all, to cut down to a minimum the time taken to rectify mistakes.

A second argument which must also be refuted is one put forward by a pseudo-self-management current. They tell us that if political parties continue to exist, they will manipulate meetings and that the Congresses of Workers Councils will not be real congresses of councils but rather congresses of political currents who will waste their time in sectarian wrangling. Political parties, they say, will take decisions behind the workers' backs. We would argue that this again is a myth: what are really manipulative are con-



'It's possible—we produce, we sell, we pay ourselves!' Workers at Lip in France defied capitalist law to finance their struggle against redundancies.

gresses where large numbers of worker-delegates take part in unprepared and unstructured debates. In such debates, real decision-making is impossible because the options are not clearly articulated. The workers can choose between three, four or five propositions which are put to them but they can't choose between a thousand, especially if these are put forward in the form of shouted interruptions or demagogic outbursts. The absence of parties, of organised workers' tendencies, which could come to congresses with clear proposals, platforms and programmes would simply put a premium on demagoguery and prevent workers from choosing between coherent and clearly formulated positions.

This is why self-management is impossible without real socialist democracy which also must imply not only the right to vote and the existence of trade unions independent of the workers' state, but also the jealous safeguarding of freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, organisation and demonstration for the workers.

In essence, the possibility of workers making real decisions depends on their access to real information — to *contradictory* information — without any limitation or monopoly; this, in turn, can only be realised if various political currents are allowed to formulate proposals and make them known for the workers to accept or reject. This is a model many times more democratic than that thrown about by many proponents of 'self-management socialism' who, by retaining a market economy on the one hand, and restricting the freedom of political organisation for currents inside the workers' movement on the other, would create an inevitable tendency towards new monopolies and new forms of alienation for the whole of the working-class.

SOCIALISM IN ONE FACTORY?

For those of us brought up in the struggle against the idea that it is possible to build socialism in one country, the conception of 'molecular self-management', of 'mini-socialism in one factory' has little attraction. Some currents, however, defend these sorts of positions and attribute our positions to dogmatism; they argue that unless workers gain experience of management before the socialist revolution, they will not be able to learn from one day to the next, upon the transfer of power. The experience of small-scale self-management under capitalism, they explain, is

useful education and preparation. Many examples are quoted, some of which are not without value. There is the much vaunted case of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in Glasgow. Here was a case of a firm which had collapsed under the management of the bosses; when it was taken under workers management the results were, however, disastrous. After a while, the workers themselves were forced to create the very redundancies amongst themselves which they had been trying to stop the bosses from enforcing when they took over the yards.

There have been many examples of workers co-operatives that went wrong; there have even been some that have 'succeeded' — in capitalist terms that is! All that they have succeeded in, however, has been to transform themselves into profitable capitalist enterprises, operating in the same way as other capitalist firms.

There are some examples, however, which allow us to go into this question more deeply, and for which revolutionary marxists require a more developed response. I will intentionally consider the most paradoxical of such examples, which is to be found today in Francoist Spain. The Mandragore company employs 12,000 workers in a series of workers co-operatives in the Basque country and is Spain's largest manufacturer of refrigerators. The firm is self-managed and, at first sight, it seems a phenomenal success. The workers have disposed of the foremen, reduced the line speeds and introduced a whole series of measures to create better working conditions such as implementing a 37 to 38 hour working week. Despite all this, the firm remains very profitable; apparently it is a spectacular economic success.

But this is not all. Taking account of the classical critiques which marxists have made of workers co-operatives, a rule has been introduced to the effect that wages in the factory cannot exceed by more than 10% the wages paid in that part of Spain, so that the firm doesn't take on an exploitative relationship with the rest of the working class. This would otherwise become almost inevitable in the case of successful productive units, as the example of certain Israeli *kibbutzim* illustrates very clearly. Such units have become collectives of capitalists which even go so far as employing workers without letting them enter the co-operative, and paying low wages while keeping for themselves

their shares in the prosperity of the co-operative. Any possibility of this has, thus, been eliminated in the Mandragore co-operatives.

Why, given all this, should we conclude that this has been anything but a valuable experience. The answer is quite obvious and, in the case of Mandragore, it almost hits one in the face; none of the successes at Mandragore could have been achieved within the framework of a capitalist economy without the acquiescence of the banks, of all the economic institutions and above all, the state, which in this instance is not even a bourgeois democracy but a dictatorship. Without this acquiescence the Mandragore experiment would not survive a single day! A firm which employs twelve thousand workers and produces refrigerators for almost half the Spanish market, quite clearly requires a continuous credit facility from the banks. It is integrated into the banking system and is thus dependent on the backing of the central bank in consort with local and regional banks. It can only exist to the extent that it is tolerated by the capitalist regime as a whole. For this reason, there is no way in which it can pose any solutions for the working class as a whole. It is an experience which is tolerated by the bourgeoisie because of the local relationship of forces until such a time as a conflict arises, at which point it will either have to capitulate or it will be suppressed.

It is, therefore, dangerous for the working class to become involved in this type of experience; at the very best it can constitute a 'pilot scheme' for a tiny minority, the effect of which is to divert the energy of the working class from a dynamic of ever-extending struggles to one dominated by requirements of 'production' which has nothing in common even with syndicalism, let alone revolutionary marxism.

When the boss wants to create redundancies and the workers respond by occupying their factory, by transforming their passive strike into an active one by seizing

'booty' as they did at the Lip watch factory in France, we must see these developments as *forms of struggle and ways in which consciousness is raised*, and not as economic solutions. In this context, it is necessary to determine what actions are most favourable to the concentration of effort on the extension of the struggle rather than on the solution of technical problems of production and distribution which inexorably lead along the road to sectoral interests which will ultimately come into conflict with the interests of the working class as a whole.

PREPARE THE WORKERS TODAY FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT TOMORROW:

Does this mean that we reject any notion of preparing workers now for the problems of self-management they will face after the revolution? Absolutely not; a working class which has only had experience of strikes for higher wages and electoral campaigns will find itself at a considerable disadvantage when it is confronted with the task of running the economy at a regional, national and international level. We realise that preparation and education are essential for these tasks, but this will not be achieved through dead-end attempts at mini self-management under capitalism. The working class will prepare itself for self-management through the struggle for workers' control and the self-organisation of its struggles. When workers begin to exercise control over the capitalist management of their factories, to take control of their unions, to take the organisation of strikes into their own hands with the greatest possible degree of workers' democracy, they are enrolling themselves into the only real school of self-management which is open under capitalism.

This education in practice will not be limited to gaining technical knowledge in preparation for self-management but will also concern the central precondition for this self-management: the raising of their capacity for self-organisation and for struggle—the raising of their collective class consciousness and solidarity.

THE CLASS IN EUROPE

THE TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES IN EUROPE

This conference is an indication of the profound changes which are taking place in the international working class movement today. In dozens of industries, and in new sectors like the banks and hospitals, a layer of revolutionary militants, capable of directly initiating and leading struggles of a very advanced character, is emerging.

This development highlights the modification in the relationship of forces between the workers' vanguard and the trade union bureaucracy which has taken place since 1968. The ripening of this process in the course of dozens of struggles during the next few years could, in the event of a far-reaching social explosion, lead to a situation very different from that in May '68. It could trigger off a series of struggles on a scale not seen in France for decades.

But this is true not simply of France. For those who have taken part in workers' conferences like this organised on a European scale, it is easy to see that a similar transformation of the workers' movement is taking place in a number of countries—notably in Belgium, Italy, Spain and Britain.

LAUNCHING STRUGGLES ON AN INTERNATIONAL SCALE

If today we can launch at least limited initiatives at the level of the individual factory, and even industrial sector,

STRUGGLE

by Anton Udry

then it is clear that tomorrow we will be able to take certain initiatives—limited, but of extraordinary significance—at an international level. The possibilities are already evident in some sectors, such as the motor, steel, chemical and glass industries.

So, to deal with the tasks of revolutionaries in Europe today, we must first insist upon the active role of the workers vanguard in the internationalisation of struggles. It must be stressed that this development flows directly from the inevitable tendency towards the internationalisation of capital. The existence of the Common Market, and the possible steps towards economic and monetary union together with the political repercussions that would have, means that the development of its struggles on an international scale is already a crucial question for the workers' movement. This internationalisation of the productive forces, means that the multi-national companies have numerous factories in the various European countries—in other words, we are seeing the emergence of a kind of international employing class.

This means that *the international negotiation of work contracts and European-wide strikes and solidarity actions* have already been on the agenda for some years. There are basically four central tasks in this context:

1. To organise a response to the attacks on the workers' movement by the multi-nationals.

2. To integrate the 12 million immigrant workers in Europe into the organs of working class struggle in each particular country.
3. To popularise the experiences of the most advanced struggles led by the workers' vanguard from one country

FIRST TASK:

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE MULTINATIONALS

The first task can be summarised as the need to overcome the negative effect on strikes of the international centralisation of capital. In its most typical form, the multinational firm, this allows the employers to develop a new offensive strategy, co-ordinated and centralised, in order to keep a tight rein on the situation while keeping wages as low as possible. This involves playing on the divisions in the trade union movement and the absence of any co-ordinated response, as well as investing in regions where wages are lower and the trade unions are weaker.

Hence any multi-national company faced with a strike can respond in a number of ways: it can transfer production from one country to another, insisting that overtime is worked in one factory which is not on strike in order to make up some of the production losses; it can adapt the schedule of production at the subsidiary to make up for the losses in production at the factories on strike; it can geographically separate certain stages of production so as to reduce the effect on sales of a struggle in a particular country, etc...

The bosses can even threaten to close down the factories and shift production for good if they are faced by a strike. This happened in Germany in May-June 1971, when the boss of the second biggest chemicals concern, Kurt Hansen of Bayer, threatened to move his factories abroad unless the workers modified their demands. Today the weight of these multi-nationals is still greater; and it must be an urgent task for revolutionary militants to respond to this offensive.

At the moment, however, it is the trade union bureaucrats who have seized the initiative at this level. They have set up 'world trade union councils' for each multi-national which organise a limited response at a supra-bureaucratic level to the bosses' offensive, and through this 'technical efficiency' they hope to maintain and consolidate their position.

I don't want to dwell here on the initiatives they have taken, even though a study of them would be rewarding for revolutionary militants. There was for instance, the strike at Kodak in Vincennes in May 1971, when the Kodak 'world trade union council' succeeded in getting the British transport workers to prevent the delivery of films destined to Vincennes, and persuaded the German workers at a Kodak subsidiary not to produce extra film to make up for this.

But what I want to deal with here are the concrete initiatives which we should be able to develop with the forces we have already accumulated in various sectors on a European scale. Three examples will suffice: Caterpillar, SEAT-Fiat; and Rhone-Progil, which is part of the Rhone-Poulenc trust.

CATERPILLAR

Caterpillar is an extraordinarily powerful trust with interests on a world scale, specialising in the production of heavy tractors, bulldozers, earth-moving equipment, etc. It can cope at one and the same time with strikes in Belgium, France, and Scotland, provided they aren't co-ordinated.

However, we have comrades in Caterpillar—at Gren-

to another.

4. To go beyond economism, and solidarity simply at the level of one sector, to develop a political solidarity on a European scale with the political struggles of the workers in Spain, Portugal, France, England, etc...

oble in France we have comrades who are with us today, at Goslee in Belgium we have contacts and intervene in the factory, while at Glasgow in Scotland we should be able to develop similar work.

These factories concentrate on different stages of production: for instance, the engines are produced at Goslee, while the assembly and wiring are carried out at Grenoble. Hence, if there is a strike at Grenoble, it should be possible to stop the delivery of engines from Goslee.

For example, in May-June 1973 a struggle began at Grenoble. It got off to a good start, being supported by nearly all the workers, but then got bogged down because the bureaucrats refused to consider the occupation of the factory. At the centre of the struggle was the demand for an across-the-board increase of 200 francs a month (approximately £4.50 a week) — a demand which could obviously have been extended throughout the trust, and taken up at Glasgow and Goslee, for instance.

The fact that the Grenoble factory wasn't occupied, however, was a big problem: eventually only 60% of the workforce remained on strike, and the scabs were going into work. Now if the Belgian comrades had taken solidarity action, and had refused to send the necessary engines to Grenoble, that would have been decisive in strengthening the strike and encouraging the Grenoble workers to defy the bureaucrats. It didn't happen — but it could have done, it was perfectly possible, and will be again if we systematically organise this work on a European scale.

Again, on 7 April 1974, a strike broke out at the Belgian factory at Goslee. But the comrades at Grenoble were not in touch with the developing situation. Right from the start the relationship of forces was rather bad, as only 57% of the workers had voted for a strike. The trade union leaders refused to organise the strike, although the bosses were notorious for their use of repressive tactics. By 13 May the strikers had returned to work on the instructions of the bureaucrats, even though their demands hadn't been met. Here again solidarity could have been decisive. At one time there were tenuous links between the factories at Goslee and Grenoble, but these have long since broken down. It is up to us to remedy this, and we now have the means to hand.

We can develop this solidarity on a very concrete basis. For instance, Caterpillar has a very complicated system of grading and bonuses, and indeed the last strike at Goslee concerned the whole grading system and the way in which transfers from one category to another are carried out. There are no less than seven categories, each consisting of four different grades. Here there is obviously the possibility of a general campaign around common demands against this divide-and-rule system of the bosses.

There is also the possibility of developing a campaign of political solidarity against the military use of Caterpillar equipment, which is currently on delivery to several armies. This had its inspiration when the Grenoble comrades, reading the Spanish paper published by the Swiss section (*Rojo*), noticed a photo of a Caterpillar tractor being used in Angola. Caterpillar, in fact, sells tractors with machine-gun rests. So the Grenoble comrades put out a leaflet dealing with the military use of Caterpillar equipment, and now

there is a chance of developing a campaign in the European factories tied to the situation in Portugal and the struggle of the liberation movements. These kinds of possibilities exist, and we must take advantage of them.

To take one more instance - Caterpillar recently closed down its factory in Melbourne, Australia, making 2,500 workers redundant. But we only found out from the Communist Party, although we have comrades in Australia and could, with a more systematic centralisation of work, have been the first to use the announcement of this closure to show what Caterpillar is up to, developing from this example agitational work around job security at Glasgow, Goslee, and Grenoble.

SEAT-FIAT

A second example is the struggles which have been developing at SEAT in Spain and Fiat in Italy. Half of SEAT is owned by the Spanish State, with the other half belonging to Fiat. The example I'm going to give is based on initiatives taken by us, taken by member organisations of the Fourth International, but without any wider co-ordination or even information.

When the strikes at Fiat reached a very high level in 1969, the boss, Agnelli, considered shifting the production of engines and machine-tools to SEAT. So the leaders of the Italian CGIL union federation, who knew about this plan, went off to Spain to discuss it with the SEAT workers. However, when struggles started to break out at SEAT in June-October 1971, Agnelli gave up the idea, realising that the situation in Spain wasn't all he'd hoped it might be.

But during the June-October 1971 struggle another significant event took place: the French CGT union federation, together with the CGIL (both dominated by the Communist Party), sent a delegate to Spain. They asked a member of the Spanish Communist Party to come and address the workers at Renault and Fiat. Clearly it was a chance for the CP to play up its 'internationalist' image while at the same time developing a purely verbal solidarity.

An alternative, however, was proposed by a Trotskyist militant in the workers' commission (underground trade union). Very simply, he suggested: 'The delegate should be elected on the basis of a concrete programme of international solidarity.' He proposed that a 'permanent liaison committee' responsible to the base should be established. This committee, he said, should put out regular information on the progress of struggles and the response of the bosses in the Fiat empire. Furthermore, it should ensure the organisation of solidarity strikes in the European factories whenever a struggle broke out in any part of the Fiat trust. *And on this basis he was elected.*

For several reasons this project never actually got off the ground -nevertheless, it shows the kinds of initiatives and proposals that revolutionaries can put forward today.

At the same time in Fiat, Turin, while the SEAT strike was developing, some solidarity strikes were called by the trade unions. But our comrades used this to organise meetings in the departments and workshops where they worked in order to discuss the political situation in Spain. They developed the internationalist consciousness of the Italian workers.

So here we have two actions, totally unco-ordinated, which show the possibility of going beyond abstract and verbal solidarity.

These possibilities were already apparent with the outbreak of strikes in Turin in 1971. Fiat then tried to introduce a third shift at SEAT to make up production losses, but it was successfully resisted by the SEAT workers who in this way concretely supported the struggles of the Fiat workers.

Once again, we see that we could take initiatives which choke off the demagogic policy of the Communist Parties. We could bring to the SEAT workers in Barcelona the lessons of the massive gains won by the Mirafiori workers, par-



Two faces of Fiat - Director Agnelli and a workers' demonstration



icularly in the struggle against the capitalist organisation of work. We could also popularise in Turin the gains won by the SEAT workers on the question of self-defence, on the question of resisting the police. Lastly, we could develop a political campaign showing the key role of these forms of workers' struggles at SEAT and Fiat in the overall framework of the development of workers' struggles in Italy and Spain.

RHONE-PROGIL

This strike is currently taking place in a complex and highly automated factory in France producing phenol. Rhone-Progil is part of a multi-national, Rhone-Poulenc, which has 35 factories in 12 different countries and has for the last two years invested mainly in its foreign subsidiaries. In the present struggle I want to underline two extraordinary aspects: (1) the links established with other factories whose production is tied in with that of Rhone-Progil; (2) the links which the comrades are developing with other phenol-producing firms in Europe which aren't part of the Rhone-Poulenc trust. Then we can make a comparison with the elaborate projects of the international bureaucrat, Levinson, who in 1971 set up a 'world trade union council' for Rhone-Poulenc.

As soon as the workers decided to cut the level of production from 280 to 140 tonnes (enough only for use internally -so that they get paid but the bosses don't have

any to sell), they got in touch by phone with the factory shop stewards at Bayer in Cologne and Montedison in southern Italy to explain the situation. The Bayer workers immediately respond in a very concrete fashion: they won't produce a drop extra of phenol, and their present production is only just sufficient for the German market, so they're hardly in a position to accept supplementary orders from Rhone-Progil. As for Montedison, the response is predictably a bit different: they're about to go on strike themselves, so there's nothing to worry about there!

The Rhone-Progil workers therefore talk about the possibility of sending a delegation to Italy. And here's an excellent example of how seemingly different questions tie in together—because it is obviously the Italian immigrant workers at Rhone-Progil who will be sent to contact the Italian workers at Montedison!

These contacts can and must be of a very different kind from those proposed by Levinson. First of all, one can explain in Italy and Germany—particularly necessary in the latter—the importance of the methods of struggle adopted: how the general assemblies of workers contribute to advancing the struggle, the way in which the technical problems posed by a strike in this sector (such as the danger of explosions) are overcome. The rank-and-file delegates will try to *exchange experiences of struggle*, and then they will go on to suggest ways in which the struggle can be prepared and organised.

You probably know that the struggle has been prepared and popularised by adopting many of the methods used at Lip. They produce their own recorded radio bulletins, for instance, which are regularly played in the canteen and keep everyone informed of all aspects of the struggle. There is also a printed bulletin, *Phacumene Unite*, like *Lip Unite*. This application of the Lip experience must now be extended to Montedison and also—even if it meets with only a limited response—to Bayer.

Obviously these are *projections*, which we won't be able to organise in a day and which will only be systematised with a lot of effort. But even if we can't apply them today, we must all the time be aware that these kinds of possibilities exist. For instance, the whole question of industrial safety is posed: there was an explosion at Rhone-Progil in 1962, and there has recently been one at Bayer. There will also be a 'boomerang effect', since the workers at Montedison have had their own extraordinary experiences of struggle and will be able to pass these on to the militants at Rhone-Progil.

Unless we at least start to consider such initiatives today, we will never be in a position to carry them out. Although there are limits to what we can do today, that is no reason for not launching an all-out propaganda offensive on these questions. Clearly, also, we must push for *demands* on wages, etc., to be generalised and coordinated on an international scale.

But there is also another aspect of this struggle—the links established with other factories in the region, which it would clearly be possible to develop on an international scale. For instance, Rhone-Progil produces electricity for the EDF (electricity board) and chlorine for Ugine-Kuhlman. It is therefore necessary to get in touch with the workers here (which has been done) since they will be affected by the loss of production.

This kind of struggle has a potential importance unrelated to the comparatively few workers actively engaged in it, and its lessons must be driven home at an international level in the chemical industry.

LEVINSON'S PLAN

Compared with this kind of projection, Levinson's plan displays all the bureaucratic distortions of the international trade union apparatus. All he proposes is to draw up a list of demands which he alone will decide on in his offices at Geneva, based on his own enquiries.

On this basis he tries to secure collective agreements,

ratified by himself, on an international scale. He proposes limited actions to give some credibility to his international strategy, but these in no way stimulate or extend new methods of struggle gained through the various initiatives taken by the revolutionaries. On the contrary, he aims to limit as much as possible any communication on this issue. However, it is clear that there exists today a *real possibility* of countering the international strategy of the bureaucrats and the tendency towards hyper-bureaucratisation, as long as revolutionaries counterpose concrete initiatives at an international level.

The bureaucracy appears to have a big 'technical superiority'—Levinson, for instance, has at his disposal (thanks to the German DGB) a computer with information on all the main chemical firms in the world. This can give complete information on any firm to any trade union leadership within seconds.

It is this aspect of its activity that the bureaucracy aims to build up, knowing that here lies its strength. We have to respond to this 'technical and bureaucratic efficiency', not at the level of technical efficiency—although we could make use of much of the information built up by the trade union leaderships—but through a series of initiatives which *increase the effectiveness of struggles*. One of the basic strengths of revolutionary militants lies in the *co-ordination of struggles* through delegates elected directly by mass meetings of workers. The workers of the Solvay trust did this with delegates from factories in France, Belgium, Italy, and Germany.

ONE CAN WIN AGAINST THE MULTI-NATIONALS

So I would insist on the fact that one can stand up to and even defeat an international boss, even if the struggle is isolated. It is possible to smash the policy of the multi-nationals if one rejects the defeatist attitudes encouraged by the international trade union bureaucrats—if there is a high level of struggle, if it is organised democratically, if it has clear perspectives and concrete objectives are put forward.

SECOND TASK:

INTEGRATE THE IMMIGRANT WORKERS, FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

The second internationalist task of revolutionaries concerns the integration of the immigrant workers—of whom there are now 12 million in Europe—into the structures of the local workers' movement.

Immigration is today structurally necessary for the capitalist system. One can only understand the long-term growth of the capitalist system since the Second World War in the light—among other factors—of the presence of this mass of immigrant workers, which has allowed the bosses to tilt the balance of forces in favour of productivity increases at the expense of real wages.

CAPITAL'S POLICY

This relationship of forces has assisted the accumulation of capital because of its favourable impact on the rate of profit. In the present situation in Europe, immigrant workers are not only crucial for the functioning of the economy in a series of countries, but at the level of production they almost completely dominate certain industries such as textiles, and the car assembly lines in Germany, France and Belgium. They also play an essential role in some of the public services (refuse disposal, public transport).

The *political use* made of immigration by the bourgeoisie obviously ties in with its economic use (no training costs, low wages, long hours, etc.) to weaken the working class as a whole, by stirring up racist and chauvinist attitudes.



Asian workers at Imperial Typewriters in Leicester. They learned the results of divisions along racial lines inside the workers' movement. Local Trade Union officials scabbed on their struggle. Cases like these underline the need to integrate immigrant workers into the indigenous Labour Movement.

The super-exploitation of immigrant workers thus becomes acceptable to sections of the indigenous workers, who are even persuaded to accept the sacking of immigrant workers as if this will in some mysterious way guarantee their own jobs.

The bosses try to foster the illusion that the social crisis is caused not by the capitalist system but by immigration. One even has the situation, in countries like Switzerland, where the existence of a privileged layer of workers is long-established, where the super-exploitation of immigrant workers is justified on the basis that it will guarantee a privileged position for the indigenous workers.

OUR RESPONSE

It is urgent that we respond to this policy—which weakens the whole working class—since the traditional workers' movement has proved incapable of doing so. Our basic slogans must be: *complete freedom of migration; common political, civil, voting and trade union rights for all those working in the same country.*

In response to the strategy of the bourgeoisie—which envisages the 'social integration' of a layer of immigrant workers as atomised individuals, who adapt to bourgeois social and ideological norms—we must counterpose a '*class integration*', i.e. their inclusion in the structures through which the indigenous working class movement organises its struggles.

The employers are trying on the one hand to increase the turn-over of a section of immigrants ('rotating' immigration), and on the other to integrate another section.

Class integration follows several routes. To take one example: when the Hella workers at Lippstadt in Germany (who make car headlamps) won a struggle in 1973 thanks to the advanced methods of struggle they used (strike committees, multi-national Spanish-Italian-Turkish committee), they introduced into Germany forms of struggle developed by the workers' movement in their native countries (Spain and Italy).

When Spanish workers at a Geneva engineering works in

Switzerland took over the 'factory committees' and organised the first strike for decades in three or four factories, they introduced new methods of struggle into a country where the 'Social Peace' has long reigned unchallenged. This has allowed the new generation of young Swiss workers to take a short cut in accumulating experience of how to fight effectively.

When a struggle broke out at the small Blindex factory in Marseilles with Tunisian workers at its head, they showed their ability to unite in struggle with French workers and to develop local support, including a solidarity demonstration through the area. This too shows the way in which immigrant workers can be integrated into local struggles and at the same time put to good use the traditions in the countries from which they come.

UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS AND FORMS OF ACTION

This possibility can only be developed through a huge and conscious effort by the workers vanguard, sometimes against the stream. Obviously the examples I gave above are, at the moment, exceptions. We must not under-estimate the chauvinism and racism, the nationalist degeneration, of the workers' movement, which can lead to the isolation of even exceptionally militant struggles. Thus the Turkish workers at Ford's in Cologne suffered a severe defeat in August 1973 when they were unable to involve a significant number of German workers in the struggle. They made the mistake of estimating the balance of forces solely on the basis of their own militancy, not realising the importance of work in the trade unions and a period of preparation for the struggle.

We should also launch initiatives with the understanding that in some countries *autonomous movements of immigrant workers* can and ought to assist and provoke this 'class integration'. In France, for instance, the General Union of Senegalese workers has played a real role in channelling Senegalese workers towards the trade union organisations.

Lastly, we must fight for the right of immigrant workers to establish their own caucuses inside the trade unions. This

will allow them to meet, to discuss their own specific problems, and to win greater backing for their demands. Furthermore – given the anti-trade unionism of many immigrant workers, whose judgement is based on the chauvinist policies of the trade union bureaucracy – these caucuses must also be open to non-union labour.

In this context brief mention must be made of two other tasks: *the importance of support committees, and the creation or strengthening of revolutionary organisations in the immigrant workers countries of origin.*

For instance, around the Muser strike in Switzerland, was held one of the largest demonstrations ever seen in Geneva. More than 3,500 people demonstrated their support for 100 mainly Spanish building workers. This was the first real challenge to the dominant chauvinistic current in the Swiss workers' movement, and it showed the possibilities of establishing links in the fight against chauvinism between immigrant workers, the radicalised youth vanguard, and a section of the Swiss working class. The work of building support for the strikers was decisive in achieving this success.

THIRD TASK

COMBINE THE UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT OF STRUGGLES.

An essential task for the internationalist vanguard is to try to modify the unequal development of struggles by integrating them on a European scale. In all the major European countries, with the partial exception of capitalist Germany, struggles are today being launched around more and more similar objectives. This is explained by the fact that *the structural crisis of the capitalist system is today combined with a conjunctural crisis.* The structural crisis is expressed in declining industrial sectors, in the generalised inflation, as well as in the increasingly repressive regime inside the factories and the moves against this to question the bosses' authority.

The conjunctural crisis takes the form of growing unemployment, galloping inflation, etc. The combination of these two factors now exists to one degree or another in all the imperialist countries. This explains the growing tendency on a European scale for struggles to break out around broadly similar objectives. So it is on the basis of common problems – unemployment, inflation, attacks on trade union rights, the struggle against the capitalist organisation of work – that we must aim to stimulate and speed up on a European scale the absorption of the most advanced experiences from one country to another.

We must encourage the workers in one country to learn from the most advanced experiences of their comrades elsewhere. We must prevent them from having to cover all the same ground again, so as to be able to develop rapidly a level of struggle, or organisation, *which corresponds to the objective problems posed today by the structural and conjunctural crisis of the capitalist system,* which can only be tackled and resolved by a highly militant and conscious working class.

I would like to give several concrete examples of this, though the only one in which we directly took the lead was that at the Geneva hospital in Switzerland. This is the only instance where an effective and conscious integration of many different experiences has been carried out under Trotskyist leadership.

THE HOSPITALS

This long strike and struggle broke out in a country where there are no traditions of militancy, in a sector where there had never before been one single struggle in the whole history of Switzerland. The demands were for a 40-hour week and 300 francs (approximately £50) for all. The nature and forms of this struggle cannot be understood except in the context of Lip and the struggles in the French hospitals.

The Swiss comrades in Geneva had organised meeting

The second task flows from the fact that immigrant workers, joining the trade unions in the country to which they have come, and establishing contacts with revolutionary militants there, will thus be able to absorb a whole series of 'lessons' from the experience of the native workers' movement. This will obviously strengthen the possibilities of organising revolutionary parties, sections of the Fourth International, in their countries of origin.

This is already beginning to happen in one instance, with activity directed towards the Spanish immigrant vanguard in Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium and France in order to help strengthen the LCR-ETA(VI) (a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Spain). This work can both help to strengthen the Trotskyist organisation in Spain and counter the influence of the Communist Party and centrist currents among the immigrant workers. It is a precondition for the development of a movement of political solidarity with struggles in the countries from which the immigrant workers come.

after meeting in solidarity with the Lip workers. Comrade Piaget (CFDT union delegate at Lip) and others explained in detail how they were popularising their struggle, how they kept control over the negotiations, how they sought to create unity among different sections of the workforce. In fact, as experienced trade unionists they passed on every scrap of information which could be useful to young militants trying to bring together different categories of Swiss and immigrant workers and ensure the maximum involvement of all the hospital workers.

But one element was still missing. A hospital is not Lip – you can't take it over to produce illnesses! The basic question is how to maintain health care while at the same time hitting the administration. For that you need the kind of experience of struggle that was developed around the administrative strikes in the general hospitals in Lyon and Tours in France.

So a comrade from Tours was invited to Geneva on the suggestion of the revolutionaries to take part in a trade union general assembly. In explaining how an administrative strike should be organised, and in giving concrete and detailed explanations on how to take such a struggle forward, he allowed these workers to absorb an experience which it would otherwise have taken them years to gain. Of course this development rested on one small but very important thing: the existence of the French and Swiss sections of the Fourth International, which made this transfer and conscious fusion of diverse experiences possible.

LIP

There is no need to expand on this struggle, for the general details are well known (see issues of *Red Weekly* in the second half of 1973, for instance). However, in Belgium the international campaign we led allowed us to develop very fruitful debates inside the workers' vanguard on the key question of workers' control. In Switzerland there were meetings which were extremely important in showing the Swiss watch-workers, who are faced with the same threats to their jobs, that it is possible to win a struggle. There was also a campaign organised by the Swedish comrades.

But on top of that, the struggle at Rhone-Progil can only be understood in the light of the Lip experience. It would never have taken place, let alone developed in the way it has done, if there had been no Lip. Lip has been a fantastic stimulus to other struggles, notably in its lessons for the popularisation and extension of the struggle. The struggle of the Ampex workers in Belgium, who took a 'war chest' of magnetic tape cassettes as hostage and so forced major concessions

GLAVERBEL - GILLY SOLIDARITE!

NON aux licenciements au démantèlement



Cartoon by workers at Glaverbel glassworks. The text reads: No to redundancies, no to dismantling of the factory

out of their American boss, is another example of how the Lip experience has been absorbed.

THE EXAMPLE OF GLAVERBEL-GILLY

I would like to end this section with an example of the integration of experiences at a regional level, together with those from past struggles, during the recent Belgian glassworkers' strike in the Charleroi area.

On 8 May this year, 4000 workers went on strike and occupied their factories. On 13 May the number of workers on strike grew to 12,000 and a *regional strike committee* was set up. On 27 May the strike ended in complete victory. This experience on the level of a region shows just how much better we can combine the unequal development of struggles on an international scale.

The importance of the glassworkers' victory becomes clear when one realises that in 1960-61 they were completely smashed when the bosses launched their counter-offensive after the Belgian general strike. A long period of reconstruction was needed, first centering on the Glaverbel-Gilly plant and then spreading to the rest of the glass sector. Its culmination in a general struggle highlights three important elements: 1. The absorption of the experience of a struggle at Glaverbel-Gilly in 1973. 2. The possibility for the first time of responding successfully to a sacking by a multi-national firm. 3. The ability to bring the multi-national BSN trust to its knees.

With regard to the first element: the essential point about the victory won at Glaverbel-Gilly in 1973, apart from the occupation, was the *existence of a strike committee*, elected in the workshops and in the different sectors. It organised the occupation, the pickets, set up a rota for maintaining the occupation, and in every aspect had real control over the occupation and its popularisation. The strike committee was in daily contact with the various political groups to push forward the extension of the struggle. Finally, the strike committee controlled the negotiations and, what is especially relevant to what may happen at Rhone-Progil, they *controlled production*.

The problem in the glass industry is this: one can't stop the production of glass for any length of time without damaging the machinery. In arriving at a solution to overcome this problem, the workers showed their evident ability to run the factory themselves—they decided to produce glass sheets which were not of the standard size, and so could not simply be sold by the boss afterwards. After the strike, they made sure that it wasn't sold off cheaply because of this. And if

they then had to cut it to the right size...well, then they would have to be paid for the whole job. In this way production was continued throughout the strike without in any way benefitting the bosses. And this type of strike, initially launched by the workers of one factory, was adopted in seven other glass factories.

But this integration of experiences didn't just happen spontaneously. A major factor was the intervention of revolutionary militants inside and outside the factory through the bulletin of a class struggle tendency in the union called 'The New Defence'. This slowly allowed the workers to reorganise after the defeat of 1960-61, and took them through the victory in 1973 to its generalisation in 1974 to 11 factories, seven of which were occupied, linked up through a regional strike committee.

We must understand the decisive role played by 'The New Defence' in generalising the experience of 1973. We ourselves will be able to play this role on the international level—perhaps less efficiently, but its effect will be ten times as exemplary given the difficulties of doing it. The synthesis of the experience of the most advanced struggles carried out in the Charleroi region must be generalised to other sectors of the glass industry in France, England, etc.

The second key element of this strike lay in the workers' ability to respond to a sacking carried out by a multi-national company. A worker was sacked on the spot by the bosses for calling a meeting of workers in the refectory at the Multipane factory, against the advice of management and without the agreement of the trade union bureaucrats. At once the factory was occupied and strike pickets were organised. Immediately the demand for his reinstatement was included along with those concerning the contract renewal in the glass industry, and it was given equal weight throughout the struggle. In this way the bosses' counter-offensive was smashed, and the redundancy notice withdrawn.

This example must be developed, generalised, explained. The workers of a multi-national trust have shown that the international bosses cannot sack a worker without repercussions. The workers can make a multi-national pay for such attempts at victimisation. In large part, this success depended on the level of conscious organisation of the struggle. In this case, success could be achieved even without international co-ordination.

'The New Defence' declared in drawing the lessons of the

strike: 'Just as it is our brawn and brains which normally keep the factory going, so we will be the masters during the strike and will take the decisions on the basis of our own interests.'

This wealth of experience must be assimilated by the workers' vanguard of the European glass industry. We must look into this kind of question in all our sections so that we can develop in our trade union work a level of international co-ordination to ensure that such an advanced experience in any one country can be organisationally assimilated. The struggle of the Belgian glass workers itself provides an example of the integration of struggles, since the Glaverbel workers played a decisive role in involving eleven factories in a strike which generalised at a very high level the lessons of a victorious struggle and a long preparation for the fight.

MORE ADVANCED EXPERIENCES

Today there are a whole series of sectors in which we will be able to generalise the experiences of more advanced struggles. For instance, the contracts in the US car industry provide for an annual guaranteed wage. If a worker is laid off he still gets about 85% of his normal wage. At Alfa-Romeo in Milan there is in effect a guaranteed wage—if a worker is laid off, he gets unemployment benefit from the state and the difference is made up by the bosses. Today such a demand is of key importance in the face of the rationalisation and redundancies that will be introduced by the car bosses in a period of slump. One sees here the importance of generalising experiences, if only to determine the objectives of struggle.

To conclude, there are two other aspects of our work which it is important to strengthen from the point of view of combining and assimilating the experiences of the most advanced struggles. The first is 'women's work'. In a series of countries where backwardness on this question holds back struggles we will be able to make important breakthroughs by drawing lessons from the struggles and the development of the women's movement in France and Britain.

Then there is the question of workers' self-defence, whose experiences must also be generalised. An important example of this is the way in which the flying pickets were organised during the miners' strike in Britain. From a central pool, dozens of miners could be despatched at need to strengthen this or that picket. This kind of experience must be incorporated into the general lessons that the workers' vanguard can draw from the struggles of recent years.

FOURTH TASK POLITICAL SOLIDARITY

The mobilisation which took place all over Europe in 1970 in solidarity with the Basque militants sentenced to death by the Burgos military tribunal represented a high point of the political solidarity developed by the revolutionary vanguard with the struggles of the Spanish working class. For these demonstrations of support did not limit themselves simply to demanding the release of Izko and his comrades—even though that was of course essential—but based themselves on solidarity with the Spanish workers for the overthrow of the Francoist dictatorship and the achievement of socialism. Furthermore, this mobilisation was taken up by more than a million Spanish immigrant workers in France, Germany, Switzerland, etc. That indicates the kind of movement that could be developed in the event of a revolutionary upsurge in Spain.

Following on from the campaign in solidarity with the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese people, the Trotskyists set in motion throughout capitalist Europe a campaign in support of the armed resistance of the Chilean people. This campaign indicates on the one hand the new internationalist consciousness—unparalleled in the last 20 years—of the mass vanguard; on the other, it enables us to specify the objective tasks confronting the working class in its struggle against the

capitalist system. Through this solidarity movement tens of thousands of militants have developed an internationalist and revolutionary consciousness.

This work of political solidarity is not some Trotskyist fetish. It is not for reasons of abstract internationalism that we think it is vital to develop struggles based on political solidarity. Certainly they can play a role in extending the impact of certain developments, but the key question is to prepare the European working class to oppose organisationally and as a mass any counter-revolutionary attempt to intervene against a victorious socialist revolution, in the first instance in one country alone. That is the main objective in developing the solidarity of the European working class with political struggles. That is why we attach so much importance to this work, and why we must develop it systematically to overcome the narrow limits of sectoral, trade union solidarity.

Without this conscious work we will be faced with big dangers. In the event of a revolutionary explosion in any European country there will undoubtedly be a semi-spontaneous movement of solidarity, but to be able to consolidate it we must strengthen and develop an internationalist consciousness on every possible occasion now.

When the workers at Cockerill Ougree and the dockers of Genoa go on strike in protest at the US invasion of Cambodia, we must draw the lessons of that. We must show that this type of initiative can be developed at other levels, that the solidarity which takes place during strikes is also relevant on the political plane.

BUILDING THE INTERNATIONAL

The implementation of these four major tasks requires on our part *specific organisational initiatives*.

We are convinced that the simultaneous construction of a national and international organisation is essential. First of all, it enables a thoroughgoing internationalist education to take place, developing a revolutionary consciousness which extends beyond the limits of regional, trade union and sectoral interests—limits which still exist inside our own movement, expressed in such ways as the difficulty of exchanging experiences or the mechanical understanding of experiences gained in other countries.

Furthermore this simultaneous construction of a national and international organisation helps us to avoid misunderstanding important aspects of the international situation and notably the dominant tendencies developing at the heart of the imperialist system. By misunderstanding these, we are in danger of making an impressionistic analysis on the basis of how they appear apparent at the national level. This can result in a vulgar theorisation of minor national or local experiences to demonstrate general tendencies.

We must struggle resolutely against these weaknesses, by simultaneously building a national and international organisation.

Finally—and at the moment it is the most concrete thing—we must co-ordinate our daily work and develop systematically, if modestly, experiences in internationalising workers' struggles. A start, however propagandistic, of work towards the internationalisation of struggles would represent a qualitative leap forward for the Fourth International at the present time.

We can do it—I have already sketched out some of the elements involved. But this flows from a conception which clearly rejects any federalist ideas about the International. There must be a political centralisation which enables us to understand both the particular and the general. This is also essential if we are to give a concrete content to one of our major achievements on the European level, the slogan of the United Socialist States of Europe, which is already being prepared through struggles which, in their turn, show its immediate objective necessity.

THE ECONOMIC IMPASSE OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

Alan Jones and David Tettodoro

The collapse of the Heath Government in February of last year under the impact of the national miners' strike was a watershed in the recent history of the class struggle in Britain.

Far more was involved than a mere tactical defeat for the ruling class. The fall of the Tory Government represented a *strategic* defeat for the British bourgeoisie, and this event provided the catalyst to unhinge and destabilise the whole economic, political and social situation in Britain.

Over the past year the economic crisis of British capitalism has deepened at an ever-accelerating pace. But now this economic crisis has been joined by a *political crisis* flowing from the break up of the traditional ruling class bloc organised in the Tory Party. The British bourgeoisie is not only a class facing life-and-death problems — it is a class without *any clear perspective* for the resolution of those problems, a class which has at present at its disposal no actual or potential 'leadership team' that can begin to carve a way out of the capitalist crisis.

Britain has thus joined the ranks of those European countries where even a temporary restoration of political equilibrium seems highly unlikely. This can only imply that the immediate future will see a period of immense social and political struggle in Britain, the outcome of which will be of major significance for the balance of class forces, not only in this country but throughout Europe.

THE ROOTS OF THE CRISIS

The bases of the specific nature of the British capitalist crisis are to be found in a particular pattern of historical development, starting with the very early development of British capitalism, which has led both to the extreme proletarianisation of the country and to a position where historically the dominant sections of the ruling class have derived, to a degree unequalled in any other major capitalist power, their profits not from the exploitation of the British working class but directly or indirectly from the exploitation of the labouring masses of other countries.

This situation is reflected in a pattern of foreign investment which in accumulated bulk exceeds quantitatively, even today, proportionately to the size of the country's economy, even that of the United States and is qualitatively higher than that of West Germany, France or Japan. This is in turn complemented by a pattern of 'invisible' exports (insurance, banking, shipping for foreign nations, etc.) which is far greater in proportion to the size of the economy than any other major imperialism² and to a pattern of trade which has been oriented towards sectors of the world economy, first the Empire and then the Sterling Area, where, for historical and/or political reasons, British capitalism had a privileged position as a seller and where competition on the same technological level was very weak.³

Rarely has the word 'imperialism' had such direct importance in analysing any major economy as it has in the case of British capitalism.

This pattern of insertion in the world economy has had profound historical implications for the whole social and political structure of Britain. Firstly, it has given the bourgeoisie a huge 'buffer' against the need to sharply increase the rate of exploitation of the British proletariat. Secondly, it has allowed the bourgeoisie to make, when under working-class pressure and without creating economic ruin, the great economic concessions to the British working class which are reflected in the great organisational strength, and political backwardness, of the British working class. Thirdly, it allowed the bourgeoisie to avoid having to resort to fascist or military solutions between the two imperialist world wars, and thereby allowed it to maintain the enormously strong ideological weapon of 300 years of uninterrupted parliamentary regimes. Fourthly, however, and this is where the crisis within the bourgeoisie becomes very important, this situation of the British economy has meant that the decisive sections of the home-based British industrial bourgeoisie, in particular of the new industries created in the twentieth century, have not historically been the dominant fraction within the ruling class.⁴ Economic pre-eminence was in the hands of finance capital, symbolised and organised in the City of London, and government was in the hands of the remnants of the landowning sections of the ruling class — these latter two forming the dominant section of the main party of the ruling class, the Tory Party, with home-based industrial capital playing a subsidiary role, and with the policy of the whole being dominated by the needs of finance capital.

This relation of forces within the ruling class meant that the policy of the British state was not in general directed towards the interests of the home-based technologically advanced industrial bourgeoisie but to the needs of the foreign operations of British capital. This was shown in dozens of ways — the return to the gold standard after the first world war with the disastrous consequences of a high exchange rate for the British domestic economy; the maintenance after 1945 of absurdly inflated exchange rates which kept the maximum value available for foreign investment but which crippled exports; the maintenance of military forces vastly beyond Britain's financial capacity in East Asia, the Arab Gulf, etc.; the concomitant foreign policy alignment not with European capital but with the United States, the only possible military protector, of British investments and operations abroad; the decision not to enter the European Economic Community (EEC — Common Market) at its inception because of its effects on the financial operations of the City and the export and import patterns of British trade, etc.

The historical reasons for the crisis of this economic orientation are well known. They are in particular:

1. This foreign economic orientation was gained, as

noted, at the expense of the development of the British economy itself. From the 1860s onwards, the British economy was weakening compared to its rivals. The final nail was driven into its coffin when, unlike its German and Japanese rivals, it missed the benefits of the enormous increase in the rate of exploitation made possible by a totalitarian regime.

2. British imperialism, precisely because of its weakening home base, did not have the political or military capacity to defend its markets against the encroachments of rival imperialisms. Starting with the rise of German imperialism, and ending with the concessions Britain was forced to make to the United States to gain lease-lend during the war, the old political defence of the system of trade and investment began to crumble.

3. After 1945 British imperialism could no longer economically afford to sustain a foreign military system which, with the exception of the United States, far exceeded that of any other capitalist power.

4. Those sections of the world economy towards which British imperialism was oriented were, after 1945, the most stagnant sectors of the world economy.

The net outcome of these developments was that by the early 1960s it was clear to all that the old pattern of British economic development was no longer viable.⁵

On every major index⁶—the rate of profit, rate of investment, rate of growth of productivity, rate of growth of the economy—the position of British imperialism was and is unrelievedly bad. The crisis of the foreign orientation meant that it was no longer capable of compensating for the domestic deficiencies.

But two enormous barriers stood in the way of British imperialism reorienting its policy in the necessary way, i.e. towards integration into the EEC. Firstly, the British economy was so run-down that it was incapable of competing adequately with its rivals in the EEC.⁷ Secondly, such a reorientation would shake up, and have to overcome, the whole social and political pattern based on the old economic structure. In particular it would mean:

1. Shifting dominance within the ruling class and the Tory Party from the old finance-capital/landowning nexus to the representatives and interests of big industrial, technologically advanced, British-based capital.

2. In foreign policy, shifting from the old alliance with the United States to an alliance with European capital.

3. Within the economy carrying through an unprecedented series of mergers and rationalisations and greatly increasing the rate of exploitation.

The key to this whole process, which in many ways is analogous to, but much more profound than, the type of restructuring which French capitalism carried through under de Gaulle, is of course the ability of the bourgeoisie to bring about a qualitative shift in the relation of forces between the ruling class and the working class.

On some of these fronts the bourgeoisie has made progress, generally of an empirical stumbling sort, during the last ten years. The big series of economic mergers in the mid and late 1960s, symbolised in the coming into existence of British Leyland and GEC-AEI-English Electric, strengthened, concentrated and gave more cohesion to, the industrial bourgeoisie.⁸ The success of Heath in being elected to the leadership of the Tory Party put an end to the political dominance of the old landowning clique of the Salisbury-Baldwin-Churchill-Macmillan-Home line. In foreign policy, an attempt at a decisive break was made by the Heath-Pompidou agreements and the entry of Britain into the EEC. The devaluations of the pound and the tolerance of very high rates of inflation are an expression of the dominance of the exporting industrial bourgeoisie vis-a-vis the old, dominant finance capital. While the task of changing the relation of forces within the ruling class is not completely finished—finance capital succeeded, for example, in thwarting the creation by amalgamation of an industrial-

based merchant bank by the Slater-Walker group—nevertheless, real progress has been made on this front by the industrial bourgeoisie.

The political impact of this changed situation within the ruling class can be seen both inside and outside the Tory Party. In the early 1960s something approaching half the Tory Party was opposed to entry into the EEC, while now only a tiny minority retains its opposition—although here this is helped by the fact that the City of London has had to abandon its dreams of ruling the world money market and has concentrated on ruling the finances of Europe instead.

The change is registered in the fact that the last Tory government was prepared to continue the policy of expanding the economy long after all sections of the financial bourgeoisie were calling for it to be halted so as to check the rate of inflation. It is registered in the fact that the Tories, who until the Heath government had never once in their history devalued the pound, were able to float sterling without any significant resistance. Likewise in the abandonment of the British farmers to the tender mercies of the EEC. It is shown even in the fact that the sexual scandals of the old dominant section of the Tory Party, in the Profumo affair, could, in the early 1960s, shake the party to its foundations, while now equally bad scandals against British public bourgeois morality, in the Lambton-Jellicoe affair, are regarded as the aberrations of a relatively isolated clique.⁹

But if the bourgeoisie has made progress in re-equilibrating itself internally, nevertheless this whole operation, and even the cementing of the new relation of forces within the ruling class, depends on success in qualitatively altering the relation of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Unless the historically very low rate of surplus value extracted from the British working class can be increased, then no amount of 'technical' adjustments will allow the British bourgeoisie to compete successfully in the harsh world of the 1970s style of inter-imperialist competition.

THE FAILURES OF BOURGEOIS POLITICAL STRATEGY.

The first major attempt to overcome the impasse in which the British industrial bourgeoisie found itself was stimulated by the economic recession of 1962-63. The Tory government, finding itself under pressure from industrial capital, made relatively fumbling attempts at a political turn by 'de-colonising' Africa, by abolishing Retail Price Maintenance, by setting up the National Economic Development Council and the National Incomes Commission, and by opening negotiations for entry into the EEC.

But these moves were not sufficiently radical for the needs of the situation, and the main strategy adopted vis-a-vis the working class, integration of the trade unions, was a very difficult one for a Tory government to carry out. In any case the internal relation of forces of the Tory Party greatly favoured the old politically dominant sections of the ruling class. In the leadership crisis following the illness of Macmillan, the old governing clique—while it could not impose one of its own dominant members—succeeded in thwarting Butler, the candidate of the industrial bourgeoisie; and a buffoon, Home, became Tory leader.

Faced with this situation, decisive sections of the industrial bourgeoisie, in a relatively bold political turn, moved to support a Labour government.¹⁰ Such a government, it was hoped, could achieve three things. Firstly, it could break the dominance of the old governing sections of the ruling class. Secondly, through state intervention it could help the process of the rationalisation of the economy. Thirdly, and most importantly, it was hoped it could—because of its links with the trade unions—hold back the working class and create the conditions for a powerful increase in the rate of exploitation.

Wilson duly seized this 'opportunity' to fuse working



Mass picket in 1972 miners' strike

class discontent with ruling class interests; and, once safely elected in 1964, proceeded onto the path of establishing a new Department of Economic Affairs, which was supposed to overrule the traditional mandarins of the Treasury and the Bank of England, put forward the National Plan, set up the Royal Commission on the Trade Unions, support productivity bargaining, and so on.

At first Wilson appeared supremely successful in his integrationist strategy. In April 1965 only the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) opposed the prices and incomes policy when the Trades Union Congress (TUC) discussed it.

But in fact right from the beginning the strains were evident. For Wilson really to have shifted to total subordination to the needs of the industrial bourgeoisie, with all that entailed (early devaluation and rise in food costs, a hard incomes policy, anti-union laws, etc.), would have meant a crisis within the Labour Party involving a more or less complete rupture with its traditional base and the consequent danger of decline of the Labour Party into simply a splinter bourgeois party. Wilson received a taste of what this would mean with the resignation of Cousins from the Cabinet after the July 1966 deflationary measures; and Wilson, for reasons of bureaucratic survival, could not contemplate the consequences of the process. For him, this is what the 'lessons of Ramsey MacDonald' always meant.

In the final analysis, the alliance of Labour and the bourgeoisie broke up because the relation of forces between the trade-union bureaucracy and the masses, as determined by the relation of forces between the classes, did not permit the trade-union bureaucracy to really integrate the working class. The bureaucrats found themselves either outflanked by unofficial strikes, forced to the left against their will, or replaced by bureaucrats standing further to the 'left'. It was this pressure which also finally put an end to Labour's attempt to introduce the 'In Place of Strife' anti-union proposals. From then on the floodgates were open and in 1968-

69 a massive strike wave began to unfold.

The dropping of 'In Place of Strife' was the final straw which broke any significant section of the ruling class from support of the Labour government. The ruling class judged, correctly, that the dropping of 'In Place of Strife' signified that there was no possibility of integrating the unions until the relation of forces between the classes had been altered. From 1969 onwards the ruling class turned fundamentally to a policy of confrontation.

Meanwhile the Tory Party, disliking intensely being isolated from sections of the ruling class, had been undergoing a series of internal struggles during the mid and late 1960s which led to the dumping of Home and the emergence of Heath, a clear representative of industrial capitalism, as leader. He understood the necessary changes which had to be made to secure the dominance of his particular section of the ruling class; and he turned to a resolute pro-European, 'anti-American' foreign stance, brought the symbols of the new dominant sections of the ruling class, Peter Walker and John Davies, into the inner circles of the Tory Party, and most importantly, turned resolutely, even aggressively, in the famous 'Selsdon Park' Tory leadership meeting, from integration of the unions to confrontation with them.

In the first year and a half of the Heath government, this turn was extended logically. Attention was focused on entry into the EEC and on the passing of the Industrial Relations Act. Unemployment was allowed to soar to over a million persons. Not once were the trade-union leaders invited to discuss with Heath. A policy of confrontation with successive unions was embarked upon. Although the dockers and then the municipal workers broke through the Tory strategy, Heath claimed his first victim when the power workers were defeated in the winter of 1970. Then, in the spring of 1971, the post office workers were smashed. Heath's policy of 'n-1', that is, that each major pay settlement must be one per cent lower than the preceding one, appeared to succeed. Despite his continual frustrations in

the North of Ireland, in the spring and early summer of 1971 Heath appeared to be master of all he surveyed.

But the whole situation of the Tories was in fact illusory. Not one really strong section of the working class had been taken on and defeated. Once the 'heavy battalions' started to move into struggle, things began to take a very different turn. First, in 1971, the Ford workers slugged the company to defeat. Then the UCS work-in took place. Finally, starting with the Plessey occupation in the summer of 1971, a whole series of factory occupations against redundancies started. Trade-union membership, for the first time in a period of high unemployment, was rising. The danger for the government was obvious. Given any movement of the economy out of recession the unions would go on the offensive.¹¹ To prevent this, the Tories had to defeat a 'core' section of the working class. The one they decided on was the miners.¹²

In the event, the miners' strike was a disaster which exposed the whole weakness of the position of the Tory government and the ruling class. Not only was the government smashed into submission, but with the use of flying pickets and other advanced forms of organisation, a qualitative development in the methods of working-class struggle began. From the miners' strike on, things started to go decisively wrong for Heath. During the spring and summer of 1972, the working class scored victory after victory—in a railway drivers' strike, in a building workers strike, in the strike to free five imprisoned dockers leaders. In two cases—the rail-drivers and the 'Freeing of the Five'—the Industrial Relations Act was successfully defied. In the only cases where the employers were victorious—in the docks strike and in the Manchester engineering occupations—this was not primarily due to the power of the employers but to extreme sabotage by the union bureaucracy.

After a spell of indecision, Heath drew more or less the correct conclusions from the debacle. The bourgeoisie was able to use a world and British economic upturn in 1972 to give concessions to the working class and bring about a relative restabilisation of the situation. Heath turned to a new policy of preparing a confrontation, *but within the clothing and rhetoric of integration*. The trade-union leaders were invited in for endless discussions. The role of trade unions in 'the nation' was stressed. All the rhetoric of 'lame duck' industries being allowed to go bankrupt was dropped. A thousand million pounds was pumped into the mining industry.

Meanwhile, a new confrontation was prepared, but this time in the form of an incomes policy. In the late autumn of 1972, Heath felt strong enough to pounce; and he imposed a wage freeze—Phase One of the Incomes Policy. The combination of concessions and political manoeuvres succeeded. The wage freeze was not broken. Further success was gained with Phase Two in the spring of 1973. The miners and Ford workers did not struggle and the health workers and gas workers were defeated. But this was a deceptive victory. The key sections of the working class were not defeated. They merely lacked perspective.

During the spring and summer of 1973 the storm clouds were mounting. Despite partial setbacks in the spring, the number of strikes continued to mount. Attempts by the bourgeoisie to capitalise on the spring successes by an offensive in the factories failed, and only against relatively isolated groups—in the trial of building workers at Shrewsbury and on the question of racism—did the ruling class gain important victories. The summer union conferences showed a particularly militant mood. Finally, despite the 1972-73 boom, the underlying economic crisis began surfacing.

By November 1973, the time the working class, and in particular the miners, were entering into struggle against Phase Three, the ruling class and the government basically had only three options.

The first option was to capitulate to the strong-

est section of the working class, the miners, and hope to hold back the rest of the working class. But the ruling class and the Tory government correctly assessed that in the given relation of class forces this could not be achieved. Glasgow firemen, power station engineers, and train drivers were already in struggle against the Incomes Policy.

Although in November-December, large sections of the working class were not directly involved in the struggle, nevertheless the bourgeoisie calculated that this passivity was only *apparent* and that very large sections of working class militants were acting on the assumption that if they could help the miners to create a hole in the incomes policy wall then they could follow through the breach later—which is in fact precisely what occurred. In other words, the miners dispute could in no sense be seen as a sectoral struggle which could be handled in isolation but on the contrary was a locus around which the total relation of class forces was lining up.

This was even consciously understood in quite important sections of the working class and among almost all the bourgeoisie. For this reason, until it became clear that the price of even trying to defeat the miners—with no certainty of success—would be ruinous, no significant section of the ruling class favoured capitulation to the miners. In particular, all reports indicate that the economic departments of the state remained on a hard line throughout the crisis and it was those ministers closest to the economic departments of the state machine, notably the Chancellor of the Exchequer Barber, who took the hardest line against the 'special case' throughout the crisis and remained on that line even when individual sections of the bourgeoisie were beginning to crack.

The second option open to the ruling class was to attempt to break any miners' strike by repression. This however was a very dangerous option. Already in 1972 the miners had shown tremendous combativity, with tens of thousands of workers involved in picketing, several fights with the police, and finally the traumatic experience of Saltley where a solidarity strike of 40,000 engineering workers and a picket of 10,000 miners and engineers broke the back of bourgeois attempts to repress the miners. Even against the miners alone it was not certain that a policy of repression could have won. But precisely the alignment of class forces around the miners' strike made massive repression an exceedingly dangerous option—one in which Saltleys could have developed not in the fifth week of the strike but in the second or third.

Throughout the run-up leading to the strike, pledges of support flooded in to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) from every conceivable trade-union body—from the Scottish TUC to individual unions such as the Transport Workers and the train drivers down to hundreds of individual union branches and shop stewards committees. Any attempt at savage repression of the miners could have led to a serious move towards a general strike.

Certain sections of the bourgeoisie favoured such a risky confrontation, for example, *The Economist*; and most appeared to have weighed it as a serious option, the *Times* and *Telegraph*, for example, doing calculations on whether the army could be relied upon, how strong the police were, etc., while the anti-picket squads of the police were placed on a nationally centralised footing. But in the event, the bourgeoisie, almost certainly correctly, decided that the risks in a policy of repression were too great.

The third option open to the government and the ruling class, the one the impossibility of the other two options forced on it, was to attempt to use their political strength to defeat the organisational and social strength of the working class. The trade-union bureaucracy were continually subjected to manoeuvres and political attacks by the government. The government achieved notable political successes. But these political offensives broke against the rock of the organisational strength of the miners and the support



Heath out - Thatcher in - Powell waiting his turn?

they received from other sections of the working class. Once the miners' strike was actually called for, with an 81 per cent vote for a strike, the bourgeoisie and the government were defeated. Left with no way out but the last gamble of an election, which in the given relation of forces created by the miners struggle was almost certain to, and did, end in a defeat for the Tories' project, the Heath government fell. The colossal organisational strength of the working class had succeeded in defeating the most severe political attack to be launched against it for decades.

PROSPECTS FOR THE CRISIS

The bourgeoisie have been unable to resolve their 'crisis of leadership' which the fall of the Heath Government opened up. The ruling class understands that a party like the Labour Party, whose social base lies in the organised working class and which has close organisational links with the trade union movement, cannot be a reliable instrument for implementing bourgeois political strategy in a period of acute crisis such as the present one. This is true no matter how willing the reformist leaders of the party are to do the bourgeoisie's dirty work.

At the same time the ruling class's political spokesmen have been unable either to base themselves on the political strategy which failed so abysmally in January of 1974, or to assemble a viable alternative. Thus we have had the spectacle of two electoral victories for Labour in the past year, despite the manifest political bankruptcy of the Labour leadership, the acute internal wranglings within the party, and the virtually unanimous opposition of the ruling class and their principal organs (in sharp contrast to 1964, when the Labour Government was supported by a substantial sector of industrial capital).

The performance of the Tories in both elections reflected this crisis of bourgeois political leadership. The only programmatic banner they could raise was that of 'national unity'. (The depths they had sunk to were indicated when the leader of the 'natural party of government' could think of nothing better to offer the electorate than a pledge that he would be prepared to resign if his presence as Prime Minister obstructed the formation of a 'national coalition'.)

This banner, of course, was promptly snatched from their hands by Labour, who were at least able to present it in the slightly more tangible (if equally ephemeral) form of the 'social contract'. Thus the Tory emperor had to proceed to the polls as ill-equipped for political combat as on the day of his birth.

Edward Heath has been ruthlessly ditched by the Tory Party in the February leadership context. But the election of Margaret Thatcher in no constitutes a viable alternative at the level of strategy for the party. She is little more than a personal alternative to Heath, a useful frontispiece for the Tory Party should it find itself thrown into a snap election campaign. Thatcher, despite her unorthodox larder-stocking habits, will have a certain appeal to some working class housewives, and a strong moral appeal to the rebellious petty-bourgeois social base of the Tory Party. But the facade of unity she appears to impose on the party is thin-

indeed, concealing rather than resolving the policy vacuum at the heart of the Tory leadership.

This situation gives a figure like Powell a certain ominous credibility as a potential political force. Powell is busy both building a firm base among the Ulster loyalists, and at the same time exploring the possibilities of implementing a political formula that would use the axes of racism and chauvinism to split the working class and create a new political alignment of forces in Britain.

Such a formula could develop into a viable alternative to the past, and lost, combinations on which the Tory Party has based itself. But this would involve a very drastic and very sharp reorientation of political strategy—an historic reorientation—on the part of the ruling class. Moreover Powell has yet to demonstrate its practical viability, and the bourgeoisie are certainly not about to buy his model unseen.

The Powellite course is not, therefore, a short-term option for the bourgeoisie. Indeed, there are no short-term options. For the time being the ruling class will continue to remain politically adrift in the midst of the growing crisis of Britain's economic and political structures.

Moreover this crisis is not merely historic, but is an acute conjunctural one. We are on the verge of a precipitate intensification of the economic dimensions of the crisis, which cannot but have dramatic political effects. This prognostication is borne out by all the relevant data, and has been the subject of a growing volume of Cassandra cries from a wide range of bourgeois experts.

The recent report from the prestigious, and semi-official, National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) flies in the face of the more optimistic Treasury estimates on the future performance of the economy. (In any event, this 'optimism' is obviously a very frail creature, since the Treasury had taken the absolutely unprecedented step of refusing to disclose its estimates beyond the first half of 1974.)

According to NIESR, 1974 will see a virtually stagnant economy from the standpoint of total output, an acceleration of price inflation above the 20% level, and a rise of unemployment to just under the 1 million mark.¹³

However, many bourgeois experts believe NIESR to be over-optimistic. As Alan Day of LSE put it: 'The only major fault in the National Institute's gloomy forecasts for the British economy in 1975 is that they are not gloomy enough. Unless there are major changes in the Government's policies, it is increasingly likely that 1975 will see either an economic and social catastrophe or a rapid slide towards rigidly-controlled Socialist economy.'¹⁴

Professor Day's jaundiced view of socialism aside, a closer examination of the major economic factors confirms his pessimism about the deep trouble British capitalism is in.

INFLATION. Retail prices are currently more than 18 per cent higher than twelve months ago. After a certain slackening, they are now accelerating, with last month's rise being at the annual rate of 26 per cent. The combined effects of the budget, the inevitable *de facto* devaluation of

the pound, and wage increases stimulated by the present level of price inflation, virtually preclude any easing of the situation.

The Economist, the *Sunday Telegraph's* economists, and NIESR all expect the rate of inflation next year to be between 20 and 25 per cent.¹⁵ It seems most likely that it will be nearer the upper figure, and it would take very little to push it even higher.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS. Even before the effects of higher oil prices hit the economy, the British balance of trade and payments was deteriorating rapidly. British imperialism's chronic balance of payments problem has very little to do with the 'oil crisis', and everything to do with British capitalism's totally uncompetitive situation in relation to its main rivals. In the ten years from 1963 to 1973, for example, the West German share of British imports increased from 4.3 per cent to 8.5 per cent, while Britain's share of the German market declined from 4.7 per cent to 3.5 per cent.¹⁶

As a result, the balance of payments crisis broke with a vengeance in 1973—before the increase in oil prices had really begun to bite. That year the British economy recorded an all-time record breaking deficit on current account of £1,210 million. This was as much due to the declining trade surplus in manufactured goods as to the rising deficit in raw materials trade.

The situation has continued to deteriorate throughout 1974, exacerbated by the three-day week and the full impact of increased oil costs. The deficit on current account for 1974 is approaching the £4,000 million mark. In absolute terms such a figure is totally unprecedented in the history of British imperialism. But even in relative terms—at around 6% of the GNP—it is unprecedented during peacetime.

Nor is the picture for 1975 very heartening. NIESR predicts an improvement in the situation: a current account deficit of 'only' £2,700 million, with the non-oil element accounting for one-third of this. But both these figures remain of crisis proportions.

STERLING. A certain complacency has entered into government pronouncements about the balance of payments situation, due to its confidence that the dominant 'oil element' in the deficit must eventually make its way back to Britain through the international capital market.

It is this thinking which underlay the huge borrowing requirement of the last budget—it was assumed that the immense budgetary deficit could be funded by money flowing back from the oil producers.

However the oil producers are nobody's fairy god-mother—least of all British imperialism's. The grave dangers in the situation were exposed in December by the decision of Saudi Arabia to ask for tax and royalty payments in dollars only (as opposed to three-quarters in dollars and one-quarter in sterling). Even this relatively minor move put great pressure on the pound, forcing its devaluation by 0.4 per cent in a few days, despite efforts by the Bank of England to support the existing exchange rate.

As a result sterling has been, as of mid-December, effectively devalued by 21.4 per cent against other major currencies in the space of three years. The 4 per cent devaluation which NIESR predicted for sterling in the course of next year has already occurred in the space of months.¹⁷

Whatever benefits this may bring British capitalism in terms of the improved competitiveness of exports, they will be more than outweighed by the increased pressure of import costs and the extra twist to the inflationary spiral that comes with it.

PROFITABILITY. British capitalist industry has suffered a steady decline in its profitability for the past two decades. Superficially the situation improved recently, with a 29 per cent increase during 1973 in the profits of the UK operations of commercial and industrial companies. But this

improvement is due to the totally illusory effect of 'stock appreciation'—the increase in the cost of raw materials, semi-finished goods, and unsold products in stock, due to inflation.

Once this is discounted, it is evident that the crisis of profitability of British capitalism is continuing. As one recent study put it: '...company net-of-tax profits—the only type of profit that matters to a company—have dropped by 42.5 per cent in money terms during 1973, and are now running around 37 per cent of their 1973 level despite an increase in real fixed investment during this period of over 50 per cent...Deflating by the retail price index, 1973 net-of-tax profits are 47.5 per cent down in real terms on 1972 and 79 per cent down on 1963.'¹⁸

According to NIESR, profits, net of stock appreciation, amounted to only 5.5 per cent of total output in the first half of 1974, compared with 10-15 per cent from 1963-1972.¹⁹

The study quoted adds that 'there is, moreover, good reason to fear that the position is further deteriorating in 1974.'

While Labour's budget measures may provide some relief, the underlying problem will persist. Some 44 per cent of business economists expect the profits of their firms to decline in 1975, compared with only 23 per cent expecting a rise. This view is echoed by *The Economist*, which warns that 'if there is another squeeze on profits in early 1975, and most business forecasters now expect one, this may give the final push into real slump.'

It is hardly surprising that this has had a devastating effect on business confidence. The *Financial Times* Monthly Survey of Business Opinion for November shows that of the businesses surveyed in the four month period August-November, 45% were 'less optimistic' about their company's prospects than they were four months before, 33% were 'neutral' and only 22% 'more optimistic'; this compares with 31% 'less optimistic', 30% 'neutral' and 39% 'more optimistic' in the midst of the post-three day week euphoria from March to June.²⁰

The Confederation of British Industry paint an even blacker picture, with their four-monthly survey in November revealing 60% of their respondents 'less optimistic' and only 4% 'more optimistic'.²¹

This is confirmed by that most reliable barometer of business confidence—the stock exchange. From their high-point in May 1972 share prices have plummeted to the lowest point in more than 20 years—a fall of more than 70%.

The stock exchange is so shaky that in the wake of the public announcement of its financial difficulties, British Leyland found its shares trading at less than 7p. (about a quarter of their par value, and less than 10% of the value per share of the company's assets), despite the obvious importance of the company to the national economy and pledges of government support.

INVESTMENT. With all these problems accumulating, investment is also seriously depressed. Investment in manufacturing fell in 1971 and 1972, and rose only slightly during 1973. Original projections by the Department of Trade and Industry for an increase of 12-14% during 1974 were revised downwards to 5% in June. The most recent figures show that in the third quarter of 1974 investment in manufacturing fell by 4%.²² If this trend continues the June OBE prediction will be borne out, and the total 1974 figure will remain well below the 1970 level.

Indications are that the present downward trend will continue well into 1975. The *Financial Times* survey shows (with answer weighted by capital expenditure) that of businesses surveyed during August to November 53% planned to decrease capital investment in the next twelve months, with only 18% planning an increase. (The CBI survey gives a similar picture.)

Of those industries surveyed in November itself, 66% of construction firms planned to cut capital spending (only 9% are planning an increase), 93% of food and tobacco companies were cutting (7% increasing); and 68% of textiles and clothing were cutting (1% increasing).²³

GROWTH. Despite the attempts of the Labour Government to avoid sharp deflation and its inevitable concomitant of mass unemployment, this huge accumulation of economic difficulties is bound to have a deleterious effect on growth of total output. Due to the combined effects of deflationary economic policies and the three-day week (itself a deflationary mechanism), output as a whole fell during 1974—probably by something just under 1%.

Predictions for 1975 are conflicting. The Treasury has said that the economy will grow at the rate of 2% during the first half of 1975, and have tried to hint that this rate will be maintained during the second half, but without any clear commitment of figures to back it up.

The NIESR suggest that the average level of output in 1975 will be up by 2% on the depressed average level for 1974, but that the economy will only grow by 0.5% during 1975 itself. A similar rate is projected by the *Sunday Telegraph*.

But others doubt that 1975 will see any growth at all in real terms. A study by the Society of Business Economists predicts a 0.7% decline in real output, and declining output is also projected by stockbrokers Phillips and Drew.²⁴

The recession is obviously hitting certain sections particularly hard—notably cars and construction.

The decline in the car industry is particularly serious, as 10% of British industrial production is tied up directly or indirectly in motor manufacturing. Car sales have been seriously hit by the general economic recession, the increase in oil prices, and the greater penetration of the British market by foreign competition. Even after substantial recovery from the catastrophic slump at the beginning of 1974 (January sales were only 64% of what they had been a year earlier), total car sales in the first 10 months of 1974 were still 9% below sales for the equivalent period in 1973.

The worst hit of the car firms is British Leyland. They account for 40% of car sales, are Britain's largest exporter, and 3-400,000 workers producing 3-4% of total national output are directly or indirectly tied up with this firm. It now seems certain that they will ring up virtually no profit at all for 1974. Acute liquidity problems are threatening their investment plans and driving them to the very edge of collapse, hence their urgent pleas for state aid.

The construction industry is experiencing an even worse downturn, reflecting the impact of inflation on costs, land prices, and interest rates, on the one hand, and prospective home buyers' incomes on the other. As of November 1974 the number of new housing starts was down 50% on 1973, itself a year in which the number of housing completions was the lowest in 14 years.²⁵

UNEMPLOYMENT. No one doubts that Britain is once more on the road to mass unemployment—this time under a Labour Government. As of October 1974 the number of unemployed (seasonally adjusted and excluding school leavers) in Great Britain stood at 606,000. This is far short of the 770,000 recorded in the same month in 1972, but also well above the 511,000 in 1973. Moreover the Labour government is still attempting to avoid any deflationary measures—a policy it is unlikely to be able to sustain much longer.

Again it is almost universally agreed that the crunch will come in the winter of 1975-76, although there are widely differing estimates of how serious this will be. NIESR expects it to be below 900,000. But again others think this is an underestimation: Phillips and Drew are plumping for 1 million, and the *Sunday Telegraph* is talking about 1.5 million.²⁶

Obviously there is a certain trade-off between unemployment and inflation, but a package 'guesstimate' of

'25% inflation—1 million unemployed' would certainly not err on the side of catastrophism.

The present Labour Government's solution to this dire situation—as to every other problem—is the 'social contract'. But it is now self-evident that the 'social contract' was effectively strangled at birth by the economic crisis.

It will not be possible to sell to the British working class—the most highly organised and socially powerful in the capitalist world—the idea of wage restraint in the midst of mass unemployment and a rate of inflation that will double prices every three years. Nor can the Labour government, under present economic conditions, deliver any substantial improvements in the social services to sweeten the pill. On the contrary, one of the most obvious effects of the crisis of British capitalism is a corresponding crisis of social expenditure which threatens every sector of the 'welfare state'.

Even if the Labour government and the trade union bureaucracy should succeed in a temporary restriction of the level of wage demands they will simply be postponing an inevitable showdown and ensuring that it occurs in an even more explosive and (from the standpoint of the bureaucracy) uncontrollable fashion. Nor will such partial restraint satisfy the bourgeoisie. As the main spokesmen of the bourgeoisie are beginning to state with ever greater frequency (if still in veiled terms) nothing short of a major redistribution of income from the working class to the bourgeoisie—that is a major erosion of working class living standards—can even begin to tackle British capitalism's economic crisis.

But such a redistribution can only be carried out through a state-enforced incomes policy. That is why the bourgeoisie is now both unanimous and vociferous in its demands for such a policy. The Labour Government will try to avoid such a step, most likely by a deflationary budgetary package in the Spring. But this will only make the situation worse. It is virtually certain that the Labour government—caught in the vice of its own deep commit-



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ment to the capitalist system and the far-reaching crisis which that system is now in— will be forced to grant the bourgeoisie their wish.

But what price will it pay? It is unthinkable that the working class, which fought the Tory government to a standstill and destroyed it on precisely this question, could accept such a move from a Labour government. Nor is this like 1931—the working class is far more powerful than it was forty years ago, and has yet to suffer a single major defeat in the post-war period.

It is these factors which set the scene for the next stage in the class struggle—a stage which will unfold not in a period of years but of months. They put on the agenda an immense upheaval in the whole structure of British politics—both in the camp of the ruling class and the camp of the working class.

FOOTNOTES:

1. In the years 1870-1913 Sweezy and Magdoff calculate, on the basis of Cairncross's figures, that the foreign investment of British capitalism was equivalent to over \$ 24 billion in terms of modern dollars. Return on foreign investment was over \$ 40 billion in the same terms. (Sweezy and Magdoff, *The Dynamics of U.S. Capitalism*, p.33) But even more amazing than the size, which is vast when considered in terms of the far smaller economy of that period, is that fact that by 1870 annual British capital investment abroad exceeded net capital formation at home and in 1911-13 capital investment abroad was probably double that in Britain. (Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* p.192.)

Even as late as 1968, on a far smaller Gross National Product (GNP) than its main imperialist rivals, apart from the United States, Britain still invested over twice as much abroad (\$ 890 million) as West Germany (\$ 390 million) and four times as much as Japan (\$ 220 million). [Rowthorn, 'Imperialism in the Seventies—Unity or Rivalry?' *New Left Review*, No.69 p. 42]. This compares to a rate of home investment which, as a percentage of GNP, is twice as high in Japan (30-35%) as in Britain (16-18%) and which is two-thirds higher in West Germany (23-27%) than in Britain ('Survey on Japan', *The Economist*, 31 March, 1973). The situation on accumulated foreign investment is still more striking even in relation to the United States. In 1971, accumulated stocks of West German capital abroad were worth 4% of GNP. For the United States the figure was 8.2%. For Britain, however, it was 16.7% (*Financial Times*, 15 April, 1974).

2. In the whole period from 1796, when records start, to 1973, there have been only nine years in which the Balance of Trade (relation of visible exports to visible imports) was in Britain's favour. In 73 years in the twentieth century there have been 69 deficits. In invisible trade, however, Britain is the greatest 'exporter' per head in the world. (Manser, *Britain in Balance*, p.23)

3. As late as 1955, for example, trade with the Sterling Area represented 45% of British exports compared to only 15% with the countries that became the EEC. (Prest and Coppock, eds., *The British Economy*.)

4. The ideological effects of this economic, social and political situation have been analysed in a series of articles by Anderson and Nairn in *New Left Review*, and a brilliant sketch is given in Trotsky's 'Through What Stage Are We Passing?'

5. Take for example foreign investment. The pattern we have discussed above still exists, as shown by the fact that the value of the total stock of British foreign investment was still 80% that of exports in 1971, compared to 18% for Japan and West Germany (*Financial Times*, 25 April, 1974), nevertheless, returns as a proportion of GNP had fallen from

10% in 1914 to only about 2% even by 1960. (Cited by Kidron, 'Imperialism: Highest Stage but one', *International Socialism*, No. 61.)

6. See the tables following this article.

7. In the years between the mid-1950s and 1970s, Britain's pattern of trade was of necessity, in view of the world market changes, transformed. For example in 1955, 22% of British exports went to the developing countries of the Sterling Area and only 15% to the countries which formed the EEC. By 1971, only 13% of exports went to the developing countries of the Sterling Area and 21% went to the EEC. In 1955, 45% of British exports went to the Sterling Area as a whole and only 41% went to Western Europe and North America. (Prest and Coppock, *The British Economy*, p.119). But in the new markets Britain couldn't compete against its main rivals. To take just one example: between 1963 and 1973 the West German share of British imports increased from 4.3% to 8.5%, while the British share of the German market fell from 4.7% to 3.5%. (*Financial Times*, 23 April, 1974.)

8. This was accompanied by an ideological offensive that concentrated on building up new bourgeois 'cult' figures (e.g. Lord Stokes of Leyland Motors, Arnold Weinstock of GEC). A whole series of books stressed the need to break with 'amateurism' (associated with the old ruling class) and develop 'professionalism' (associated with industrial capital). The build-up of Heath himself, the first 'grammar school' Tory leader, fitted perfectly into this.

9. A good account of the further ramifications of this process can be found in 'The Heath Government; a New Course for British Capitalism' by Robin Blackburn in *New Left Review*, No. 70.

10. In the 1964 election, Labour was supported by, among others, Stokes—the head of Leyland Motors; Lord Kearton—the head of Courtaulds; and *The Economist* magazine, i.e. by representatives of the most dynamic and central sectors of British industrial capital.

11. As *The Banker*, November 1971, put it: 'More demand, faster growth, and less unemployment would surely intensify the militant pressure for an ever growing share of wages in the national income.'

12. This was a perfectly conscious choice. The *City of London Newspaper* reported on 1 February, 1972: 'Months before the coal strike started, ministers were saying in private that the government would establish their "anti-inflation" policy through a resounding victory over the miners.'

13. See 'Cassandra sounds too cheerful', *The Economist*, 7-13 December, 1974.

14. *The Observer*, 6 December, 1974.

15. *The Economist*, op. cit.

16. *Financial Times*, 23 April, 1974.

17. *Financial Times*, 12 December, 1974.

18. 'The real crisis now facing Britain's industry', *Financial Times*, 30 September, 1974.

19. *The Economist*, op. cit.

20. *Financial Times*, 7 December, 1974; 7 October, 1974.

21. *Financial Times*, 12 November, 1974.

22. *Financial Times*, 3 December, 1974.

23. *Financial Times*, 7 December, 1974.

24. *The Economist*, op. cit.

25. 'All systems stop', *The Economist*, 30 November-6 December, 1974; *Financial Times*, 1 February, 1974.

26. *The Economist*, 7-13 December, 1974, op. cit.

TABLES

Average Annual Rate of Growth of Productivity in Manufacturing

	1950-70	1965-70*
Belgium	3.84	5.68
France	5.64	7.84
Germany	4.72	6.28
Italy	6.86	4.78 (6.43)**
Netherlands	5.0	7.76
USA	3.16	1.56
UK	2.6	3.44

* The latest observation is mostly first quarter, 1970.
 ** 1965, first quarter to 1969, second quarter. OECD

Investment as a Percentage of GNP

	Range From 1960 to 1972
Japan	30-35%
Germany	23-27%
France	20-26%
Britain	16-18%
U.S. (excludes government expenditure on machinery and equipment)	17-18%

(*"Survey on Japan," The Economist, March 31, 1973.*)

Rates of Growth of GNP for Seven European Countries

	Denmark %	Germany %	Italy %	Netherlands %	Norway %	Sweden %	UK %
1870-1913	3.1	3.1 ¹	1.4	2.2	2.6	3.1	2.3
1913-1957	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.8	2.4	1.6
1913-1929	2.1	0.5	1.8	3.3	2.8	1.6	1.3
1929-1938	2.2	2.5	1.6	0.1	3.0	2.0	2.2
1938-1957	2.3	2.9	2.3	3.1	2.8	3.3	1.6
1924-1929	2.7	3.5 ²	2.6	4.2	4.2	4.3	2.9
1951-1957	2.7	7.5	5.4	5.2	3.6	3.8	2.5

1. 1871-1913
 2. 1900-1913
 3. 1925-1929

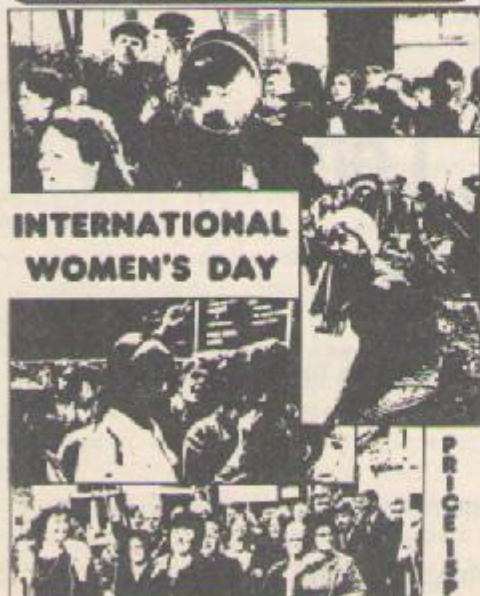
Figures adjusted to exclude the effect of changes in national boundaries.

Source: *Economic Growth in Western Europe 1870-1959* by Angus Maddison, *Banca Nazionale del Lavoro Quarterly Review*, March 1959.

Cited by Comas, *What Attitude to Growth?* *National Westminster Bank Review*, February 1974.

Socialist Woman

A JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP SPRING 1974



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PORTUGAL AND THE REVOLUTIONS IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE

One of the main aims of the Portuguese Junta of National Salvation and the first Provisional Government which it set up following the 25 April Lisbon coup was to extricate Portugal from its disastrous wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau and find more subtle ways to defend Portuguese and Western interests in the 'overseas provinces'. The new rulers felt that events had proved the impossibility of an outright military victory and that further pursuit of the wars would carry grave risks, both political and economic, for Portuguese capitalism.

The wars had, after all, dragged on—to little avail from the Portuguese point of view—for nearly one and a half decades. They began in Angola, in February 1961, when African farmers in Kasanje rose in rebellion against the Portuguese system of forcing them to grow cotton and sell it at prices well below those fetched on the world market—a system which played a decisive role in the construction of Portugal's giant textile industry. On 4 February the *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA—Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) staged an unsuccessful raid on Luanda's central prison in the hope of releasing the political prisoners incarcerated within its walls. Five weeks later Northern Angola was swept by a massive peasant uprising, mainly spontaneous, but led to some extent by the *Uniao de Populacoes de Angola* (UPA—Union of Angolan Peoples), the antecedent of today's *Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola* (FNLA—National Liberation Front of Angola). The 1961 revolt was crushed by the methods of the pogrom. An indiscriminate slaughter of Africans by white settlers and troops left up to 50,000 dead.

Guerrilla warfare began again under MPLA leadership in 1963 in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda, and in the east in 1966. War began in Guinea-Bissau in 1963, and in

by Tony Hodges

Mozambique in 1964.

By 1973 the wars had become a quagmire for the Portuguese. Three-quarters of the land area of Guinea-Bissau was under the control of the *Partido Africano para a Independencia da Guine e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC—African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verdes), and in September 1973 a national assembly elected throughout the liberated zones voted to declare Guinea-Bissau an independent republic. By 25 April, over 80 governments had recognised the new state.

1973 also saw the Mozambican movement *FRELIMO* (*Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique*—Mozambique Liberation Front) spreading the liberation war from the northern provinces of Tete, Cabo Delgado and Niassa into the strategic 'white heartlands' of Manica e Sofala, threatening the port of Beira, Mozambique's second biggest city, and the road and rail routes to the landlocked white settler regime in Rhodesia.

Portuguese units were also facing three liberation movements in Angola—the MPLA, the FNLA and a smaller group, UNITA (*Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola*—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

Some 150,000 Portuguese troops were committed to these wars, morale among the soldiers—young peasants and workers conscripted for a four year spell in the armed forces—was falling fast, and antiwar moods were spreading widely among the Portuguese people, who, despite the repression of the Caetano dictatorship, held demonstrations against the regime's colonialist policies.

The wars were also draining the country dry. Fifty per cent of the government budget was being lavished on military expenditure—a vast proportion for a backward country like Portugal, where 30 per cent of the people were still illiterate, where funds were badly needed to industrialise and modernise the country, and where the lack of jobs had forced 800,000 Portuguese (out of a total population of 9 million) to emigrate to France and other countries in search of employment. At the same time, war spending pushed the inflation rate to 23 per cent in 1973, the third highest in Europe, undermining the ability of Portuguese capitalism to compete in the world market.

But, despite the economic and political overhead costs of the wars, Portugal's post-25 April rulers did not plan to concede immediate, unconditional independence to the peoples of Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, the Cape Verdes, Principe and Sao Tome. Nor did they intend to immediately withdraw their armies. On the contrary, they hoped to maintain Portugal's presence in the African colonies, albeit in a more disguised manner.

In the first few weeks after the coup the junta based its colonial policy on the perspective outlined by General Spínola, the new president, in his book *Portugal e o Futuro* (Portugal and the Future), which, two months before the coup, had proposed the formation of puppet multiracial governments in the colonies within a 'Lusitanian federation' of Portuguese states, where the decisive powers would remain in Lisbon's hands. Spínola strongly opposed allowing the colonies to have independence. He wrote: 'We are among those who propose the overseas provinces as the essential prerequisite for our survival as a free and independent nation. Without the African territories the country will be reduced to a meaningless thing in a Europe which is assuming the proportions of a giant and without the necessary cards to play within the concert of nations and we will end up by being in existence in a merely formal way within a political framework in which our real independence will be totally compromised.'

There can be little doubt that Spínola, who had been governor and army commander in Guinea-Bissau and deputy chief of staff of the armed forces under the old dictatorship, had every intention, once president, of finding ways to preserve Portuguese interests in Africa. Indeed, he hoped to convince the liberation movements to lay down their arms, sign ceasefires, and participate in Portuguese-controlled referendums on the future of their countries, without Portugal having to make any commitment to accepting their independence.

Spínola and the junta calculated that if the liberation movements accepted this scheme, the colonial administrations would gain the time badly needed to cultivate a reliable neocolonial force to whom 'independence' could one day be safely entrusted. In the meantime every encouragement was given to the few African political leaders who had been hostile to the liberation struggles in the hope that they could emerge as powerful rivals to the liberation movements. Typical of these traitors to the national liberation struggle was Joanna Simiao, who founded GUMO (*Grupo Unido de Mocambique*—United Group of Mozambique) and later became a leader of the *Partido da Coalizao Nacional* (PCN—National Coalition Party), launched on 24 August by five small parties with the avowed aim of challenging FRELIMO.

The same happened in Angola. On 21 June, for example, there occurred the inaugural meeting of the *Uniao Nacionalista Angolana* (UNA—Angolan Nationalist Union), led by an old-time collaborator with the Caetano regime, Angelino Alberto. Another such movement, backed by liberal whites and conservative middle-class Africans, was

founded in early September—the *Frente de Unidade Angolana* (FUA—Angolan Unity Front), led by Fernando Falcao, a white businessman who now sits in the Angolan government.

Spínola's colonialist policies were strikingly demonstrated by his choice of General Silveiro Marques, a hard-line Salazarist, as his governor of Angola, and by the failure of the Marques administration to disband the PIDE (secret police). Marques had, in fact, been Salazar's governor of Angola from 1962 to 1966.

Spínola and Marques gave time to the extremist white settler elements to organise themselves—often with the connivance of members of the colonial administration or members of the PIDE—and for mercenaries to be recruited outside the country, particularly in South Africa. As early as July, a Portuguese officer named Mendoca was said to be organising a secret army of up to 20,000 men called the *Resistencia Unida de Angola* (RUA—United Resistance of Angola).

Savage pogrom-like attacks were launched in July and August against African workers in the Angolan capital, Luanda, by white racist mobs encouraged by groups like the RUA, the FRA (*Frente de Resistencia Angolana*—Angolan Resistance Front), the ESINA (*Exercito de Salvacao e Intervencao Nacional Angolana*—Army of Salvation and National Angolan Intervention) and the *Partido Cristao-Democratico Angolano* (PCDA—Christian Democratic Party of Angola). The FRA, which compares itself to the Algerian OAS, even went so far as to inform the press on 24 August that it was planning a coup.

Extremist white terror groups and vigilantes were responsible for the killing of hundreds of Africans. In the month of July alone, over 300 were killed in riots in the Luanda suburbs according to the 27 July *Observer*, and the 9 August issue of the Lisbon daily *A Capital* reported that about 40,000 Africans had fled the terror in Luanda for the rural areas. On 17 August *A Capital* reported that 37 had been killed since the beginning of August. In all these massacres the overwhelming majority of victims were black.

Spínola's colonialist policies also aided separatist tendencies in Angola like FLEC (*Frente de Libertacao do Enclave de Cabinda*—Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda), a tribalist movement founded in 1963 which is out to defend the large imperialist oil interests in Cabinda and threatens Angola with national dismemberment and a repeat of the tragedies of Katanga and Biafra. After 25 April, Spínola reappointed Brigadier Temudo Barata, an old Caetano supporter, to his post as governor of Cabinda and commander of the Portuguese troops there. Barata proceeded to give every assistance he could to the secessionists.

The First Government Crisis and the Colonies

By early July the junta's colonial strategy, which had been faithfully applied by the first provisional government of Prime Minister Palma Carlos, was in ruins. None of the liberation movements had agreed to ceasefires—with the minor exception of UNITA, which laid down its arms on 14 June. FRELIMO, the PAIGC, the MPLA and the FNLA all demanded a clear commitment from Lisbon that it would accept the independence of their countries and repudiated the idea that independence would be subject to the outcome of a referendum.

It seems probable that disputes broke out in the junta, the first provisional government and the Movement of the Armed Forces following the breakdown of the first Portuguese-FRELIMO negotiations in Lusaka in June. FRELIMO had flatly rejected the terms brought to them



PAIGC delegates — on their way to negotiate independence for Guinea-Bissau.

by Foreign Minister Mario Soares. Jorge Rebelo, head of FRELIMO's Information Department, spelt out the three conditions for a resumption of talks with the Portuguese authorities in an interview published in the 15 August issue of *Noticias* of Lourenço Marques. 'Our positions', he explained, 'agreed on in Lusaka during the negotiations with the Portuguese government, are based on three fundamental demands: first, the recognition of the right of the Mozambican people to independence; second, the explicit recognition of FRELIMO as the only legitimate representative of the people of Mozambique; and third, the transfer of powers which the Portuguese government still exercises in Mozambique.'

The liberation movements' rejection of the ceasefire/ referendum plan carried grave risks for Portuguese capitalism and the imperialist powers. The Portuguese army in Mozambique was in a virtual state of collapse, with reports coming in of units of Portuguese soldiers refusing to go on combat duty. Guerrillas continued with daily regularity to blow up goods trains and passenger trains on the strategic rail lines between Rhodesia and Beira.

Mozambican society was in a state of high tension. The liberation fighters were within miles of Beira. African workers, inspired by the prospect of quick victory in the liberation struggle, staged a wave of strikes in the cities, shutting down railways, docks, iron works, newspapers and public buildings. Reports began to arrive of African peasants seizing and occupying the lands of white farmers.

In these circumstances, the most acute defenders of capitalist interests soon grasped that a new approach should be made to FRELIMO. The leaders of the Movement of the Armed Forces warned that the army was in no state to continue with the war and that the most effective way of retaining stability was to bring FRELIMO directly into the government. The wisdom of this course was recognised, for example, by the millionaire Mozambican capitalist Jorge Jardim, who expressed the following view—somewhat later—in an interview with the Lourenço Marques daily *A Tribuna* on 17 August: 'All the facts at our disposal lead me to have confidence—though not certainty—that a Nationalist government, which would be a government with a FRELIMO majority, would not be an extreme left government, in the sense of a Marxist-Maoist government.'

Pressure on the Spinoza regime to pull off a stable neo-colonial solution in Mozambique as quickly as possible may also have come at this time from the major imperialist powers with whom Portugal was beginning to hold discussions on aid to the country's crisis-ridden domestic economy and entry into the Common Market. Their concern was with the stability of Mozambique's neighbour, South Africa, an advanced capitalist power whose industrial output is greater than that of the whole of the rest of Africa and where both British and United States investment has been growing at record rates in recent years, attracted by cheap, apartheid-controlled black labour and high profits. The imperialists were worried that if a quick neocolonial solution was not brought off in Mozambique the struggle there might soon inspire a new wave of struggles by the workers of South Africa.

On 11 July, Spinoza dismissed Palma Carlos' government after pressure from the junior officers in the Movement of the Armed Forces had blocked the prime minister's plans to postpone the elections slated for the Constituent Assembly in March 1975 and proceed rapidly to presidential elections to strengthen Spinoza's authority in the country. Differences over colonial policy played a part in Palma Carlos' departure and the installation of a new, second provisional government, composed heavily of representatives of the Movement of the Armed Forces and presided over by a new prime minister, Colonel Vasco Gonçalves.

A commentator writing on the governmental crisis in the 12 July issue of the Lisbon daily *Republica* stressed the opposition of Palma Carlos to withdrawing from the colonies: 'I am getting out now so that I won't have to do it later, drenched with blood and mud'—these are the grandiloquent words that Professor Palma Carlos is supposed to have used to explain his resignation to his friends. According to the interpretation that is made of these statements by the former law professor, the blood in question referred to a return to fascism, while the mud symbolised what the right customarily calls "abandoning the overseas provinces".

The new line was first spelt out in a major speech by Spinoza on 27 July. 'The moment has come for the President of the Republic to proclaim, once again and solemnly, the recognition of the right of the peoples of the Portuguese overseas territories to self-determination, including the immediate recognition of their right to independence'. This was the first occasion on which Portugal's rulers gave formal recognition of the colonies' right to independence, though 'the immediate recognition of their right to independence' did not mean that all of the colonies were to be conceded immediate independence with no strings attached.

But two significant concessions to the peoples of Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique did soon follow. On 26 August an agreement was signed in Algiers by Soares and Major Pedro Pires, a leader of the PAIGC, which established an immediate ceasefire between Portuguese and PAIGC forces, promised Portuguese recognition of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on 10 September, and stipulated that all Portuguese troops would be out of the country by 31 October. This concession represented the recognition by Portugal's rulers that there was no point in continuing the war in Guinea-Bissau, which was effectively ruled in most of the country by the rebel government in any case, and which had little strategic or economic value for the West or Portugal.

A few days before the Algiers agreement a Portuguese negotiating team flew to Dar es Salaam for a new series of talks with FRELIMO. The talks broke up after three days and were reconvened in the first week of September in Lusaka. On 7 September FRELIMO and the Portuguese

delegation signed an agreement which called an immediate ceasefire and promised independence for Mozambique on 25 June, 1975, the anniversary of the founding of FRELIMO.

These concessions did not, however, signal the end of Portuguese colonial involvement in Africa. The Portuguese government refused, for example, to concede immediate independence to the Cape Verde Islands, an archipelago off the West African coast which has had close historical and cultural ties with mainland Guinea-Bissau for many decades. Spínola and Soares stipulated that the islands would not be granted independence until after the election of a National Assembly, a move that hinted at Portuguese hopes to buy time to safeguard Western interests in the strategically located colony. NATO, eyeing the excellent airport facilities on the island of Sal, is well aware that the island could be an invaluable launching pad for imperialist intervention in continental Africa. The Lajes airbase in the Portuguese Azores played a similar role for the United States in October 1973, when thousands of tons of war equipment were flown by the US airforce to Israel in the middle of the war in the Arab East, using Lajes as a stop-off refuelling point.

The Lusaka accords, too, included many concessions from the liberation fighters. The new 'transitional government' has nine members, six appointed by FRELIMO and three by the Portuguese government. Defence and foreign affairs are not included and remain in Lisbon's hands. The new administration is headed by a Portuguese high commissioner, Rear Admiral Vitor Crespo, and a FRELIMO prime minister, Joaquim Chissano. A joint military commission, composed of equal numbers of representatives of the Portuguese armed forces and FRELIMO, has been established to supervise the implementation of the ceasefire.

Until the new government establishes a new police force, the present colonial police will continue to function. They are under the control of the Portuguese high commissioner, who is also empowered to take control of the other security forces 'in the event of disorder'.

At a news conference in Lusaka on 5 September, Soares announced that Portuguese troops would remain in the country, under Portuguese command, at least until independence. Soares also stated that the Portuguese government would not allow Mozambique to aid the Zimbabwean liberation struggle by offering continued use of Mozambican territory for the liberation movements, and that Mozambique would not apply sanctions against either Rhodesia or South Africa. The Mozambican government is being forced, at least until independence, to continue to supply over 100,000 contract workers annually for South Africa's gold mines, to proceed with plans to sell power to South Africa from the giant Cabora Bassa dam, and to maintain the port of Lourenço Marques as a major trade outlet for South African industries.

Several actions and statements by FRELIMO leaders indicate that FRELIMO, now in the Mozambican government in coalition with the Portuguese colonialists, may be willing to play the 'stabilising' role expected by the Portuguese authorities. Samora Machel, the movement's president, sent a message from Tanzania (where the movement still maintains its headquarters) to the inauguration ceremony of the 'transitional government' on 20 September, calling for an end to the wave of strike actions, occupations and demonstrations that has forced Lisbon to make as many concessions as it has. Machel said that 'an increase in salaries would only bring an increase in prices'. He warned that 'in this situation and phase of the life of our country, strikes will not take place', and called for 'stepping up austerity and very hard work'.

Machel's approach can only result in the grave problems of the Mozambican economy being tackled in the interests of the capitalists and at the expense of the Mozambican masses. The only real solution to the problems of inflation, unemployment and underdevelopment facing the people of Mozambique after decades of colonial superexploitation is the nationalisation of the major capitalist holdings and the launching of a planned economy to develop the country in the interests of the workers and peasants.

Nor have FRELIMO leaders indicated that they will strive to mobilise the masses and resources of Mozambique to aid the liberation struggles in South Africa and Rhodesia. This is the only way to defend Mozambique from South African, Rhodesian or mercenary intervention and, in the long run, by tapping the huge industrial power of South Africa, to lay the basis for real socialist development in Southern Africa as a whole, including Mozambique. Discussing FRELIMO's attitude to South Africa at a press conference on 17 September, Chissano said: 'We do not pretend to be the saviours of the world. We will not be saviours or the reformers of South Africa. That belongs to the people of South Africa.'

FRELIMO has also dropped demands for the immediate withdrawal of Portugal's troops from Mozambique. The dangers that flow from this stance were well illustrated by the events surrounding the white settler uprising immediately following the 7 September Lusaka accords, events which proved that the Mozambican people cannot rely on the Portuguese colonial army for protection. Portuguese troops and police did little or nothing to put down the settler putsch. No resistance was given to the racialists' seizure of the Lourenço Marques' radio station or their freeing of 200 ex-PIDE agents from the Machava prison. As Antonio de Figueiredo and Peter Niesewand put it in the 9 September *Guardian*: 'It is apparent that—at key stages—police and soldiers stood by and allowed the takeover.'

FRELIMO broadcast appeals to the black population of Lourenço Marques advising them not to mobilise themselves against the white racialists. But after watching the Portuguese troops do nothing against the putschists for two days, the black masses mobilised themselves spontaneously despite the FRELIMO leaders' appeals. They built barricades, searched for arms destined for the white racialists and blocked roads from South Africa to prevent aid reaching the reactionaries from that quarter. 'At one roadblock', Niesewand reported in the 11 September *Guardian*, 'thousands of blacks stopped cars to search them for Portuguese flags and arms'.

The real role of the Portuguese troops in Mozambique was revealed very soon after the black revolt. Troops were sent into the black shanty-towns to put down the African workers by force. Niesewand reported that 'commanders guarding the perimeters [of the black areas] said they recognised the sound of automatic weapons used by Portuguese troops' and that helicopters flew over the shanty-towns, while the Portuguese military high command met in emergency session. Nearly 100 were killed, almost all of them blacks. The white reactionaries, by contrast, were not militarily suppressed but allowed to leave the buildings they had seized quite freely in the wake of the black uprising.

The Second Provisional Government and Angola

The dangers posed by the depth of the liberation struggle and the social crisis in Mozambique forced the junta and the second provisional government of Vasco Gonçalves to opt for a 'FRELIMO solution' in that country as the best way of defending imperialism's essential interests there and in

neighbouring South Africa.

In Angola the comparative weakness and divisions of the liberation movements encouraged the Goncalves/Spinoza regime to attempt to hold off independence for several years. The only immediate effect of the 11 July changes in the Lisbon government was the replacement of Governor Silveiro Marques with a more 'liberal' officer, Rear-Admiral Rosa Coutinho, who was appointed president of a new Governing Junta of Angola.

In Angola, the stakes are really high. The country is fabulously wealthy, a huge store of potential profits for the imperialist monopolies. Producing 160,000 barrels of crude oil a day, Angola is the second largest oil producer in Africa south of the Sahara. The main interests here are held by Cabinda Gulf Oil Company, a subsidiary of Gulf Oil Corporation of the United States, which first struck oil in Cabinda in 1966. Portuguese, South African, French, Belgian and United States capital is involved in six other oil companies now operating in Angola. Both the corporations themselves and the colonial Portuguese government benefit—the latter in the form of huge royalties and revenues from the oil companies. Gulf, for example, paid 400 million dollars to the government last year alone.

Crude oil exports have jumped in recent years from 1½ million tons in 1969 to over 7 million in 1973. Even before the boom in oil prices had had its real effects, Angola's crude oil export earnings in 1973 were 62.8 per cent up on the year before. With reserves in Gulf's Cabinda oilfields alone estimated at over 300 million tons, and with over 20 more companies in addition to those presently operating in Angola queuing up for oil exploration rights and concessions, the major imperialist powers will take every precaution to prevent this wealth slipping from their clasp.

The Angolan economy is one of the fastest growing in Africa. There is a very wide range of British capitalist interests in the country, extending into nearly every area of the economy from railways to iron ore, and Angola's exports of raw materials are experiencing a real boom. Export earnings from diamonds, for example, in which British capital has large investments through DIAMANG and CONDIAMA, rose by 26.3 per cent last year from their level in 1972. It was a similar story for iron ore exports, whose value rose 19.7 per cent from 1972 to 1973.

The fourth largest coffee producer in the world—after Brazil, Colombia and the Ivory Coast—Angola is also bringing in huge increases in coffee export earnings. Last year the country's coffee exports rose 34.6 per cent in value and in the first five months of 1974 coffee export earnings were a further 25 per cent above their level in the same period of 1973.

The imperialists' stake in Angola is well illustrated by the massive trade surplus achieved in recent years by the colony on account of the imperialists' exploitation of its raw materials. Angola's exports rose to a record 19,136.8 million escudos (£320 million) in 1973, 37.4 per cent more than the year before. The trade balance improved by 83.4 per cent to a staggering 5,860.8 million escudos (£100 million).

To defend the imperialist holdings in Angola, the Portuguese government and junta have moved slowly and cautiously to build up a neocolonialist government in the colony. On 9 August the junta issued a communique which laid out a timetable for 'decolonisation'—a process which would keep Portuguese troops and rule in the country for two to three years. The statement demanded that the liberation movements lay down their arms and open negotiations with the Portuguese—as if the Portuguese had any right to negotiate anything with the Angolan people! 'Once a ceasefire is agreed to', the junta announced, 'the Portuguese government will immediately set up a provisional coalition government, in which all the liberation movements will be represented along with the most representative ethnic groups in Angola, including the white population'.

The junta's statement indicated that the main task of the provisional government would be to work out an electoral law. Then, 'in about two years, the provisional government should see to the election by direct, secret and universal ballot of a Constituent Assembly, whose task will be to work out the Constitution of the new nation, and define what relationship it wants to have with Portugal.'

The statement went on to explain that Portugal would refuse to allow Angolan independence until after the Constituent Assembly had finished writing a new Constitution and elections had been held to a new Legislative Assembly.

The Portuguese colonialists have no right whatever to lay down such conditions for independence to the Angolan people, who have the right to determine their own affairs and choose their own form of government without Portuguese interference. The only course consistent with the right of self-determination is that the Portuguese colonialists leave Angola *now* and *unconditionally*.

Six days after the junta announced its colonial plans for Angola, supporters of the MPLA held a rally in central Lisbon to protest against the junta's communique. The rally was banned by the government and units of the Public Security Police opened fire on the demonstrators, killing a passer-by.

A statement was issued the following day by the provisional government and the chief of the general staff of the armed forces justifying the banning of the demonstration on the grounds that actions in support of the MPLA were unpatriotic. 'The MPLA', the communique stated, 'has so

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far rejected all the peace offers of the provisional government and declared its intention to continue the struggle indefinitely in Angola, thus showing disrespect for the desires of the Angolan peoples. The soldiers of Portugal will be obliged to remain on guard to defend themselves in Angola. The government and the general staff cannot permit support for the MPLA to be expressed on the Portuguese homefront while this organisation maintains its warlike attitude.'

The colonialist frame of mind could scarcely have been better expressed! Except, perhaps, by Prime Minister Vasco Goncalves, who had this to say in an interview with the French magazine *Nouvel Observateur* published in its 6 October issue: 'We intend to decolonise with the agreement of the white population. Nothing will be done without the agreement of the white population there.' So Angola's independence was to be conditional on the agreement of the privileged white minority, a minority of 500,000 out of a total population of 5½ million and a minority which has real material reasons to oppose African majority rule! Indeed, its privileges over the black population are enormous, as an article in the 4 October issue of the French journal *Marches Tropicaux* detailed: a minority of 10 per cent of the Angolan population, which includes the great bulk of the white population, earn over 35,200 escudos (£600) a year, while 90 per cent—almost all blacks—earn less than 2,200 escudos (£38) a year.

Another side to the plans of the junta and the second provisional government came to light ten days after the junta's 9 August communique: the Angolan paper *Provincia* reported that the 1974 Angolan military budget was to be increased by 20 million dollars. Indeed, the war was still not over. Neither the FNLA nor the MPLA had accepted the 9 August plan. They had refused therefore to call ceasefires and the Portuguese press continued to report lists of combat deaths from the Angolan war. In this context, the extremist settler forces and mercenary groups also continued to flourish.

At the same time Spinola continued to back the small 'phantom parties' like UNA and FUA as a counterweight to the liberation movements. On 27 September he welcomed 23 Angolan 'leaders of thought', none of them representing the liberation movements, to a round of talks in Lisbon on Angola's future.

Spinola also hoped to enlist the aid of pro-US President Mobutu of Zaire in selling the junta's plans to the Kinshasa-based leaders of the FNLA. On 15 September he flew to the Island of Sal for talks with Mobutu, the FNLA's leader Holden Roberto and UNITA president Jonas Savimbi.

Spinola, apparently overruled at the time by more farsighted representatives of the capitalist order on the Council of State, now hinted that he considered too many concessions had been granted FRELIMO. On 16 September he publicly announced that he would take direct personal control over the negotiations on Angola's future.

The Downfall of Spinola and Costa Gomes' Pacts with the MPLA and the FNLA

Spinola's personal handling of the Angolan negotiations threatened—from the capitalist point of view—to be as dangerous as the first provisional government's colonial strategy nearly became in Mozambique. The defeat of the extreme reactionaries as a result of the massive mobilisation of the workers of Portugal on 28 September, and the subsequent resignation of Spinola, brought a more flexible Angola policy from Portugal's rulers.

The new president, General Costa Gomes, repudiated

Spinola's colonial line in his inauguration speech, warning Spinola supporters that 'we must not let ourselves be bound by rigid and preconceived plans'.

Costa Gomes understood that the liberation movements, particularly the MPLA, had mass African backing and could not be ignored any longer; and that the Angolan tinderbox might soon explode if a rapid, peaceful transfer of governmental powers was not soon set in motion. Costa Gomes and Coutinho embarked on a new round of negotiations with the liberation movements in the hope that they would participate in a coalition government which could restore political stability and end the deepening crisis in the country.

The crisis was certainly deep. Both the FNLA and the MPLA had rejected Lisbon's two-to-three year timetable and had calculated that the junta's plan to include formal representation from 'ethnic groups' was designed to bolster right-wing groups like FUA and UNA whose leaders had opposed the liberation struggle during the Salazar and Caetano years.

Even UNITA, which had signed a ceasefire in June, nearly two months before the junta's 9 August statement, and which appeared to be willing to co-operate, refused to join a provisional government which did not include members of the FNLA and the MPLA—out of fear that it would lose African support.

Strikes also began to sweep the country. On 22 October, for example, Luanda's dock workers went on strike, holding up banana exports, and workers in the financial administration offices walked out. It took a 64 per cent wage increase for employees with two years' service—and a 44 per cent raise for the rest—to get the dockers back to work on 27 October.

On 4 November 700 workers at the tyre factory, Mabor, struck for wage increases and the firing of fascist managers. Two days later, water and electricity workers in Luanda walked out demanding a minimum salary of 5,500 escudos (£94) a month and the removal of 41 reactionary officials accused of collaborating with the PIDE. Health workers, bakers and hospital workers were also reported on strike the same day.

Thousands of blacks were also arming themselves in the cities as a defensive measure against the racist mobs of settlers who had continually carried out attacks against the black areas since July. Typical was the response to the discovery of a murdered white taxi driver on 3 November. Three cars, driven by whites, drove into the Cazenga suburb of Luanda and let off a hail of bullets, killing ten blacks. The widespread defensive arming of the black population in Luanda caused grave concern to the Portuguese authorities, who saw the liberation movements as the only force to keep the independent mobilisation of the African workers in check.

Signs of peasant uprisings proved equally threatening to the Portuguese colonialists. The 4 November issue of *Diario de Noticias*, Lisbon's leading bourgeois daily, reported one such rebellion: 'Groups of Africans invaded and destroyed houses and public buildings in Duque de Braganca, in the district of Malanje, around 425 kilometers to the east of the capital, *Provincia de Angola* reported today.

'The paper stated that various estates and plantations had been set on fire and destroyed and others had been abandoned, while parachutists were en route there to help the police "control" the agitation carried out by the black population in the past three weeks.'

In this more and more explosive atmosphere, the Portuguese authorities took steps in October and November to come to a deal with the leaderships of the Angolan libe-

ration movements.

On 10 October a five-man delegation led by General Fontes Pereira de Melo arrived in Kinshasa for a series of meetings with Mobutu, Roberto and the FNLA leadership, and Daniel Chipenda, vice-president of the MPLA and leader of its 'Eastern Revolt' faction, one of the movement's three public factions. On 14 October the Portuguese delegation signed an agreement with the FNLA leadership in Kinshasa, setting an immediate ceasefire and allowing the FNLA to open legal offices in Luanda. On 30 October a 94-member delegation led by Henrik Vaal Neto, the FNLA's information minister, arrived in the Angolan capital to open the Front's new permanent offices.

An agreement with the MPLA followed soon after the Kinshasa accords. On 20 October Captain Leonel Cardoso, a key man in Coutinho's Angolan administration, flew to Luso, in the east of the country, to meet Neto himself. Two days later, in a village some 40 miles from the Zambian border, Neto and Cardoso signed an official ceasefire agreement, which allowed the MPLA to open legal political centres throughout the country.

With speculation now rife that the announcement of the long-awaited coalition government was imminent, Coutinho flew to Lisbon to give a progress report to the Decolonisation Commission on 28 October. 'Important steps have been taken during the last few weeks in the process underway in Angola', Coutinho told reporters outside the meeting in Lisbon's Belem Palace. 'We have achieved the cessation of hostilities with all the movements, first with UNITA, afterwards with the FNLA, and finally with the MPLA after talks in Angolan territory. This has been a very important step, because, from now on, with delegations of the liberation movements present in Luanda, contacts will be made easier and their co-operation in the development of the process can be more effective.' Coutinho said that he was 'pleased with the way in which things are going'.

To accomplish the emerging deal with the leaderships of the liberation movement, Coutinho was forced, belatedly, to take some measures against the extreme right-wing forces which his and Marques' policies had previously encouraged. On 27 October he announced that several right-wing leaders—who had 'aimed at stopping the decolonisation process and at imposing a Rhodesia-type independence'—had been arrested, including Antonio Navarro, president of the PCDA. In a similar development on 4 November, the Decolonisation Commission in Lisbon fired Temudo Barata, the pro-separatist governor of Cabinda, after riots had broken out in the Cabindan capital between supporters of FLEC and MPLA.

The clearest indications of the plans of the junta and the provisional government came to light on 20 November—when Major Melo Antunes, a top leader of the Movement of the Armed Forces and minister without portfolio in the provisional government, arrived in Algiers to open secret talks with Neto on the establishment of a coalition government.

The same day in Luanda, Captain Vasco Lourenco, leader of a Movement of the Armed Forces' delegation to Angola, explained that his delegation was looking for a 'united front' of the liberation movements 'to constitute a provisional government with the aim of it being able to get going definitively with the process of decolonisation'.

The Portuguese government and the junta expect that the MPLA and the FNLA leaders will play a moderating role over their rank-and-file supporters once they are in the government. Indeed, already, these leaders have indicated their willingness to co-operate only too well. The *Diario de Noticias* report on the peasant uprisings in Duque de



MPLA guerrillas in Angola before liberation

Braganca, for example, noted that the Governing Junta of Angola had sent African intermediaries to the area, 'having asked the liberation movements represented in Luanda to help calm emotions and restore public order'.

One of the most explicit indications of the MPLA's political line came at a press conference addressed by MPLA leader Lucio Lara in Luanda on 13 November. The 14 November issue of the Lisbon paper *O Seculo* carried this report of Lara's denunciations of Africans who had armed themselves and organised the self-defence of the black areas of the city against the white racialists. 'He agreed that many of those responsible had signs or emblems of the MPLA and carried the organisation's banners, believing in fact that some were sympathisers of the organisation. Nevertheless he made an appeal to the intelligence of people not to believe that the leadership of the MPLA would have in any way supported or given its approval to the wave of violence.'

O Seculo noted that 'Lara deplored, as well, the recent wave of strikes and, energetically, repudiated accusations that the MPLA was responsible for organising them.

'In the second place, he declared, his movement only supported strikes which had been previously authorised by the unions, regretting those egoistic persons who do not work for the good of the people and who are seeking to prejudice the Angolan economy.'

It is this moderating role which the Portuguese ruling class now hopes to use to bring a stable, neocolonial solution to success in Angola.

This neocolonial strategy has won public praise from United States imperialism. For example, Donald Easum, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee on 10 October that 'patience and good judgment' had 'so far characterised the process of decolonisation' and that the United States was adopting a 'hopeful

and helpful attitude' towards 'these new and encouraging developments'. He announced that the US government was seeking 'meaningful dialogues' with the liberation movements.

The Way Forward

Portugal's rulers, in seeking a stable neocolonial solution in Angola, Mozambique and the Cape Verdes, have sought to play for time. They have refused to withdraw all Portuguese troops at once and to concede immediate, unconditional independence in order to organise the construction of reliable, neocolonial governments which will defend the imperialists' key interests.

The primary responsibility of socialists and supporters of the liberation struggle of the peoples of Mozambique, Angola and the Cape Verdes is to demand the immediate, unconditional independence of the colonies and withdrawal of the troops. This is the only course which is consistent with the right of self-determination of the peoples of these countries, i.e. their right to determine their own affairs without another day of Portuguese interference.

Nowhere is this task more urgent than in Portugal itself, where the Communist and Socialist Parties, instead of

building a mass movement against the colonial policies of the junta and the government, have done everything in their power to cover up for the actions of the government in which they themselves sit.

It is our responsibility too, here in Britain, to build a powerful movement in solidarity with the liberation struggle and to fight all forms of collaboration by the British government with Portuguese colonialism and the racist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia. A movement against British government collaboration with South Africa is of particular importance in view of the dangers that South Africa might intervene militarily in Angola or Mozambique if the revolutions in those countries threaten to spill over into South Africa. As the recent naval exercises carried out jointly by the British and South African navies reveal, the British Labour Government stands full-square behind the deep commitment of British capitalism to defend its giant holdings in Southern Africa, mainly in South Africa itself, but also in Angola. Our job must be to campaign vigorously to force the Labour Government to break off this collaboration with the racists in Southern Africa and solidarise with the national liberation struggles of its oppressed peoples.

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CHILE

THE COUP AND AFTER

The LIGA COMUNISTA DE CHILE, sympathising section of the Fourth International held an underground conference in Chile after the coup. The following is a translation of sections of the main perspectives document discussed at that conference.

After the legislative elections of March 1973 came the final realignments of the forces of the Right before the definitive crisis. In this period the armed forces became the key political factor. The Christian Democrats looked to them to ensure the continuance of the State in bourgeois legality and to push the government into numerous retreats, such as the appointment of the military to key ministerial posts. The Christian Democrat party nationally wanted to drag the military as soon as possible into a coup to overthrow Allende. The same position was held by the bosses' organisations, especially SOFOFA.*

The First Fruits of the Coup

Within the Popular Unity, positions were less clear cut. Within a few hours of the election there was a split in the MAPU as a result of the deep crisis that had been developing there since their 2nd congress. The CP called a plenum to analyse the election result and decided the new axis of their intervention. At the end of it, the Chilean Communists defined their principal task as the election of a new 'popular government' in 1976! From this it followed, for the CP, that the immediate task of the proletariat was to redouble their efforts to improve production so that the government would have a secure base from which to carry out a programme of financial stringency to control inflation, put a stop to the black market and re-balance the state sector. At the same time the CP proposed to lead a campaign against the threat of civil war which the bourgeoisie had been using as a form of blackmail, hoping thereby to isolate the *goipistas*, bring the 'democratic' sector of the bourgeoisie into an agreement and preserve the rule of law. At the time this was also the position of Allende and the dominant current in the UP.

The centrist currents of the UP, on the other hand, highlighted the need to face up to the bosses' offensive with a more aggressive policy which would take account of the strength of the masses and encourage sustained mass initiatives. These currents, which were close to the MIR, albeit hesitantly and with many contradictions, did make the struggle for popular power the main axis of their politics in this final period. The calls for workers' power, together with the development of organs of popular control, had a profound resonance with the masses and came to dominate every demonstration.

The period of class struggle opened by the March '73

elections developed in an economic climate where the contradictions imposed by the global crisis of bourgeois society became constantly more evident. It was a situation of deadlock which could not last very long. There had to be a movement—either forwards towards socialism or backwards towards a fascist barbarism. These were the only possible solutions to the crisis, and it was up to each of the opposing classes to impose its will on the other and defeat it.

In June the political crisis was sharpened. The strike at 'El Teniente' provided the opportunity for a new mass offensive by the bourgeoisie; this set off a widespread and vigorous mobilisation by the left which promptly halted the opposition's advance and threw them into confusion.

At the end of the month, just when everything seemed to have settled down, came the uprising by the armoured units of the Second Regiment, which surrounded the Moneda Palace and attacked the Ministry of Defence. But the uprising failed to draw in other units of the armed forces and was swiftly crushed. Far from improving, the political situation worsened. The counter-revolution moved into the final phase of preparation for a coup. The government, faced with the activity of the armed forces (closing down radio stations and imposing a rigid press censorship in relation to news of the events of 29 June) had to declare a state of emergency and restore power to the prefects and governors in the provinces. At the same time under the law of arms control the army launched large scale searches of factories, estates, and the offices of trade union and political organisations. In all these searches militants were mistreated and goods destroyed in the offices and factories. At Punta Arenas such an action led to the death of a worker. Some radio stations were searched and closed down by the military while broadcasting political programmes. A group of sailors was arrested on the grounds that they had been plotting against the Navy high command. There were a series of clearly political declarations by senior officers in the armed forces. In short, the armed forces began to act on their own authority, without waiting for the word of the civil power, in a perspective clearly leading towards a *coup d'état*. The political ground was carefully prepared so that this time there would be no failure.

To this end, they had to be able to present the government as 'illegal' and again paralyse the country with a new offensive. The first objective was met by an intensive campaign, carefully orchestrated from within the Parliament by

means of statements from the presidents of the Assembly and the Senate; this was underlined when the Assembly, representing the legislature, in agreement with the Supreme Court and the Treasury, refused to accept the promulgation of a partial constitutional reform about the sectors of the national economy. Above all, via the media of mass communication which they controlled, the opposition prepared the psychological climate for the coup. All this was accompanied by strong pressure on the chief of the army, General Carlos Prats, to resign. The mass offensive was again launched through the paralysis of road transport; then the other sectors controlled by the opposition were brought in: commerce, the professional associations, certain student groups, etc. The National Party started to collect signatures 'to demand Allende's resignation'. A showdown was inevitable.

However the government didn't see things like that, and made desperate efforts to reach an agreement with the Christian Democrats. Allende made a public appeal for a dialogue with the party and showed himself ready to grant concessions. As a guarantee of good faith, the government, through the intervention of the minister of the interior, Carlos Briones, and of Allende himself, began to attack the organs of struggle which the workers had created during the October crisis and which they had ceaselessly strengthened since.

At the same time, most of the factories which had been occupied by the workers during the *Tankazo* of June were ordered to be returned to the bosses. For the sake of retaining their 'responsible' image, the Christian Democrats accepted the offer of talks, but with no intention of arriving at an agreement. They imposed the following conditions: the armed forces to be brought into the cabinet with a controlling position, the promulgation in full of the project for defining separate sectors of the economy which the Parliament had adopted, restoration of channel 9 on the TV, etc.

But the die had already been cast and the government's weakness merely strengthened the hand of the *golpistas*. The resignation of the commander-in-chief and of two other high ranking generals was eloquent testimony as to what was going on within the high command. The same scenario unfolded in the Admiralty.

The workers, on the other hand, were not disposed to leave the stage without a battle; they showed their discontent with the government's policy and organised demonstrations at the base. In a demonstration organised by the CUT (trade union organisation) the military cabinet was jeered, as also in the march of the shantytown dwellers and the *cordones*, which was sabotaged by the CP and the CUT. Finally on 11 September the coup took place. The armed forces managed to stifle the resistance within their ranks by groups of conscripts and NCOs, the *carabineros* did not resist, the left-wing radio-stations were silenced, a curfew imposed. The workers, abandoned by the traditional parties, unable to neutralise the voice of the dictatorship through their own radio station, unable to silence the enemy radio, lacking any central command which might organise the struggle, were in no position to put up any effective resistance to the coup, despite the determination and heroism of the many who fell in armed clashes.

The Armed Forces and the UP Government

The important role which devolved on the bourgeois army in the events leading up to the coup, in the defeat of the Chilean proletariat, and in the tendency today for it to become the principal instrument of the great national and international monopolies in their domination of the political, economic and social affairs of the country makes a



Middle-class demonstration against Allende before the coup.

more detailed explanation of its conduct in this last period very important.

We cannot understand the role of the armed forces without considering their class nature and the specific purpose for which they were created—otherwise we should fall into the facile trap of explaining everything in terms of the resolution of internal conflicts (and therefore of conjunctural factors), which would only miseducate the working class and disarm it in the face of its new tasks.

The first characteristic of the armed forces in every capitalist country is that they are an integral and important part of the bourgeois state apparatus. The capitalist state is the expression of a society profoundly divided into opposing classes with irreconcilable interests and it is the principal tool by which the ruling class maintains its hegemony over the whole society. Historically, the armed forces have fulfilled various functions: settling accounts with the ruling classes of other countries when there are important differences; the colonial conquest of those sections of the world population which have yet to be incorporated fully into the capitalist system; settling those internal (class) conflicts which threaten bourgeois stability.

A second important point: there is no way in which this class nature of the armed forces can be altered since it is determined by the relationship of the army to the system as a whole (although, of course, the class origin of the officers, the kind of education they receive, the predominant ideology and so on, do affect the degree of homogeneity within the force). In every army there is a strict chain of command, the command structure is supposedly independent of major outside interest groups, the command (and therefore also their subordinates) are tied to the maintenance of the state apparatus—all of which suggests that when a revolutionary tendency appears within the

armed forces it must necessarily take the form of a radical break with the bourgeois army. If we fail to clearly assimilate these lessons or deliberately conceal them, we run the risk of confusing those factors which may, in a conjunctural sense, prevent the bourgeois army from fulfilling its mission of stemming the advance of the revolutionary forces, with a transformation of its basic character; this would inhibit the class and its vanguard from performing their proper tasks. How was it that broad sections of the political leadership of the working class came to make such a false judgment on the position of sections of the high command in the last period before the coup?

Some weeks before the presidential elections of 1970 the then commander-in-chief of the army, Rene Schneider, made a statement in which he declared that the army would respect the popular decision or, if no candidate obtained an absolute majority, the vote of the Congress. The army would not abandon the role entrusted to it under the Constitution. This constitutionalist position became known as the 'Schneider doctrine'. This declaration was made in reply to rumours of a possible military intervention in the event of a victory for the Popular Unity candidate. The constitutionalist 'doctrine' therefore referred to the fact that at this particularly critical moment the high command showed an inclination to join in a reformist project, thereby rejecting any reactionary positions which wanted to use the military in their own immediate interests.

In this situation, the reiteration of the constitutionalist position reflected nothing more than the presence of 'reformists' in the senior ranks of the army hierarchy. To give a few examples, in the last year of the Frei government a series of articles appeared in the review of the army general staff, denouncing the subordination of the army to the interests of the big bourgeoisie. It was also generally known that the teaching staff and administration of the staff colleges were convinced partisans of reform.

A new concept of 'national security' was gaining ground, according to which the signs of internal strife were not simply attributed to 'the reds' and international communism, but to such factors as the gross exploitation of the working class and the incapacity of the ruling classes to solve the urgent problems of the large mass of the people, all of which necessarily created internal tension.

Given the existence of a large number of generals who favoured a reformist model, it was obvious that before they could overturn Allende and install a brutal fascist military dictatorship in the country, the *golpistas* had to carry out their own internal *coup d'etat*.

But the reformist phenomenon affected especially the most senior generals and was not widespread throughout the general staff. The development of the class struggle and the increasing combativity of the workers raised the possibility of a revolutionary situation which was in no way to the liking of the great majority of officers. From the moment that the masses began to outflank the bureaucratic leaderships of the UP parties, getting under way a whole series of measures which went much further than the limited scope of a reform programme, an important section of officers began to regroup around a position which was in agreement with the most reactionary elements in the country—those who, since Allende's victory, had come to consider that the most favourable solution for the bourgeoisie would be a military coup.

The polarisation of political forces thus produced a situation in which the majority of officers slipped more and more to the right. The reactionary generals did not at that time, though, have a favourable balance of forces on which to act—and they understood as much. They began to work out a strategy which took account of their several problems:

a) there were generals who sided with Allende

- b) the working class had shown their immense strength
- c) significant numbers of conscripts and NCOs had been won to a socialist position
- d) there was a split between the two main sections of the bourgeoisie.

This conflict was clear to see within the armed forces. On the one hand, there was a group of officers who wished to maintain their loyalty to the executive, on the other, there were groups engaged in the planning of a coup.

What was it that definitely ruled out the victory of the constitutionalists? Why was it utopian and criminal to let the fate of the working class hang on the resolution of these contradictions? In the first place, the sharpening of the class struggle put on the agenda the definitive choice between the victory of a socialist revolution or that of reaction. There was no longer any room for such intermediate positions as 'constitutionalism', and when the question of the proletarian revolution is finally posed it is clear that it can only be led by the proletariat itself and by its vanguard organised politically and militarily to take on the task of seizing power.

The outcome of this great enterprise is ultimately dependent on what forces the working class manages to group, under its own control, to counter the forces of reaction. It is possible that significant sections of the bourgeois army, having been favourably influenced by revolutionary socialist ideas (by means of agitation for the dissolution of the bourgeois army and its replacement by a popular militia) might take the side of the working class, but that would imply that these sections had left the ranks of the bourgeois army and were no longer part of it. Revolutionaries must work to see that this occurs in a massive way at any decisive moment.

It is, however, quite another matter to leave all responsibility for the confrontation in the hands of men who, although affected by the conflict within the officer corps, in no way represent the interests of the proletariat and have on the contrary opposed the dissolution of the bourgeois army. This amounts to the rejection of any possibility for the proletariat winning an influence on sections of the professional army by breaking across its hierarchical structure.

In a situation where the NCOs and the conscripts were isolated from the working class struggle, unable at the critical moment to join with the workers' militias since these did not exist, uncertain of their fate in the event of a clash with sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and officers trained for the assumption of counter-revolutionary tasks, prey to a strict code of discipline, no other result could be expected than a bloody repression of the working class.

Under these conditions the most reactionary sections of the armed forces began to:

- a) launch a violent purge of those sections of the military (especially NCOs) who had been won to the proletariat. Already months before the coup many soldiers and sailors had been tortured, imprisoned and expelled from the armed forces. The case of the sailors, made known to the workers several weeks before the coup, was only a mild indication of what had been going on.
- b) hold meetings of generals and officers from which issued petitions demanding that the executive take steps to counter the combativity of the working class.
- c) make wide use of the arms control law which Congress had passed with the approval of the UP government. This law, which gave them complete freedom to search and seize weapons anywhere in the country, was used by the *golpistas* to take possession of all the arms which might later be used to block their plans.
- d) expel those elements in the high command which were friendly to the government. To achieve this, various kinds of pressure were applied. The most obvious case was the



MIR demonstration before the coup.

demonstration by the wives of all those officers who favoured a coup outside the house of the then commander-in-chief of the army, General Carlos Prats, which, given the government's inaction, proved successful in forcing his resignation.

These preparations were in no way secret. The UP government was perfectly well aware of what was being prepared. But the positions adopted by the leading working class parties in relation to the armed forces could only result in defeat.

Leading elements among the reformists, basing themselves on the lack of any immediate intervention by the armed forces, consistently denied there was any class nature to the army. For them, the armed forces were not a bourgeois institution but an essentially 'unconscious' body, 'loyal to the executive arm', 'professional and patriotic'. Obviously if one wished to prove to the working class that they should not establish their own organs of political and military power, it was necessary to deny the class nature of the armed forces. Blindness and cowardice prevailed to such an extent that a group of sailors who had denounced the planned coup in the hope of defending the government's 'constitutionalist' position and depriving the plotters of any appearance of legitimacy, were themselves brought to trial by the government under the 'internal security' law. The criminally misleading politics of reformism are clearly illustrated by this attitude to the armed forces.

Equally it is true that the MIR and other centrist currents never managed to characterise the armed forces correctly, nor to formulate a position that truly represented the interests of the proletariat on this question. The MIR and other organisations of the revolutionary left committed a typically ultra-left error at the time of the elections and in the first months of the Allende government (an error which led them to a theoretical position which was paradoxically very close to that of the reformists): they correctly characterised the armed forces as a bourgeois institution, as an organ of repression for the possessing classes, but in the context of such a major political upset as the election of Allende, they expected an automatic, mechanical response

(the notion of an 'automatic coup'). They could not grasp the fact that although such an organ *does* respond to the strategic needs of the ruling class, this does not mean that *at every moment and in every situation* it is totally free to act in accordance with the class interest for which it was created—that in a particular conjuncture a secondary factor (like a petty-bourgeois ideology of reform), which in no way alters the class nature of the institution, can play a decisive role.

This error led to a big increase of support for the reformist position: since the coup did not immediately result, it was 'proved' that the revolutionary left had been wrong and that the 'peaceful road' was correct. After a long time without any clarification of these positions, the *Tankazo* of 29 June again called in question the nature of the armed forces. The MIR and other centrist currents (parts of the SP and the MAPU) put forward an eclectic interpretation according to which the fate of the armed forces would ultimately depend on the outcome of the internal struggle then taking place between the *golpistas* and the reformists, between the reactionaries and the left-wing NCOs.

At such a decisive moment in the class struggle, the basis for a position on the armed forces should have been the evident need for the proletariat to create a favourable balance of forces for the coming armed clash. By making the resolution of the struggle *within* the armed forces the prerequisite for achieving such a favourable balance of forces, the centrists missed the nub of the problem: that the outcome of the struggle within the army would largely depend on what forces the proletarian organisations could *themselves* mobilise against the forces of reaction and the core sections of the bourgeoisie, which were now definitively set on the path to insurrection.

Agitation within the armed forces, programmatic appeals designed to draw the soldiers towards the ranks of the people and to divide the army so that it does not act as a homogeneous bloc at the decisive moment—these are undoubtedly important matters; and the development of contradictions within the organs of repression is a necessary

condition for a victorious revolution. But agitation within the army is only significant in so far as it is supplementary to and linked with the preparation and organisation of the proletarian forces in their own militia. For this is the force that will play the decisive role in the final analysis. When the time for the showdown comes, any forces within the military which have been won to the side of the socialist revolution will be lost if the proletariat is unable to field its own combat organisations around which these can be drawn.

The Present Period and the Tasks of the Proletariat

The military coup marked the end of a long period of almost six years' uninterrupted rise in the mass struggle; its termination in a sharp revolutionary crisis ushered in a new counter-revolutionary period, dominated by the defeat of the workers' movement and by sudden re-alignments among the ruling classes. It is within this framework that we must make a careful analysis of the forces which compose the proletariat if we are to work out a correct tactic for struggle.

The pre-revolutionary crisis which shook the country led to a sharp polarisation of the opposing forces; this in turn, through a whole series of internal shifts and re-alignments, altered the composition of the two sides. For example, within the workers' movement the growing crisis of reformism was revealed by a great revolutionary upsurge of the masses; this was channelled into the various centrist currents which took positions that were firmly opposed to the basic orientation of the UP and the government.

Other, equally important, changes came about within the ruling classes, which we must understand if we are to define correctly the nature of the dictatorship and its objectives. The principal change, which has plainly crystallised since the coup but which had begun well before, is the decisive role which the bosses' associations began to play on the political front. Traditionally these bodies had taken part in national politics only indirectly through the medium of the press and media or by exercising continuous pressure on the various past bourgeois governments. In the final analysis, however, they had left it to the bourgeois political parties to ensure the continued functioning of the capitalist system and to defend their vital interests. Under the government of the UP, aware of an urgent need to find a resolution of the crisis of leadership consistent with their class interest, they increasingly showed themselves politically independent, transforming their organisations into veritable control centres of the counter-revolution, and organising large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie under the name of the Corporatist Movement. These bosses' syndicates, particularly in the sector of manufacturing industry organised in SOFOFA, looked for inspiration to the 'Brazilian Miracle' to sketch the main lines of a bourgeois solution to the crisis. This solution would essentially consist of:

- i) total control of the country by the armed forces
 - ii) a strong stimulation of the concentration and centralisation of private capital
 - iii) stimulation of foreign investment under state control
 - iv) an increased rate of exploitation of the work force.
- It is this project which now serves as a programme for the dictatorship, and its principal promoters have now been summoned by the Junta to take over the tasks of government in the ministries and other agencies as advisers or in other important positions.

It is the presence of the bosses' associations in the setting of national goals and in the running of the country which determines both the nature of the dictatorship and the nature of the contradictions which are shaking the bourgeois political camp. The military dictatorship is, in effect, nothing more than a tool in the direct service of the

monopolies for whose benefit it has imposed, with fire and blood, the most brutal repression on every aspect of national life. Its central political aim has been, and remains, that of physically breaking any resistance to their project of restructuring the capitalist system. The method—a civil war—which they have employed against the working class and the masses has led some comrades to characterise the dictatorship as 'fascist'.

Such a characterisation, however, is not entirely appropriate and serves merely as an index of the vicious counter-revolutionary nature of the regime and its methods. The classical form of fascism, as it manifested itself in Italy and Germany between the two imperialist wars which shook Europe in the first half of the century, was substantially different from the military dictatorship which rules Chile. In Chile, for example, the Junta does not represent the defence of their interests by a well-developed national bourgeoisie engaged in a determined policy of expansion at the expense of other imperialist countries. On the contrary, it represents a weak and dependent bourgeoisie which has abandoned all hope of autonomous development and now aspires only to be a junior partner of the imperialist monopolies in the most favourable possible conditions. The 'nationalism' of a bourgeoisie such as that in Chile at the present epoch of historical development is nothing but an illusion or a conscious fraud.

What is more, fascism was primarily a civilian political movement, capable of mobilising mass forces and possessing a vast propaganda machine, which took control of the state apparatus, including the armed forces, and put it to their own use only *after* coming to power. In this respect it is significant that under the (true) fascist regimes repression was in the hands of the secret police rather than the army. While it is true that, in many respects, the situation in Chile resembles a fascist dictatorship or any other extra-legal form of state, we must note that this one is a military dictatorship—that is to say a regime in which the armed forces take over every political and administrative function of the nation.

To call it a military dictatorship, however, does not resolve the problem, since there are different types of military dictatorship. (For example, the government of Juan Jose Torres in Bolivia, in spite of its military character, had very great differences with the regime of the Brazilian 'gorillas'.) In the absence of any more adequate definition, therefore, taking into account both the aims and the methods of the Junta, it seems to us appropriate to characterise it as a military-fascist dictatorship.

The installation of this dictatorship displaced certain sectors of the bourgeoisie which had, until then, occupied a privileged position within the ruling class, seriously damaging their interests and threatening their very existence. It is obvious that the contradictions between the two main wings of the bourgeois bloc will soon come into the open and will be further sharpened until there is a definitive showdown in which one side imposes its hegemony. In other words, for the military-fascist dictatorship to achieve stability, it is essential not only to crush the proletariat, but to repress every manifestation of political opposition, whether it originates from the petty-bourgeoisie or from sections of the bourgeoisie itself. These contradictions remain unresolved within the ruling classes and are reflected also inside the armed forces, rendering objectively possible not only the unity of the immense majority of Chileans against the repressive policies of the Junta, but also the organisation of broad and militant mass mobilisations in opposition to each and every initiative of the reactionaries.

Revolutionaries must be flexible enough in their tactics to turn the contradictions that exist within the enemy camp to their own advantage. Ultimately, however, everything

depends on the capacity for struggle of the mass of workers and peasants, on their level of organisation and the quality of their leadership. If this is inadequate it will not be a case of the proletariat turning inter-bourgeois contradictions to its advantage, but, on the contrary, of the democratic wing of the bourgeoisie profiting from the combativity of the workers. For this reason the key question from the point of view of the revolutionary left has been, and will continue to be, the political and organisational state of the mass movement, and especially of the proletariat. If we do not pay enough attention to the nature of the dominant political currents in the working-class and peasant milieu, to the level of combativity of the masses and to the real level of their organisation, then we shall be quite incapable of correctly deciding the central tactical aims of the revolution in each period.

The military-fascist dictatorship has succeeded in partially disrupting the workers' trade union organisation, in eliminating a significant portion of the vanguard that had led the proletariat in the period preceding the coup, and in totally suppressing all the rights won in the past. Up till now the workers have had to take these blows one after another, unable to mount any large-scale response.

In this context of very widespread reversals, the vanguard has been asking a number of questions as to what are the tasks for the immediate future. Even if the present period of counter-revolution is by its very nature transitory, the question of how long it will last depends basically on the ability of the revolutionary movement to get the working masses back into fighting order, avoiding at the same time the danger of nourishing opportunist illusions or of falling into ultra-left deviations. It is especially important, at present, to elaborate a correct political line, since a number of factors seem to place on the agenda a relatively favourable outcome to the present period of ebb in the mass movement:

- a) the international situation resulting from the present critical conjuncture of the world capitalist system
- b) the extraordinary rise of working-class struggle in the imperialist countries
- c) the very nature of the Chilean workers' movement; its high level of class consciousness and rich tradition of struggle and self-organisation.

But this is no more than a possibility. The central tactical task of the present period is through struggle to transform it into objective reality. To achieve this we must reorganise all the organs of workers' struggle on a clandestine basis; in every factory, workshop or site we must organise all or at least a large majority of workers in defence of their basic demands.

The mass line of the revolutionary movement must be firmly based on an agreed set of agitational demands of a democratic and transitional nature which will enable us to isolate the dictatorship and to draw into the struggle for its overthrow all those sectors which are discontented with the regime's economic policy, with the repression and its arbitrary actions. By exploiting every area of discontent, however limited, we can and must unite the immense majority of the population *around the working class* and build a broad and solid United Anti-Fascist Front. Revolutionary militants who fully understand the implications and limitations of such an orientation have a duty to increase their influence on the vanguard elements of the proletariat, warning them of the unstable character of their temporary conjunctural allies and explaining the need to

press forward and develop the objectives of the struggle whenever the dynamic of the confrontation permits.

The tactic of the United Front in no way implies abandoning the ideological struggle against reformist or other counter-revolutionary currents; on the contrary, this is a prerequisite for the success of the tactic. What is required is the regroupment of a heterogeneous vanguard in order to create a more favourable relation of class forces for the achievement of our objectives; there can be no question of covering over the differences that exist amongst these forces. It is not sufficient for us to advance the tactic of the United Front only at the level of the struggle against the military-fascist dictatorship, we must extend it into more substantial permanent agreements among all the revolutionary class-struggle tendencies, by developing a coherent policy of alliances directed toward the strengthening of the revolutionary position and to raising the consciousness and combativity of the proletariat. To this end it is essential that we build a United Front of Revolutionaries. Any concrete struggle launched by such a front would of course arise out of the central tactical objective of the period. This would be true also for military actions.

Time and again the question is raised: what role can such armed actions play within the framework of the orientation we have described, as a factor in the demoralising of enemy forces and as a support for the central task of reorganising the workers' movement? Like any other tactic, such actions should be evaluated in terms of the existing balance of forces and particularly in terms of the main tendencies in the class struggle at a particular point in time. Thus in a period of progressive deterioration of the enemy position and a rise in the mass struggle, armed actions can objectively help to develop these tendencies and can at the same time serve to open up a period of transition to revolutionary civil war, whatever form this may subsequently take. At a moment, however, when the enemy occupies a particularly advantageous position of strength as is the case today (i.e. June 1974), this kind of action would be equivalent to leading the revolutionary movement to the edge of a precipice.

The experience of the revolutionary left in Brazil is eloquent on this subject—for their failure cannot be put down purely to technical errors, but stemmed from a mistaken conception of political struggle. As Lenin noted in recalling the Bolshevik experience: 'there can be no doubt that without this feature—without revolutionary violence—the proletariat would never have won; but let there be no doubt either that revolutionary violence constitutes a legitimate and necessary tool only at certain moments in the development of the revolution, only in certain special conditions, while the organisation of the proletarian masses, of the workers, has been and remains a much more profound and permanent property of the revolution and a precondition for its victory. It is precisely in the organisation of millions of working people that we find the best hopes for the revolution, the deepest source of its success.'

The revolutionary forces must clearly understand this question and devote themselves wholeheartedly to the task of political propaganda and agitation among the masses, organising them and militantly leading them to action. This is presently the only way in which we can advance in a serious and decisive way along the road of proletarian revolution, to a revolution in which the sole and irreplaceable leading role will be played by the toiling masses under the leadership of their revolutionary party.

PORTUGAL

One year of turmoil



Portugal will shortly be celebrating the first anniversary of the military coup which overthrew the regime of Marcello Caetano and brought to an end almost a half century of ruthless dictatorship.

But beneath the surface of universal rejoicing the different classes of Portuguese society will each celebrate in their own way, voicing sharply divergent hopes and expectations for the future development of Portuguese society.

The working class will celebrate the occasion massively, in the streets. Feeling their power once again, they will use the opportunity to voice their grievances against a society that remains under the control of capital, both the big Portuguese monopolies and the multi-national corporations. They will demand measures against the chronic inflation and the wave of factory closures, redundancies, and unemployment which has been launched as capital retrenches in the face of the world crisis and the loss of some of the advantages of investing in Portugal. They will demand tough measures against sabotage —like the action of the gas companies who replied to the refusal of their application for price increases last year by cutting off all supplies of domestic gas. They will call for a vigorous prosecution of the reactionaries, many of whom retain top posts in both the state and private businesses.

But the bourgeoisie will look on these tumultuous celebrations from a different point of view. For them the real celebration will have come a few days earlier if, as is widely predicted, the elections for the Constituent Assembly (now scheduled for 20 April) produce a clear majority for the parties of the 'centre' (Socialist Party and Popular Democratic Party). They will then view 25 April as a final outburst of the mass feeling which must now be forced into the institutional channels of bourgeois democracy, which they hope will emerge from the deliberations of the assembly and a second round of elections in the autumn.

Looking forward a year ago, the bourgeoisie must certainly have expected to celebrate the first anniversary of the coup in a much securer atmosphere. After all the downfall of

Caetano had been engineered by an historic political instrument of the Portuguese bourgeoisie —the very same that had ushered in the era of reaction a half century earlier —the army; the new regime was headed by a senior military officer who had close social ties with the dominant circles of Portuguese big business and was known as a spokesman of their political views; and the only political forces which had either an organised base or mass influence over the working class — the Socialist Party and the Communist Party — had agreed to enter the Provisional Government and apply the brakes to the mass movement.

But the ruling class seriously misjudged the dynamic of the mass movement. They underestimated the depth of the long-repressed mass hatred for the old regime —which impelled the masses into a bitter fight for the dismantling of the most hated sections of the repressive apparatus; they underestimated the capacity of the masses to forge their own instruments of struggle which could at least partly compensate for the vacuum left behind by the years of repression; and they underestimated the ability of a new vanguard to assimilate and generalise the lessons of decades of clandestine struggle and centuries of international class struggle (a process which led to the papers of political tendencies replacing the sports papers as the most popular reading material, and sent almost every major work of Lenin —from 'State and Revolution', through 'Two Tactics', to 'Left-Wing Communism' —to the top of the best-seller list).

At the same time the ruling class failed to grasp the full extent of the impact which the political crisis of the old regime had inside the army. General Spínola might head the new regime, surrounded by a junta and Council of State dominated by senior officers, but *real* power inside the army was in the hands of the architects of the coup —the Armed Forces Movement. The mass opposition to reaction and the colonial wars had created a political ferment among the military rank-and-file and the conscript officers (many drawn from the universities) which strengthened the hand of dissident junior professional officers, organised in the Armed Forces Movement.

(MFA). At the same time the MFA, under the impulse of the same forces, had undergone a process of radicalisation which, even if it failed to go beyond the bounds of radical petit-bourgeois democracy, still created a major ideological barrier between the orientation of the MFA and the class needs of the Portuguese bourgeoisie.

Thus the months after the overthrow of Caetano saw a massive movement of industrial and political struggle which wrung important economic concessions from the bourgeoisie, forced the dismantling of decisive sections of the old state repressive apparatus (in particular the political police, PIDE/DGS) and undermined the authority of the bourgeois state machine as a whole. The capitalist state in Portugal was left highly vulnerable to proletarian attack.

What saved the Portuguese bourgeoisie was the absence of any force which could centralise and extend the struggles of the Portuguese working class, forge a fighting alliance with other oppressed strata, such as the urban petit-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, and open up the contradictions in the MFA, whose prestige enabled it to play a de-fusing role in many workers' struggles. The immense creativity which the Portuguese workers revealed in these days was not able, spontaneously, to go beyond the coordination of struggles within a single factory or firm (or, in a few circumstances, a single monopoly group), and they remained immersed in the conduct of such specific struggles and the task of building new trade union organisations from the ground up.

The only force which had the mass base and organisational resources necessary to turn the workers' upsurge into a struggle for power by the working class, the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), is cast firmly in the stalinist mould, and rapidly became one of the main props of continued bourgeois rule. Once it had received a place in the new Government, most of its energies were devoted to calling off struggles and breaking strikes, rather than fighting to extend them into a struggle for class power.

Nevertheless, even the crisis of proletarian leadership and the treachery of the PCP combined could produce no more than a stalemate in the balance of class forces. And before the bourgeoisie were able to regroup their forces and move to 'normalise' class relations, the working masses were on the move once again.

The political project on which the bourgeoisie embarked aimed to shift the focus of political authority away from the Provisional Government which, dominated as it was by the petit-bourgeois radicalism of the MFA and including the Communist Party, was an unsatisfactory instrument to meet their political needs. In its place the bourgeoisie sought to strengthen the state apparatus centred around a 'bonapartist' President. This project was facilitated by the fact that the current incumbent of the Presidency — General Spínola — was admirably suited to the role.

The first attempt to execute this shift through the Provisional Government itself simply led to the collapse of that Government and the discrediting of what was then the only viable attempt to construct a bourgeois political party — the Popular Democratic Party (PPD). As a consequence the political balance inside the Government shifted decisively in favour of the MFA.

The bourgeoisie then had to turn to extra-parliamentary action to achieve what they could not through political manoeuvre. Once more the person of Spínola provided them with the focus they required, and, amply aided with money and other resources from the main bourgeois circles, plans were laid for a massive demonstration of the 'silent majority' to demand a strengthening of the President's power.

But the balance of class forces had shifted too far to the bourgeoisie's disadvantage for this project to succeed. Already the Communist Party had found that its attempts to hold back the mass struggle were leading to its outflanking by a new vanguard with deep roots in the workers' movement. Thus the PCP faced a series of important mass struggles —

strikes over economic questions by the postal workers and airport ground crews, a political struggle against reaction by newspaper workers, and mass demonstrations against the right-wing danger by Lisbon shipyard workers — over which they had no control, and which took place in the face of their steadfast opposition.

All this serves only to underline the fact that the PCP's hold over the mass movement was — and still is — paramountly *political*, rather than organisational. That is to say it was not based on the PCP's control of a bureaucratic apparatus which exerted a powerful hold over the mass struggle (for the conditions of clandestine struggle had not permitted the creation of such an apparatus), but through its ability to present the masses an apparent way forward — albeit an illusory and potentially disastrous one — in the fight to defend the gains of 25 April and advance the interests of the working class.

(The consequent tenuousness of this hold is highlighted by a number of recent union elections. In the Postal Workers' Union — whose strike the PCP scabbed on last year — almost every single PCP candidate was defeated. In the Bank Workers' Union — a PCP stronghold dating back to before 25 April — the PCP's candidate for the presidency, Avelino Gonçalves, Minister of Labour in the first Provisional Government, was similarly defeated. In both these cases the PCP lost to opponents on their *left*.)

An essential element of this political hold was the PCP's presence in the Government and its close ties with the MFA. But the strategy of the bourgeoisie threatened all that. For the creation of a 'bonapartist' government around the personality of Spínola would make the expulsion of the PCP from the Government and the eclipsing of the MFA inevitable.

Given the already established presence of a left-wing current of mass proportions, which would undoubtedly be strengthened both materially and ideologically in the fight against the bourgeoisie's manoeuvres, such a situation could only have spelt a major political crisis for the PCP, and threatened its predominant position in the mass movement.

The Communist Party thus faced a struggle for survival — at least for political survival, and possibly even physical survival should a victory of the right be consolidated. To meet this threat they were prepared to make a tactical turn and sponsor a limited proletarian mobilisation to crush the right-wing challenge.

This decision was of great importance. The immense display of proletarian determination it unleashed was undoubtedly a major cause of the eventual decision of the MFA to break with Spínola and act against the 'silent majority'. This in turn had far reaching consequences: the second major effort of the ruling class to shift the balance of forces back in their favour was blocked, and the most immediate avenue for the strengthening of bourgeois rule was liquidated with the subsequent resignation of Spínola.

But it must be stressed that this was no more than a tactical turn by the PCP. Despite the major defeat they were able to impose on the ruling class, the total disarray into which bourgeois political circles were thrown, and the reversal of the relationship between the armed forces and the mass movement (with the MFA tail-ending the mass movement in this case), no attempt was made to follow through with this victory. Not even simple reformist concessions — like the repealing of the repressive anti-strike legislation previously adopted by the Government — were sought by the PCP. Their *tactics* may have created a new balance of forces favourable to the working class; but their *strategy* prevented them from reaping even the most minimal gains from this victory.

The balance of forces determined by the events of 28 September set the framework for the unfolding of political events today. For the bourgeoisie the central concern is to find a new avenue through which they can pursue their political aims. They have had to accept that, for the immediate future at least, the army has been lost as a political instrument. They have therefore turned from being the most enthusiastic

supporters of the participation of the army in politics to advocates of the 'civilianisation' of politics in the interests of 'democracy'. Their current strategy is to ease the MFA out of the political arena, attempt to create a stable alliance of political forces through the emerging institutions of bourgeois democracy (the Constituent Assembly, constitution and subsequent election), and then to use the new political authority so created to de-politicise the armed forces and re-establish them as a reliable repressive instrument of the capitalist state, at the disposal of this authority. Once the relations between the army and the capitalist state have been 'normalised' this is bound to set off political processes within the armed forces which might yet again allow it to become a *political* tool of the ruling class.

The most important development on the Portuguese political scene favouring this strategy has been the evolution of the Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP). The credentials of the PSP as a workers' party have always been rather slender. Formed under the dictatorship as a loosely organised grouping of the more radical section of the democratic opposition, the PSP operated primarily in exile, and had little real roots in the Portuguese working class.

After the coup it benefitted from a considerable influx of workers attracted by the fact that its leadership included some of the most famous opposition figures (Mario Soares and Raul Rego), by its name and rhetoric, and its influential position in the Government. In the months following the coup the PSP even projected a certain 'left' image compared with the PCP, partly as a function of looser organisational structure which permitted the Party to criticise measures which its ministers were silent on, partly because of the consistent liberal-democratic outlook of its leaders, which led them to be uneasy about certain repressive actions of the Government.

The height of the PSP's 'leftism' came on 28 September when its members manned the barricades along with militants from the PCP and the revolutionary left. In the period following 28 September, however, the PSP began a steady rightward march. Among the factors shaping this were a growing awareness by the PSP leaders of the incompatibility between the further development of the mass movement and the establishment of stable bourgeois democracy; a realisation that they could not compete directly with the PCP for leadership of the mass movement (except by the manoeuvre—very dangerous in the Portuguese situation—of trying to outflank it on the left); and the relative eclipsing of the PSP (and its colleagues of the PPD) within the Government as the MFA ministers began to look to the PCP as the principal spokesman of the mass movement.

This rightward turn of the PSP revealed itself in a variety of ways. The international figures it invited to visit Portugal and boost its political image changed perceptibly in hue as Francois Mitterand and Carlos Altimirano gave way to Willy Brandt and...Edward Kennedy! Then the PSP became the principal Portuguese promotor of the cold-war, (and CIA) inspired International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

This rightward evolution culminated in the stand of the PSP on 'trade union unity'. The PCP—supported by the MFA members of the Government—wanted the proposed trade union law to prescribe a unitary structure for the trade union movement. Effectively this would mean establishing the PCP-controlled Intersindical as the sole trade union federation in the country. Such a plan obviously worried the bourgeoisie—and they found a reliable political agent for their opposition in the Socialist Party, who formed a solid block with their thoroughly bourgeois colleagues of the PPD on this question. As a result a predominantly left-wing grouping in the Party—which had gained almost 40% of the votes at the recent Party congress—split on the eve of the massive Intersindical demonstration in favour of trade union unity, largely on that question. (It has since become the Popular Socialist Front.) There are signs that the political differences provoked within the PSP by this clash may yet lead to further



Portuguese Communist Party leader, Gunhal (left)

splits.

It is worth looking at the struggle over 'trade union unity' in some detail, not just because of its objective importance, but because it illustrates in microcosm the contradictions that are operating in the present situation.

The PCP undoubtedly sponsored the move for trade union unity on totally opportunist grounds. They saw it as a means of assuring their domination over the trade unions, and as an initial step to overcoming the absence of any firm organisational hold over the mass movement to which we have already referred.

They choose to resolve this problem through the intermediary of the Government, probably because they saw this as the smoothest and surest means of getting their policy adopted. But they got caught in their own trap. By trying to avoid a resolution of the question of unity through the working class movement itself they plunged themselves into the controversy on relatively unfavourable terms. The PSP was able to take up the question in terms of regulation by the capitalist state versus 'free choice' by the workers. This allowed the PSP—and the PPD—to take up the debate much more aggressively than they would otherwise have dared to do, and allowed them a certain degree of mass support (an index of the confusion is the fact that a section of the revolutionary left—basically the Maoist groups—supported the PSP; the rest of the revolutionary left, however, understood what was involved and came out clearly in favour of unity, even if they coupled this with sharp criticisms of the PCP's methods.)

Moreover a debate couched in these terms was not one in which the PCP could be certain of getting full support from the MFA. The PSP's arguments on the grounds of democracy would find a considerable degree of resonance within the MFA. (It is significant that a number of amendments to the proposed law were adopted to meet some of the object-

ions of the PSP and PPD with the support of most MFA ministers. They were opposed by the PCP, and the MFA supporters of the PCP on this question—as on many others—were not its most left-wing members but the Prime Minister, Vasco Gonçalves, and the Minister of Labour, Rogerio Martins, author of the notorious anti-strike legislation.)

The PCP thus found itself in a situation where the only way it could avoid a defeat over this measure—which it had initiated to avoid a mass mobilisation—was *through a mass mobilisation*. Thus in every union an intensive debate was opened up on the question and a vote taken on the alternatives, while Intersindical mobilised one of the largest demonstrations in Portuguese history in order to back up the demand for unity.

As a result unity now appears to the Portuguese workers neither as a benevolent gift from the MFA nor as a prize won by the skillful politicians of the PCP, but as a conquest of the mass movement. Nor will it have escaped their attention that if such methods can succeed over this issue they can also be used to determine other aspects of Government policy. This is a lesson which the PCP has been frantically trying to withhold from the mass movement ever since the victory of 28 September.

The PCP's overall political strategy has done much to get it into another dangerous position. Throughout the whole period from 25 April until the trade union debate blew up in its hands the PCP has doggedly tailed behind the MFA. During the whole period of the first Provisional Government the PCP did no more than repeat, often word-for-word, in its own statements, official Government pronouncements. Even in the crisis leading up to 28 September, it insisted on working silently inside the Government until the last minute—and even then chose to act in the name of its front group, the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP). The PCP did not breathe a word of criticism against Spínola until *after* the MFA had broken with him.

As a result the Party has burdened itself with an abysmally low 'political profile'. This is more than just the usual dilemma of 'popular front' type politics—that a Party caught up within a capitalist Government cannot fight to implement the sort of forthright anti-capitalist measures that can offer substantial and convincing solutions to the capitalist crisis. Even in reformist terms the PCP has tripped itself up. For in its attempt to acquire for itself the mantle of the MFA it lost a clear identity in the eyes of a big section of the masses.

This goes a long way towards explaining the contradiction between the influence which the PCP enjoys over the mass movement and the poor vote which it is expected to secure in the elections (10-15% of the poll, compared with up to 40% for the PSP, and an almost certain majority for the PSP and PPD combined). It is also the reason why the PCP, in contrast to the PSP's advocacy of 'civilianisation' of politics, has been in favour of a continued political presence of the MFA in the Constituent Assembly and the subsequent political structures. Despite the agreement of certain sections of the MFA left-wing, the MFA as a whole—once more reflecting their liberal democratic outlook—rejected any such proposal.

There is no doubt that the bourgeoisie still have several important factors operating in their favour: the political heterogeneity of the MFA, the relative immaturity of the Portuguese working class, and the absence of a revolutionary working class leadership. But their room for manoeuvre is still very slim.

The present economic conjuncture in the country is defined by the generalised recession of the world capitalist economy, accentuated by the particular structure of the Portuguese economy (in particular its dependence on foreign investment, multi-national enterprise, and the flow of migrant workers to Western Europe), and the economic impact of the loss of the African colonies. The deterioration of the economic situation means that the bourgeoisie have a strictly limited ability to make material concessions: and this in the context

of virtually non-existent social welfare facilities. At the same time the economic situation provides a constant stimulus to working class discontent, centring around the twin axes of inflation and (even more acute at the moment) redundancies and unemployment.

On the political level the bourgeoisie's situation is even more desperate. Virtually continuous mass mobilisation is creating the conditions in which the Portuguese working class can rapidly throw off its backwardness and begin to struggle in a more class conscious, and coordinated way. Increasingly the PCP, instead of operating as an effective restraining force on the mass struggle is finding itself forced by the level of the mass struggle to take—greatly against its will—measures that actually extend and perpetuate the mass mobilisation. (There is not only the example of 28 September. In early February the Lisbon District Committee of the Communist Party organised a workers' conference of delegates from factory committees across the country. The leader of the PCP, Alvaro Cunhal, used this occasion to inaugurate the verbal 'left turn' of the PCP, proclaiming in his summary speech that 'The Portuguese proletariat is ready for socialism'. While the conference was highly bureaucratically orchestrated by the PCP, and instead of producing clear initiatives for the mass movement continued to stress reliance on the Government and the MFA as the way forward, there is no doubt that such moves have a dynamic of their own which the PCP will not be able to control as the political and economic crisis mounts.)

Moreover the political mobilisation is threatening to have an impact on social layers that have recently been unaffected, and among whom the bourgeois parties hope to build their mass base. At the beginning of February the first land seizures by tenant farmers in the south took announced measures to takeover some large estates for the benefit of small cultivators.

Meanwhile in the north—a centre of small independent peasants and clerical reaction—the MFA has been trying to do a job which the PCP could not. The MFA's 'cultural dynamisation' programme, largely under the control of the left-wing of the movement, has moved military units into northern villages to hold mass meetings and discuss the nature of the 25 April coup and the programme of the MFA. In many cases the MFA teams have been at pains to stress that 'anti-communism is a tool of fascism', and have been able to organise these meetings only in the face of violent opposition from local clergy and political bosses.





AFTER THE COUP — Soldiers round up an agent of Caetano's secret police (the PIDE) His bloodied face shows the crowds got to him first.

Under these circumstances the bourgeoisie must make its move as rapidly as possible —but there is no immediate way forward for them. The April elections represent an opening —but they will not provide the means of reorganise the country's political structure and create a new focus of political authority on which the bourgeoisie can depend. The present arrangements afford no opportunity for that until the second round of elections in October —and the present pace of events hardly makes that a satisfactory prospect.

However, the April elections will give the bourgeoisie —if things go as expected— a considerably strengthened ideological position. We can therefore expect to see the present campaign of violent propaganda about the Portuguese political situation grow into a positive crescendo, with warnings about the danger of civil war, a communist take-over, and the imposition of a left-wing dictatorship, flying thick and fast.

The aim of such a campaign will be to confuse and divide the mass movement in order to impede its progress, to exploit the political contradictions within the MFA, in order to prevent the Government taking any anti-capitalist measures, and to frighten the PCP away from any flirtation with left damagogy that could get out of control.

This campaign will be international in scope, attempting to bring to bear on the Portuguese situation the entire weight of the international capitalist class. This too has already began. The first move was the pronouncements of the Tory's 'fraternal' delegates to the conference of the right-wing Social Democratic Centre in Porto, which was broken up by anti-fascist demonstrators. This was quickly followed by the statement of Belgium's Foreign Minister, Ranate van Elsdene, that Portugal could not be admitted to the EEC until it was a 'genuine democracy', adding that 'We would not want anything to do with a country that substituted a left-wing dictatorship for a right-wing one.'

This has recently been followed by reports from the Portuguese national bank that a number of European countries are insisting on payment in advance for all exports destined for Portugal.

Given the dependence of the Portuguese economy on international finance, the widespread acceptance of the political goal of gaining admission to the EEC, and the sensitivity of political circles (not least of all the MFA itself) to 'world democratic opinion', this international campaign could be even more decisive than the domestic one.

In a recent number of the French newsmagazine *L'Express* Jean-Francois Revel sounds the tocsin for the European bourgeoisie. Warning of the dangers of the 'Portuguese cocktail' ('one-third Chile, one third Peru, one third Czechoslovakia') he urges prompt and urgent action by the European ruling class: 'To ward off this danger immediate and total European economic solidarity must be organised to support Portugal... a genuine Marshall Plan of the European Economic Community for the development of a democratic Portugal, which could, at the same time, integrate itself into this Community. A little political imagination, in this case relatively simple, is needed to save this small neighbour of 10 million inhabitants—and many things in Europe with it.'

If this combination of economic blackmail and economic bait fails to tip the balance, then the ruling classes of the capitalist world will have to set in motion more brutal methods. The CIA are certainly busy setting up future operations in the country, and NATO will undoubtedly be used to groom the more reactionary sectors of the armed forces. But in the long run, if the Portuguese masses should still prove intractable, the possibility of more overt military intervention cannot be ruled out. (After all, NATO would have the precedent of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czech-


oslovakia to fall back on, and there are reports that Ford and Brezhnev agreed during their November meeting in the Soviet Union that Portugal would remain in the 'western sphere of influence'.)

In the course of the great events that lie ahead in Portugal the forces of the revolutionary left face an immense task. They must propel forward the organisation of the working class towards the creation of an alternate power that can contest the claim of the bourgeois state and its institutions to be the 'democratic expression' of the Portuguese masses. And they must strive to implant the mass movement directly into the armed forces—going beyond the elitist and contradictory ties established by the MFA through the organisation of the ranks of the armed forces, and the integration of their representative organs into the mass organisations of the working class.

In such a task they will require every assistance possible. In particular the revolutionary and workers movements in Europe must maintain a constant vigil against the manoeuvres of the international bourgeoisie, and be continually prepared to mobilise against them. It is only through the preparation and organisation of such solidarity that we can prevent the planting of the seeds of Chile in the soil of Europe.



The Portuguese section of the Fourth International

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◦REVIEW ARTICLE◦

Fred Halliday's new book is the most important marxist contribution to the study of the class struggle in the Arabian Peninsula yet to be published. Its greatest asset is that the author is writing about a subject he has thoroughly assimilated. The wealth of information and perceptive analysis that the book contains will undoubtedly contribute to the work of Arab revolutionaries in the area. However, rather than dwell on its obvious merits, it is important to focus on what is, in our opinion, a structural weakness of the whole book.

Do the Arab people, scattered as they are in twenty-odd states, each with its own particular class structure, constitute a nation? This question has haunted the Arab left for almost half a century. And now we notice it has returned to haunt Halliday's book.

At first glance it might seem a little odd to readers who have spent their time pouring over the fascinating details of the revolutionary developments in the Yemen, Dhofar, Oman and the rest of the Gulf, that such a criticism should even be raised. After all, the entire question occupies less than one page out of a total of 527! In spite of this we shall argue that the book as a whole has been conceived and organised on the basis of the erroneous conclusions of this one page. Let us review the author's analysis: 'It is ahistorical to argue that imperialism simply created the divisions between the Middle Eastern countries . . . the differences themselves pre-existed imperialism. They are now partially independent of imperialism; and their autonomy is embodied in the class interests of the regimes in different countries . . .' (page 20). A little later on in a footnote the author says: 'Nations do not exist in an abstract form but only [?] when a unified [?] ruling class bring them [??] into existence. In this way an Arab nation could be established through a future unification movement [surely this is circular reasoning?], it does not exist in a concrete sense at the moment' (page 30). Finally, in concluding, the author says: 'While the Arab world is divided into distinct states, there exists among all classes consciousness of a common Arab identity and a desire for unity' (page 20).

There are a number of problems in this analysis. A national all-Arab consciousness is indissolubly bound up with the objective socio-economic processes that are involved in the formation of an Arab

Arabia without Sultans

Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*,
Penguin Books, £1.00



nation. Either this is the case, or this 'consciousness' is a temporary delusion of the Arab masses. But the author has cogently demonstrated throughout the book that in the case of each separate 'piece' of the peninsula (Saudi Arabia, the two Yemens, Dhofar . . .) a nationalist all-Arab consciousness is a continuously operating historical force that, for the last decade at least, has moulded and shaped the class struggle in the whole region. The history of the South Yemeni NLF or the Dhofari DLP, and the forever hovering general influence of the Movement of Arab Nationalists (MAN) are all examples that underline the fact that something more than a mere 'consciousness' of a 'desire for unity' is at work. But what is this something? We would argue that it is the process of imperialist penetration itself and the forced—although limited—extension of capitalist relations of production throughout the peninsula—beginning in the coastal areas—that provided the objective basis for the growth of an Arab nationalism as opposed to say a Yemeni or Dhofari nationalism. This is not to say that particularist or tribal forms of consciousness did not exist. On the contrary, as Halliday himself points out, the spread of Arab nationalism was interwoven into a hard and bitter struggle against the remnants of various tribal formations (notably in the Yemeni civil war and the various tribal alliances with the British). The interesting point, however, is not that these struggles took place, but that on the whole Arab nationalism came out on top.

Undoubtedly there does not exist a unified ruling class in the Arab world. But just how devastating is this as an argument against the existence of an Arab nation?

Capitalism penetrated the Middle East in different ways and at different times. Thus, for example, Egypt was transformed into a cotton-producing satellite of British imperialism much earlier than Saudi Arabia was transformed into an oil-producing goldmine for American imperialism. This process of uneven and combined development fragmented the emergence of Arab landowning, comprador and bourgeois classes *creating objectively conflicting interests between them*. In this situation the unsolved tasks of the Arab nation fall squarely on the shoulders of the organisations of the Arab proletariat and peasantry. Permanent revolution in this sense is completely confirmed in the cases of Dhofar and South Yemen, where revolutionary and socialist organisations (such as PFLOAG) emerged out of an Arab nationalist one (the DLF) in the course of a long struggle against imperialism and Arab nationalism.

Finally, is it contradictory to argue that 'imperialism creates divisions between Middle Eastern countries' at the same time as it creates objectively the basis for the existence of a single Arab nation? Yes, there is a contradiction. But the point is that it is buried in reality and not in our heads.

The question of an Arab nation is far too complicated to be resolved in one book review. Our argument has not 'proved' its existence. Nevertheless we have shown that the author has not demonstrated its nonexistence either.

Let us now bring this discussion to bear on the major portion of the book. Two important structural flaws flow from the author's incorrect starting point.

First, the class struggle in the different Arab states gets treated as a series of

temporarily linked case studies, instead of as different aspects of the same phenomenon. Thus the most important lessons of the Arab revolution, which are buried not in each case study but in their interrelation, get passed over. The 'external' influences of, for example, the Egyptian revolution of 1952, the 1956 Suez invasion, the Egyptian-Syrian unity (1958-61) and the 1967 war on the different regimes in the peninsula, are introduced separately as influential factors in the analysis, rather than *integral components of the same class struggle* occurring in some other part of the Arab world. But, each time this is done it only begs the question: why the decisive influence of these 'external' factors? Why did the 1967 defeat of the Arab armies by Zionism have such a traumatic effect on the DLF in Dhofar for example? What are the objective interrelations of the Arab regimes that give rise to these political and organisational effects?

Second, the term 'anti-imperialist' tends to get grossly misused. It is incorrect to lump together under a single 'anti-imperialist' umbrella, organisations like PFLOAG and the South Yemeni NLF on the one hand, and the Nasserite regime and movement and the Iraqi Baathists on the other. Anti-imperialism, from a marxist point of view, is a purely descriptive category and not an analytical one. Hence whenever these two functions of description and analysis are either isolated from or dissolved into each other—as they frequently are in the book—a very fundamental distinction is blotted out between the objective dynamic of a movement and the character of its leadership. Neither the Nasserite regime nor the Iraqi Baathists have ever developed fundamental differences with imperialism, although they may very well have developed some tactical ones. In fact it is even more absurd to call the Iraqi regime anti-imperialist today than it was to call Nasser's regime anti-imperialist yesterday, because the Iraqi Baathists, unlike Nasser, have historically never been isolated from any major imperialist power (like Nasser was in 1956). Britain has always been, and still is, the major imperialist investor and exporter of commodities into and out of Iraq. Furthermore, there is some evidence to indicate that British imperialism had a hand in the 1963 coup which first brought the Baathists to power. Essentially the Nasserite and Baathist regimes are state capitalist formations. It just does not make sense to characterise them as 'anti-imperialist'. On the other hand, PFLOAG and the NLF are anti-imperialist in a qualitatively different meaning of the term. They have consciously identified themselves with the historical interests of

different classes of Arabs—the Arab working class and poor peasantry.

The dilemma in which Halliday has entangled himself is the product of his *need to find a common denominator for the struggle across the whole peninsula while rejecting the fact that the Arab world is a single artificially divided nation*. 'Anti-imperialism' is merely a label that is being used to gloss over the uncomfortable fact that the class struggle in the Arab world spills over from one state to the next.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that this critique in no way tries to

diminish the important merits of *Arabia Without Sultans*. Rather, what we have been trying to do is to argue that the source of the book's greatest strengths—the fact that the author has assimilated the class struggle in the Arab world—is also the source of its greatest weakness. For in our opinion the author has simultaneously assimilated the theoretical mistakes of the post-1967 generation of Arab revolutionaries. In this sense the debate is not academic, but intimately related to the programme and strategy of the Arab socialist revolution.

S. Jaafar

The Workers and Farmers' Government

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

The Workers and Farmers Government
by Joseph Hansen



Michel Pablo and others, *The Workers and Farmers' Government*, SWP Education for Socialists Series, 42p.

This publication of the Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party is one of the best of their 'Education for Socialists' series. In particular, it reprints important documents of the Communist International and contains a very influential examination by Michel Pablo (no less!) of the historical use of the 'workers government' slogan. Because this article will be the high point of the collection for most readers, it is on the strengths and weaknesses of Pablo's analysis that this review concentrates.

The essential problem which Pablo attempts to come to grips with is the relation between propaganda for a full revolutionary programme, and the fact that revolutionaries also demand, in the present Communist Party and Socialist Party in France, etc. Pablo discusses how, in a whole series of concrete cases, Lenin and Trotsky related propaganda work concerning the tasks of a genuine *revolutionary* government to concrete agitation for Socialist, or Communist-Socialist Party governments.

As Pablo points out, the propaganda

aspect of the slogan 'workers government' poses no particular problem. It is simply the task of explanation which revolutionaries engage in whenever they advance their programme and whenever they put forward the line which a government really acting in the interests of the working class would undertake. In the words of the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International, this is a question of how 'we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the programme of the workers government'. In this sense, the slogan of 'workers government' is a propaganda one primarily fulfilling the task of educating the vanguard on the tasks which it is necessary to undertake in order to overthrow capitalism.

But simply explaining the tasks of a revolutionary government is not sufficient. The only people who could actually carry out such a programme are the revolutionaries themselves, and they are in general far too weak to pose themselves as a government. Simply outlining the tasks which a pure workers government would undertake cannot suffice to break *the masses* from the reformist organisations. Trotsky explained this

beautifully in a debate in the Belgian section of the Fourth International when the sectarian Vereecken attacked Trotsky's slogan of 'Let the Belgian Socialist Party take power'. Vereecken replies to this: No! It is necessary to demand a workers government and not simply a socialist government. We must not forget the Stalinist workers, and besides the plan is no good—it threatens us with inflation. I, Vereecken, I will propose a better plan. Is this serious? No, it is ridiculous. Vereecken sets himself outside of reality. He constructs in his imagination a united front that does not exist in Belgium. For this imaginary united front he proposes an imaginary programme, that is Vandervelde (Socialist leader) and Jacquemotte (CP leader) ought to fight together for the perfect plan dreamed up by Vereecken. In this way matters will be splendidly arranged' (*The Belgian Dispute*).

Pablo discusses how similarly idiotic views to that of Vereecken were dealt with by Lenin and Trotsky in Russia in 1917, and by Trotsky in Spain in 1931, and in France in 1936. Trotsky later codified his conclusions in the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International in the famous formula that 'Of all parties and organisation 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'. That this type of position was not merely conjunctural but corresponded to a profound question of the relation of forces within the working class was explained by Trotsky, in this particular case in relation to Belgium, as follows: 'The slogan of a Social Democratic government is calculated not on some exceptional conjuncture but on a more or less lengthy political period. We could give up this slogan only if the Social Democracy—before its coming to power—should begin to weaken, ceding its influence to a revolutionary party' (*Revisionism and Planning*).

It is this aspect of Lenin and Trotsky's ideas, the specific answers they gave in specific situations, and not their general propaganda for a revolutionary government, that Pablo expounds most clearly. In particular he correctly insists that the slogans for government must flow not from some arbitrary list of workers' organisations, or from some scheme drawn up in a revolutionary study, but from the real dynamic of the class struggle. In all this Pablo follows in the footsteps of Trotsky's polemic against Vereecken and others.

Unfortunately, it has not been the best aspects of Pablo's article which have been

the most influential. The really influential aspects, particularly for the Healyites, the 'Militant' and others, have been on those questions where Pablo quite clearly departs from the position of Lenin and Trotsky. In this sense Gerry Healy and Ted Grant, in particular, have been the truest of the 'Pabloites'.

The most obvious theoretical deviation of Pablo's article lies in its treatment of the demand 'break politically with the bourgeoisie'. The essence of Pablo's mistake is that he reduces the break with the bourgeoisie to the level of a break at the level of government, i.e. to a break from a coalition with bourgeois parties. Naturally, breaking from such a coalition with bourgeois parties is a partial realisation of the formula of 'break politically with the bourgeoisie', but it is only partial. Above all, in Lenin's words, 'politics is participation in the affairs of the state, directing the state, determining the forms, tasks and content of the state's activities'. The demand of 'break politically with the bourgeoisie' is above all a demand for the reformist parties to break with the representative of the bourgeoisie as a whole, to break with the bourgeois state.

Pablo unfortunately, by not grasping this, not only puts forward positions which are wrong, but actually advances positions which are explicitly condemned by Lenin. For example, Pablo says that: 'the formula "All power to the Soviets, Down with the capitalist ministers", meant in practice the demand for a Menshevik-Social Revolutionary Government'.

Here, however, is what Lenin had to say on this view: 'The slogan "Power to the Soviets", however, is very often, if not in most cases, taken quite incorrectly to mean a "Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority" [i.e. a Menshevik-SR government - JR]. We would like to go into more detail on this very false notion. A "Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority" means a change of individual ministers, with the entire old government apparatus left intact . . . "Power to the Soviets" . . . means removing this apparatus and substituting for it a new popular one, i.e. a truly democratic apparatus of Soviets.' (Lenin—*One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution*).

Certainly the transfer of power to the Soviets would have led to the creation of a Menshevik-SR government, but as Lenin points out, and Pablo omits, the real point is not who should form the government but what state that government is based on and responsible to.

'All Power to the Soviets' means the transfer of power to a new state apparatus. Pablo unfortunately falls into the classic

social democratic deviation of confusing the question of government and the question of the state. The formula 'Break politically with the bourgeoisie' addressed in 1917 to the reformists meant, as always, not only 'break with the bourgeois parties' but most fundamentally 'break with the bourgeois state'.

Despite this and other errors, Pablo's article remains valuable. Indeed, in many ways it is now more relevant in Western Europe than it has been for many years. The conditions of relative economic, social and political stability during the 1950s and 1960s meant that revolutionaries necessarily had to put almost all their emphasis on the propaganda aspects of governmental slogans. Not only were revolutionaries talking to a tiny vanguard, but the coming to office of reformist workers' parties in no way threw the bourgeois system into crisis—indeed, in many cases the bourgeoisie wanted such parties in office. It is absurd to suggest that the coming to office of the Labour Party in 1964, for example, fulfilled the criteria laid down by the Communist International of 'accelerating the process of the decomposition of the bourgeois regime'.

It is only a complete right-winger who could confuse this situation of the 50s and 60s with the following conditions in which Trotsky demanded as a central demand the call for a social-democratic government: 'The dynamic equilibrium of capitalism is gone; the equilibrium of the parliamentary system is cracking and crumbling. And finally—this is a link of the same chain—the conservative equilibrium of reformism, which is forced to denounce the bourgeois regime publicly in order to save it, is beginning to shake. Such a situation is replete with possibilities (together with dangers). We must not retract the slogan 'power to the social democracy', but, on the contrary, give this slogan an all-the-more-militant and sharp character'. (*Revisionism and Planning*).

Of course, in the 50s and 60s, revolutionaries still called for governments of

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the reformist workers' parties, but this could not be a central slogan. Now, however, a new situation is developing in capitalist Europe. In countries such as France, Italy and Portugal a process of general development of crisis in all bourgeois institutions is already well advanced. Britain will follow the same path tomorrow. Under these conditions there is no doubt that the formula of the Transitional Programme, the demand for the reformist parties to 'break politically with the bourgeoisie' in the full sense of that phrase, begins to acquire an entirely greater significance. The coming to office of the Union of the Left in France, or a similar development of the processes which are beginning to manifest themselves in the rest of Europe, would truly massively 'accelerate the process of decomposition of the bourgeois regime' and provide a tremendous spur to the upsurge of the masses.

Under the conditions of the coming years, Pablo's article, and the other material in this collection, will not provide all the answers, but, at the very least, it begins to pose questions which will become increasingly important. For that reason alone, this collection is necessary reading for all socialists.

John Ross.

REVIEWS

Charles Wegg-Prosser, *The Police and the Law*, Oyez Publishing Limited, £1.25p.

The Law Society has launched a series of volumes on the law under the misleading heading 'It's Your Law'. This is the second volume and purports to explain the 'powers and duties' of the police and 'their place in contemporary society'. It does the former very well, setting forth in ordinary language the wide powers available to the police, explaining powers of arrest, entry, search and seizure, the rights of prisoners and suspects, and the scope available to the police to control 'public order'. However, in the latter aim, the book falls down heavily, though it is no more than one would expect from a bourgeois lawyer and a member of the Council of the Law Society.

Wegg-Prosser deals briefly with the development of the police force, but fails to identify the main reason for the establishment, in the early nineteenth century, of an organised and regular police. The creation of the 'new police' coincided with the rise of capitalism at a time when the working class was beginning to organise as a class. It was also a time when the wage relationship was not yet fully developed. Thus, many workers were not completely tied to the money wage,

taking part of the product of their labour as wages. In the Port of London, for instance, dockers often worked without wages, relying instead on the proceeds of widespread and well organised plunder of cargoes. It was to deal with this situation that in 1798 the first modern police force was set up in Wapping, financed by West India Merchants. Not only did it concern itself with the detection and apprehension of offenders, it also regulated and controlled by licence the labour on the quayside.

This was also a period when people were flocking into the slums from the countryside and being forced into the factories. The reaction of the people to their conditions of impoverishment was expressed through such scenarios as the Pentridge Rising and Peterloo, and through such movements as Chartism and the development of the trade unions. It was essential for capital that these conflicts be resolved in their interests and it was on this premise that the modern police force came into being, a class force, with its ranks drawn mainly from the working class, having as its prime functions the regulation of the conditions of the class struggle and the enforcement of the wage relationship.

This still remains the function of police today, though of course the methods used change as the form of the class struggle changes. Recent years have witnessed some ominous developments in the police force as the crisis facing British capital has deepened. The creation of the Special Patrol Group together with anti-picket squads and the formation of an intelligence unit to deal with industrial unrest, all reflect the heightening level of conflict that characterises the present epoch. Further developments have been the appearance of closer links with the armed forces, the most recent manifestations of this being seminars on police-army relations at Whitehall and the proliferation of combined police-army exercises at Heathrow Airport and elsewhere.

The police, through the medium of Sir Robert Mark, have also launched an attack on the right to trial by jury, for, in the words of Mark, '... the proportion of those acquittals relating to those whom experienced police officers believe to be guilty is too high to be acceptable'.

Wegg-Prosser fails to identify these relationships because he views the police as an independent and impartial body whose function is the maintenance of the Queen's peace and the enforcement of the 'rule of law'. He is unable to see that in a class society, law is class law and is the legal expression of the interests of the ruling class. It is therefore the rule of bourgeois law that the police enforce.

In its enforcement, the police enter

into the class struggle at the point of production only on relatively few occasions. The record of the police as strike breakers has been well documented in the past but the general role the police play in the community, ensuring that it functions in the best interests of capital at any particular time, is often ignored. Recent years, however, have witnessed some more spectacular examples of this (for capitalism) important function in the harassment of black people under the auspices of the 1971 Immigration Act and in the attacks that have been made on squatters.

It is because of the present nature of their role in the community that public relations is considered more important than previously and Wegg-Prosser devotes a complete chapter to the topic. The whole idea of public or community relations of course is to present a picture of the police as favourable as possible to the police, designed to increase public confidence in them, thus making their task easier. This necessarily means a masking of the real function of the police in society. Wegg-Prosser concludes his chapter on police relations with the public by advocating that '... instructions on the duties and functions of the police, and their need for help from the ordinary citizen, should be included in the curriculum of our schools'. Perish the thought.

If you wish to know that there are over 100 offences where an arrest may take place without there being a warrant in existence; that entry under a search warrant is provided for by over 50 Acts of Parliament; the rules that should govern interrogation of suspects; the principles upon which the police are entitled to seize and detain property—then the book is worth reading. But do not expect to find a cogent and clear analysis of the function of the police in a capitalist society, it is not there.

Brian Rose-Smith

Edited by Chris Searle, *Elders*, Reality Press Poems, 30p.

In contemporary capitalist society, the old are one of the most oppressed and alienated sections of the working-class. At least in previous class-societies, the elderly often had some structure of the 'extended family' type around them, which meant they were looked after in their latter years by their kith and kin or the immediate community. However, within the framework of the nuclear family, their position has deteriorated rapidly, especially given the additional oppressive factors which hit the old hardest—rising inflation and the break-up of local, stable communities by re-development projects, etc.

The main functions within the econo-

my of men and women in our society, are, for the man, to work, to produce surplus-value for his bosses by his labour, and, for the woman, to re-produce the means of reproduction—in other words to bring up more children within the home to join the labour force. Once these functions are over, once people are too old to do either, then as far as capitalism is concerned they are useless. Flowing from this, the state has no interest in caring for their needs adequately (they are no longer profitable or potentially profitable) and they themselves in turn have no economic weight to fight for a better standard of living. Given all this, we can understand why their social situation is so desperate.

Chris Searle has compiled this short anthology of poems (with some evocative black and white photos) written by these human beings thrown on the scrap-heap of our society. What comes over vividly from the collection is the sharp awareness by many of the writers of the oppressive social relationships which determine their lives. There's the woman whose whole week, her whole life, is defined by the cycle of washing, drying and ironing her clothes. There is the woman whose extreme loneliness has erected the barrier of 'me' and 'they' between her and everyone else in the world—for a concrete exposure of what Marx meant by alienation between man and man, read this poem. And there is the poem by the man who suddenly realises that social benefits, etc. are not the re-distribution of wealth but simply the re-circulation of the working class's share of it.

This collection exhibits a fragmented, partial but extremely moving picture of how the old, because of their oppression, see the world around them, and their position in it. It is a condemnation of the present—a collection which cries out for remedies which only socialism can begin to offer. Pensioners will obviously not be in the front ranks of the harricades, neither will their social weight be decisive in any revolution. Nevertheless the working-class as one of its revolutionary tasks must surely offer them a programme which gives them, and the old of the future, some hope of escaping from the degradation and misery into which capitalist society plunges them.

Lastly, in case one might think that no political lessons can be learnt from the old, one poem is worth quoting in full, for those who still have doubts about the slogan 'No platform for fascists'. It's called *October 1936* by Milly Harris:

*We stood at Gardiner's corner,
We stood and watched the crowds,
We stood at Gardiner's corner,
Firm, solid, voices loud.*

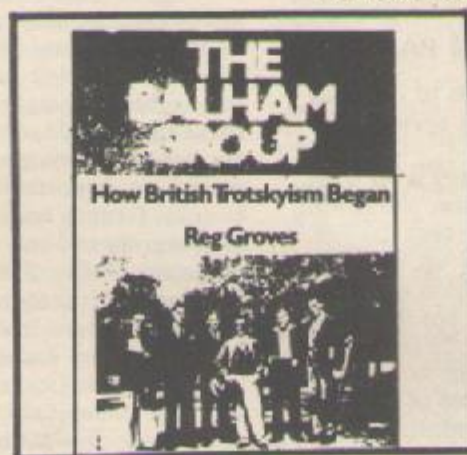
*Came the marching of the blackshirts,
Came the pounding of their feet,
Came the sound of ruffians marching
Where the five roads meet.*

*We thought of many refugees
fleeing from the fascist hordes,
The maimed, the sick,
the young, the old,
Those who had fought the fascist lords.*

*So we stopped them there at Gardiner's,
We fought and won our way.
We fought the baton charges,
No fascist passed that day!*

The book is available from Centreprise, 34 Dalston Lane, London E8, and all the profits will go to the London Trade Union and Joint Old Age Pensioners Committee.

Carl Gardner



Reg Groves, *The Balham Group: How British Trotskyism Began*, Pluto Press, hardback £1.80, paperback 75p.

When the definitive history of British Trotskyism comes to be written—a long overdue task—this little book by Reg Groves will provide valuable source material. It records the founding of the first Trotskyist organisation in Britain and provides information which it is difficult to find elsewhere.

In May 1932 a handful of members of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) published, anonymously, a duplicated journal *The Communist*, most of it devoted to Trotsky's 'Germany—The Key to the International Situation'. The very fact that the publishers did not dare to publish their names reflected the situation which had developed in the Communist International and in its British section with the rise of Stalinism. Gone were the days of free discussion and critical assessment of policies which were characteristic of the Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky. In its place was policy making from above, bureaucratically imposed. To oppose was to invite expulsion.

The Balham Group, as the early Trotskyists grouped round Reg Groves came to be known, fought Stalinism on

principled grounds, attacking the ultra-leftist Third Period, the rejection of the Leninist tactic of the United Front, and the sectarianism which proclaimed social-democracy a greater danger to the working class than fascism. (This at a time when Germany was on the very brink of the fascist avalanche which was to create such havoc in the European labour movement for years to come and imperilled the very existence of the Soviet Union itself). Trotsky's desperate efforts from his Prinkipo exile to sound the tocsin and to steer the Comintern back on the road of Leninism not only went unheeded but were violently denounced as 'Left Social-Fascism'.

In 1935, after Hitler's victory, the Stalinised Comintern swung from the ultra-leftist denunciation of the Leninist United Front to the opportunist class-collaborationist policy of the Popular Front. Principled Communist opposition to imperialist war gave way to opportunist manoeuvres with petty-bourgeois pacifism. It was for their fight against the fake Amsterdam World Congress for Peace that Groves and his comrades were expelled from the CPGB.

It will be difficult for younger members of our movement to imagine the difficulties involved in this open breach with the Party. These comrades had been deeply involved in Party activities. The Communist Party was the party of Lenin and Trotsky; the Soviet Union was the fatherland of all the toilers. A break with the Party meant ostracism from life-long comrades and isolation from the mainstream of working class politics. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Balham Group hesitated before finally throwing in their lot with the Left Opposition.

Today, when Groves has joined the ranks of the International Socialists, he tries to justify this hesitation retrospectively, as if even then he had doubts about the nature of the Soviet Union and Bolshevism. He writes: 'Our doubts were, if not dispelled, at least held in limbo by our respect for Trotsky's brilliant mind, experience and revolutionary integrity. He argued forcefully . . . that the Russian state . . . remained a workers' state, temporarily off course because of wrong leadership and policies. It did not convince us deep down in our troubled and uneasy consciences . . .'

One would search in vain through the writings of the members of the Balham Group at the time for any such expression of doubt, as the very valuable collection of documents of the period which the booklet contains will verify. It is only with his belated conversion to 'state capitalism' that he can now equate Bolshevism (in its Trotskyist form) with Stalinism and write that 'We were still in

the same psychological sphere as the people with whom we were in conflict'.

Groves, of course, broke organisationally with the Trotskyist movement many years ago. By 1935 he was well entrenched in the Labour Party, a parliamentary candidate and an active leader in Stafford Cripps' Socialist League, in which role he was particularly hostile to the Trotskyists who entered the Labour Party and the Labour League of Youth as an organised tendency in that year. But his early contribution to our movement and that of the small band of comrades round him will be remembered and valued long after his subsequent journey away from Trotskyism is forgotten.

A few comments should, perhaps, be added on the review of Groves' book published in *Workers' Press*, 15 June 1974. While much of Jack Gale's political criticism of Groves' present-day role and retrospective renegacy is correct, the language in which it is couched is reminiscent of that used against oppositionists by 'Third Period' Stalinists. This is, perhaps, no accident. For, while Groves, Wicks, Purkiss, Sara, Dewar and the rest fought this 'Third Period' madness, the present leader of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) remained a loyal member of the CPGB throughout this whole period and only broke with Stalinism when it swung from ultra-leftism to

popular frontism.

Perhaps it is significant that when an international commission came to Britain in 1938 to unite the various Trotskyist groups prior to the Founding Congress, only two groups refused to enter the unified British Section of the Fourth International—that led by Groves and the Workers' International League in which Healy of the WRP and Ted Grant of the 'Militant' current were prominent leaders. Above all, this reflects the insularity of that tradition of 'British Trotskyism' which pays lip service to proletarian internationalism but abjures it in practice.

C. van Gelderen

Editorial (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2).

pone but not avert the crisis which threatens to bring his Government down and tear the Labour Party apart internally.

But the crisis of left-wing social democracy is far from reducible to its being out-manoeuvred by Wilson, and it will continue irrespective of its fortunes in the present Cabinet. As the post-war 'consensus' begins to break up, the left, whether in the Cabinet or leading the opposition to Wilson in the ranks of the Party and the unions, will not find itself stuck for issues on which to pass resolutions. In fact it will continue to play a leading role in the labour movement. But because of this front-seat role, and because of the level and political range of the struggle on the industrial field, it will find its ideological and strategic formulas being repeatedly put to the test. For hundreds of thousands of politically organised and conscious workers, left social democracy symbolises a gradual transition to socialism through Parliament. Yet working class opposition to Labour's policies expresses itself increasingly via industrial action, as we have seen in the health service, over unemployment, and over Chile (an issue which in itself highlights the bankruptcy of gradualism and reformism). These struggles are *extra-parliamentary*, yet they often compel the support of left social-democratic leaders whose allegiance to Parliamentary legality is unshakeable. The left cannot help but be buffeted about by the dilemma: should the leaders of the working class base themselves on Parliament ('law and order') or on the extra-parliamentary struggle of the masses? Left social democracy affirms the former, yet it will be political currents to their left who will benefit politically from their dilemma.

BOURGEOIS COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

The fabric of the bourgeois political order will continue to decompose under the interlocking forces we have sketched out here. But there can be no room for any easy optimism about the outcome of the process. For this decomposition has contradictory implications. As long as the working class remains politically dominated by leaders who are reformist and class-collaborationist, the bourgeoisie will be able to put together at least some of the elements for a counter-offensive.

The political weaknesses of the workers' movement are being forcefully displayed, not only on the industrial field—where sectional trade union struggle and traditional reliance exclusively on annual wage claims against inflation are all too apparent—but on the most basic issues being debated in the parliamentary arena. The way in which the left social-democrats and the CP have taken up the quest-

ion of the EEC does not augur well for either the outcome of the referendum, or indeed for the political future as a whole. For the left have campaigned against the EEC on a thoroughly nationalist basis. This has made it possible for them to form alliances between the labour movement and all manner of bourgeois and reactionary forces. It has also proved an opportunity to praise Parliament to the skies, thereby feeding bourgeois propaganda about the 'need to maintain law and order' and consolidating the parliamentary cretinism of the British working class. The revolutionary left has intervened to exclude Powell, the NF and other bourgeois forces from anti-EEC platforms in the labour movement, and has agitated against the EEC on an internationalist basis (for a 'United Socialist States of Europe') and has denounced Parliament in favour of a workers' democracy. But the weight of the revolutionary left is of course not yet strong enough to open up a breach in the chauvinist and parliamentarist ideology of the working class.

Chauvinism is so deep-rooted among British workers that it has been possible for British imperialism to carry on a war in Ireland for six years, without so much as a word of protest from the vast majority of workers' organisations. The Labour Government does not even have to apologise for its bipartisan agreement with the Tory Party, for the role of British troops in the Catholic ghettos, or for the intervention of the British bourgeois state in Ireland. The loyalists are increasingly able to tip the balance of forces in their own favour, and it may not be long before a British Labour Government restores this reactionary bloc to power. The consequences stemming from working class indifference to the fate of the nationalist minority in the north of Ireland will be serious indeed for every worker in Britain.

The bourgeoisie will be able to utilise these political weaknesses to move back onto the offensive against the working class. At the moment, there are two chief contenders for the leadership of the anti-working class forces: the new right-wing leaders of the Tory Party and Enoch Powell.

THATCHER'S TORIES

The bourgeoisie have by no means resolved the problem of formulating a new strategic policy following the defeat of Heath. That is why they do not make an immediate move to overthrow Labour. The Tory Party is still not able to give convincing guarantees of being able to take on the working class successfully. The absence of a viable strategy has produced a disarray among the Tories which was most sharply exposed in the October elections. A section of industrial capital switched their support to the Liberals, and in Scotland finance capital supported the Scottish Nationalists. In the north of Ireland, the Protestant popul-

ation are no longer the passive followers of British Toryism. Enoch Powell has broken from the Tory Party and roused its petty-bourgeois base against the EEC. Sections of the ex-leadership of the military, encouraged by the fact that the British army is fighting 'at home', came out in favour of extra-parliamentary 'citizens' defence organisations'. Finally, the Tories, having for four years abandoned the 'peaceful co-existence' policy with the unions, lost a substantial part of the one-third of working class votes needed to keep them in office.

The election of Margaret Thatcher to replace Ted Heath as Tory leader in no way solves the problem of Tory Party unity and orientation. She is a good figurehead for the Party in an election, and may even win some support from women voters. Following Sir Keith Joseph, she is even able to campaign vigorously on a 'morality and decency' platform. But 'morality' will not solve the decisive problem of how to smash the organised strength of the working class. On this issue she can only vacillate between a re-run of Heath's policy or a policy of allowing unemployment to mount. But in the present situation, either would almost certainly fail. Massive unemployment under the Tories would only do its demoralising work if the working class had been decisively defeated in a confrontation first — otherwise it would most likely have the *opposite* effect of leading to militant factory occupations. But it is just such a confrontation which Heath has shown the Tory Party in office to be incapable of surviving.

Meanwhile, there are bolder forces at work. Enoch Powell has consistently moved with the grain of all that is most backward and dangerous in the working class. Against the immediate interests of big capital he has fought against Britain's entry into the EEC on a chauvinist platform which the left of social-democracy cannot help but applaud. On the question of racism, similarly, he has demonstrated his capacity in the past to make deep inroads into the workers movement — gaining industrial support for his policies in 1968 and again over the Ugandan Asian affair in 1972. Powell's latest return is even more ominous, for this time he brings the reactionary Loyalist cohorts with him, urging them to play a more direct role in British politics.

POWELL

Powell's objective is to be the populist leader, the 'strong man', of a government which cuts across traditional party lines and which rests on a mass reactionary base. His strategy is to split the working class politically, along the lines of its deepest ideological weaknesses, as a means of creating the conditions to mobilise the state to smash it organisationally. This particular strategy for a strong state is far more potent than anything Margaret Thatcher can produce. For Powell is willing to cut across both the immediate need of the bourgeoisie to reorient to the EEC (which Thatcher is not), and across parties too (precisely in order to establish virtual 'rule by decree'). In addition Powell has the support of the fascists of the National Front, who will complement the work of such a Government by reactionary mass mobilisations and selective street terror against the left.

But the bourgeoisie will be unable to organise itself coherently around any of the available alternatives unless the strength of the workers' organisations and their capacity to respond to attacks is shattered in some decisive defeat. At the present time, there is no force capable of inflicting it on the working class. The prospects in the intermediate term are therefore for a continuation of explosive mass struggle and a generalised political crisis for the whole of the bourgeois political order, including the Labour Party.

A WORKERS' OFFENSIVE

But for the working class to take advantage of this political disarray and assemble the political instruments out of

the crisis for putting an end to bourgeois rule, requires much more than the flexing of its organisational muscle. Out of the upsurges which are inevitable in the next period, in which strike movements involving the whole of the working class are on the agenda, the working class must adopt the policies and forms of organisation which can undermine the bourgeois state and lay the basis for overthrowing it.

Consequently, the responsibility of the revolutionary left is very great indeed. It must constantly seek to unify its own forces along with the tens of thousands of militants who are breaking practically and ideologically with social democracy, to repeatedly intervene in the political crisis within the labour movement via a systematic united front policy. As against the traditional policy of relying exclusively on annual wage demands, and utilising industrial strength almost exclusively for trade union ends, it must promote within the unions a policy of fighting against all incomes policy under capitalism, of fighting for a sliding scale of wages, defence of the gains made under the welfare state, and for the unions to take up the demands of women workers and housewives. In the battles against unemployment, it must promote factory occupations and demands for nationalisation of companies creating redundancies. And it must vigorously take up the struggle against racism, chauvinism and dependence on parliament — in the immediate period within a *workers* united front against the EEC and within the growing movement for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

But within all these united fronts, from those on which only small forces within the labour movement are as yet mobilised to those involving the broadest masses, the decisive task of the revolutionary left is to promote the independent organisation of the working class — through strike committees, action committees, Councils of Action and other democratic forms of organisation — in order that as the political crisis matures, and as the working class upsurge throws up forms of organisation whose *objective* logic is to undermine the bourgeois state, there will be sufficient numbers of working class militants politically capable of leading the masses away from reformism and firmly on to the road of socialist revolution.



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INPRECOR (International Press Correspondence) is a fortnightly information and analytical journal published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. It is an international journal with editions in English, French, Spanish and German.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 1 year (25 issues): United States \$10 (seamail), \$16 (airmail).
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