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Sarah Bennet.

Correction to Mike Pearse's article, 'The Fourth International, the Permanent Revolution and South Africa', in 'Fourth Internationalist' No 39. The last sentence on page 19, which continues on page 20, should read:

"Working on this line, the ANC called a Congress of the People in 1955, which rejected the revolutionary demands of the South African masses embodied in the slogan 'One person, one vote' and instead sought an alliance with the imperialist United Party."

ANGLO IRISH ACCORD



The document signed by Margaret Thatcher and Garret Fitzgerald and misnamed the 'Anglo-Irish Accord', is the most significant joint political act by the British and Irish bourgeoisies since the signing of the Treaty nearly 65 years ago.

It does not alter in any way the fundamentals of that Treaty, which partitioned Ireland and has led to a "carnival of reaction" as predicted by Irish Marxist James Connolly, therefore it must be understood in that framework.

It is an attempt at putting up a common front against the revolutionary Republican Movement, which now has a mass base and has not been destroyed by years of civil war in the North. It recognizes the fact that a confrontation in the North could brim over into a total destabilisation of Ireland as a whole. It is nonetheless forced to stay within the boundaries of Partition and to try and give this a new 'gloss'. It cannot work without the forces of the British state remaining in Ireland. In these senses it is entirely reactionary.

Inch by inch the perpetual state of civil war in the North of Ireland is combining with economic collapse and political impasse among the bourgeois parties to produce intolerable pressures on the 'state' in the South. A collapse of the illusion of the 26

County 'state' would open a revolutionary situation immediately dragging in the British up to their ears. Such are the pressures which brought Thatcher and Fitzgerald to a common table.

TROOPS IN IRELAND

Tony Benn and the handful of Labour MPs who voted against the Accord were totally right. Fitzgerald and other bourgeois lackeys of British imperialism in Ireland may attempt to dress the Accord up in terms of future concessions from Westminster. But the authentic flavour of the deal lies in Tom King's outburst in Europe... 'partition forever', and in the recent sending of another battalion of troops into Ireland.

The meetings of Irish and British politicians and civil servants in a villa near Belfast Harbour are held entirely under the tutelage of Thatcher. In effect the Dublin representatives are being used as part of a complicated 'complaints procedure', for Catholics in the North. But there are no guarantees of results.

As for the judicial aspects of the Accord, the case of Dominic McGlinchey speaks volumes: sent as a human shuttlecock up and down Ireland, between juryless court and juryless court, until a conviction is

found. The judiciary of the South, in their vast majority, are not known for Republican sympathies. Indeed many of them are close friends of the British Embassy in Dublin.

The signing of this piece of diplomacy based on repression seems to have taken Thatcher out of the iron mould of Unionism. But appearances are deceptive. British workers should not underestimate how much pressure has been put on Westminster from Washington. The 'Anglo-Irish Accord' is a true child of the Geneva Talks process, in which US imperialism and the Kremlin are engaged in stabilising the world for reaction. Reagan wants a potentially revolutionary flashpoint removed from Western Europe. To achieve this US imperialism will no doubt come up with an economic aid scheme of some kind. Meanwhile Thatcher reinforces the RUC bunkers and sends in more troops. The unification of Ireland is definitely not part of the Accord.

DOMINATION BY BRITAIN

What is at stake is not the 'Unionism' of Thatcher or the 'Republicanism' of Fitzgerald. In the face of a collapse of the Partition system in Ireland these are both expendable as ideologies. What the two governments are seeking is a common bourgeois front against proletarian revolution. What is at stake is the real, material domination of Ireland by British capital and the real, material share in that which a section of the Irish bourgeoisie gets through taking part in maintaining the Partition system.

In giving his support to the 'Anglo-Irish Accord', in extending the bi-partisan agreement on Ireland to this deal, Neil Kinnock has proven once again, as he did during the Falklands-Malvinas War, that he is a loyal devotee of imperialism. So much for his quiet mumblings about the unity of Ireland. No real socialist can support this framework for increased repression of republicans, North and South, in Ireland.

END PARTITION

The just aspiration of the vast majority of the Irish people for a unified and independent nation is in line with the needs of working people on both these islands.

The 'Anglo-Irish Accord' is a bosses' deal, and not the agreement which is needed, that between the working people of both islands and their organisations, determined to put an end in common to imperialist domination and Partition.

By George White
10 January 1986.

LATIN AMERICAN DEBT CRISIS: WORKERS' CONFERENCE

The Latin American debt, that is, the amount of money owed by governments in South America to Western banks, is \$360 billion. Today it is a central issue around which the class struggle revolves in that region. The opening of a revolutionary situation across Latin America moreover makes the debt crisis a problem of truly global proportions.

First tremors were felt amongst Western bankers in 1982 when 22 different countries had to negotiate a rescheduling of their national debt. In the same year, some startling figures were made available to the US Congress. The loans made to Mexico by the top nine US banks represented 59.8% of their capital. Their loans to Brazil were equivalent to 54.2% of their capital. Their loans to all Latin American countries equalled 210% of the capital of the top nine banks. In short, a default by one or two of the main debtors in Latin America would bankrupt the US's financial institutions.

IMPERIALIST ECONOMICS

It is in this context that the Reagan administration's harassment of and incursions into Nicaragua can be explained. Take away the hype about a Soviet build-up in the Caribbean, or Managua being a refuge for IRA men, and it is clear - for reasons of imperialist economics - that the US government is desperate to prevent the spreading of the example of the Sandinista revolution and their refusal to honour all of the debts of the dictatorship they overthrew.

But what is the effect of these debts on the countries of Latin America themselves? There has been a substantial fall in real income for workers and peasants in most countries. In Mexico the standard of living has dropped 30% in three years. The subjugation of Chile to the 'free market' under the Pinochet dictatorship has produced poverty and unemployment for millions. In Brazil, despite massive industrialisation in the last ten years, famine on the regional scale is posed more and more frequently.

There is no way out of the crisis in the imperialist framework. "If the industrialised economies grow at a reasonable rate (say 3% a year)," suggested a Peruvian minister and IMF and World Bank official two years ago, "and if interest rates do not increase beyond mid-1983 levels and if a modicum of capital inflows can continue, then most of the major debtors could resume economic growth and service their external debt more or less comfortably by about 1986." So far none of these conditions have been met.

VICIOUS SPIRAL

Latin American economies are trapped in a vicious spiral, and pay in interest several times the value of their original debts. By the early 1980s, 75% of new debt undertaken was for servicing (ie, paying interest on) existing loans. This figure is continuing to rise.

Last July a workers' conference was held in Havana on the problem of the external debt in Latin America and the Caribbean. 330 trade unionists representing 197 organisations and 29 different countries were present. The conclusions of the conference included a number of important proposals around which the trade union movements in each country should campaign:

For the different governments to cancel or suspend the foreign debt.

For the debtor governments to form a common front with which to negotiate with the banks.

For a continental day of action against the foreign debt.

Despite some flaws in the Havana declaration, the conference was broadly very positive. Particularly significant was the representation of a growing movement of workers organisations, which are independent from the traditional outlooks of bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism. The contribution of Victor Cuadros, leader of the federation of Peruvian miners and metal-workers, illustrates this:

"The anti-imperialist struggle must be clear and defined, because imperialism does not accommodate itself to compromises which favour

the oppressed peoples. We the Peruvian miners consider that the only viable and effective political solution to the foreign debt is to cancel it and break with the IMF. That is the real starting point in the struggle for progress and the emancipation of Latin and Central American nations.

This response is a world away from the calls for 'peaceful coexistence' offered by the Kremlin, an injunction to continue the daily super-exploitation of Latin America. In their different ways the Communist Parties of the region have been totally committed to the projects of the bourgeoisie, which accept the IMF's terms and increase the oppression of the masses.

UNITED FRONTS

The position held by all classes in the oppressed countries of Latin America, including the national bourgeoisie - whose access to the world market is limited by imperialism - does not produce an automatic response. Only the working class has the economic organisation and social power to lead an alliance of the most oppressed against imperialist domination. It is precisely the massive steps forward being made by workers' organisations, such as the PT in Brazil, that it so problematic for the capitalist banks and their local agents.

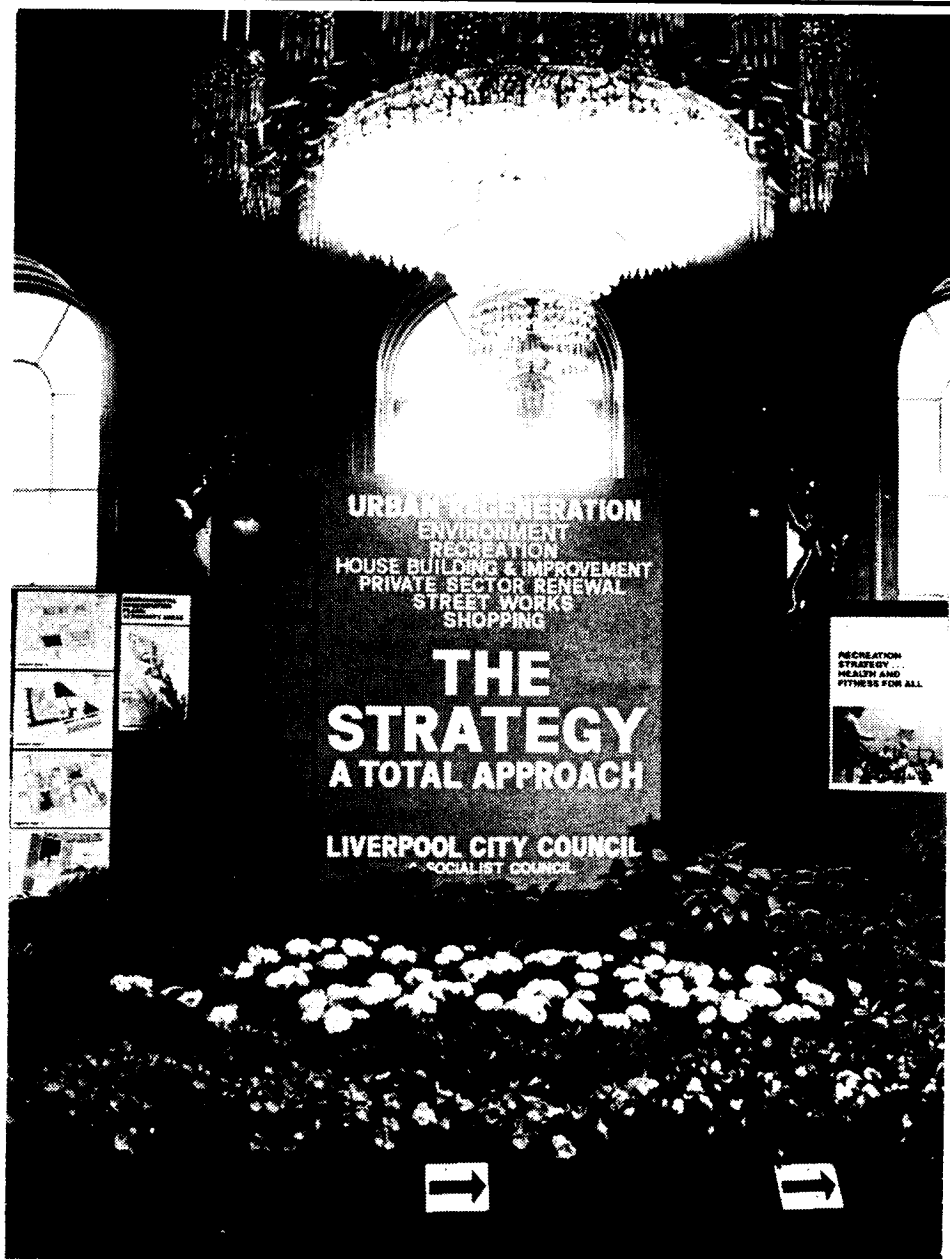
It is through the strengthening of such movements that genuine anti-imperialist united fronts will be constructed, with independent workers' parties at their head, but involving many different peasant and petty-bourgeois organisations. The growth of Workers Parties in Brazil and Peru and of strong independent trade union federations such as the Bolivian COB confirms Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution that it is the working class that mobilises and stands at the head of the oppressed masses in the fight for democratic and national demands - at the same time, in contradistinction to the Stalinist line of peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

"The objectives of the colonial revolution go beyond the bourgeois democratic framework. In fact this victory is incompatible with the domination of world imperialism... Only a form of Soviet administration can achieve the agrarian peasant revolution." (Theses. Fourth Congress of the Communist International)

In this sense the Havana Conference was an important step forward, not only because of the central problem of the debt for all Latin American countries, but also, because it helped the development of workers' organisations from different countries on a political line which is independent of Stalinism and the national bourgeoisie.

By Mike Pearse and
Juan Gonzales Mesa
December 1985.

Liverpool - the Militant and 'Municipal Socialism'



In the *Militant* of 29 November 1985, two pages were given over to a statement by the Editorial Board concerning the decisions taken by the Militant-led Liverpool City Council.

Unfortunately, the statement does not attempt to provide answers to the questions that are being asked by many in the labour movement; rather, a barrage of rhetoric is used as a substitute for analysis and lists of achievements used to cover up failings. It is our task as Marxists to analyse what happened in Liverpool and to draw the lessons from that fight. We can best start this by an analysis of that statement.

First of all, what was the meeting on Friday 22 November 1985 about? According to the *Militant*:

"The District Labour Party voted by 694 to 12 in favour of adopting a recommendation by the executive to implement a financial package to balance the city council's books.

"This followed a meeting earlier in the day of the joint shop stewards committee which voted by 250 to 30 to support the council's proposals. The local authority trade unions and the labour movement of Merseyside recognise, by this decision, that they had to accept an orderly retreat given

the monstrous campaign that had been waged against them."

Yet only a week before, in the editorial of *Militant* 22.11.85 it was stated that:

"Liverpool's struggle is now the real battle for the whole of the labour movement, as the miners was a year ago. A victory for the council, forcing the Tories to back down and provide the cash the council needs, will be a victory for every worker in Britain. It will signal the beginning of the end for this reactionary government."

FROM ATTACK TO RETREAT

What had occurred in that week to change a position of attempting to bring down the government into one of orderly retreat? It would seem to be the result of this 'monstrous campaign'. Admittedly the attacks of the bourgeoisie and its agents in the labour movement were particularly virulent, but that has been the case for the past year.

Apparently the vote at that meeting:

"...represents an endorsement of the Labour Council's decision to balance the books by adopting a package based on capitalisation and new loans in order to make up for the cash which the Tory government stole from the city and failed to make available this year."

Above all it represented the fact that the workers of Liverpool were quite aware that they could not win this battle alone and that some form of compromise had to be achieved. It also represented the great doubts raised by the question of making 31,000 council workers redundant and other tactics of the Militant Tendency. We will try to cover all these problems.

REDUNDANCIES

Regarding the proposed redundancies, one of Militant's greatest mistakes:

"The Tories were prepared to punish a population of half a million people, by locking out 31,000 council workers, by imposing housing cuts and by depriving the old, the sick and young children of council care."

For the majority of workers it was the council, a Labour council, that was making its workforce redundant. The logic that it was better to sack 31,000 or so rather than 5000, is not sufficient. Making those workers redundant was still making the working class pay and it is decidedly unprincipled to accept no pay in support of his employer. The fact that it is a Labour council, even a Militant-led one, does not alter the fact that it is part of the apparatus of the state - the bourgeois state.

In the *Financial Times* of 7.11.85 a report read:

"Liverpool's District Labour Party

last night voted overwhelmingly approving any solution of the city's financial crisis that involves large rate increases (...) the resolution passed (...) said that Liverpool District Labour Party members 'reaffirmed their willingness to accept any package that protects jobs, services and programmes, that does not pass on government cuts through massive rate increases'.

Put in this way it is rather like saying 'either redundancies or rate rises'. The fact that Militant allowed itself to be caught in that position raises questions about its leadership.

But this was not all, it wanted some workers to work for nothing. Yet back in March 1985 (issue 742) on the question of working-on then being discussed in other Labour boroughs in the country, this was **Militant's** (correct) position:

"How can you possibly ask other workers to take solidarity action which would be crucial (if) the government is to be defeated, while you are still working? Without solidarity action the authority would be isolated and no 'action' (be it strike or otherwise) can stand still forever; then inevitably support would begin to crumble amongst the workforce."

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

This is not the only aspect of the Militant's Tactics which represent a 180° turn.

Further on we find this statement:

"The struggle in Liverpool forced the Tories to make concessions last year."

This statement is true, but it must be qualified. Last year the Tories were also faced with the historic struggle of the miners. This difference was already noted in the article by Nick Toms in issue 742 (29.3.85) where he says:

"There is however one crucial difference from last year. The Tories are no longer desperate to prevent a second front alongside the miners."

This was in line with the editorial of a previous issue (739 - 8.3.85):

"Labour councillors have to take a stand but they cannot defeat the Tories on their own. With the power of the state behind them, the government will not hesitate to use the law to crush their resistance. But no laws will be able to crush a mighty mass movement of council workers, tenants, parents and the whole trade union movement. Faced with just such a movement in Liverpool last year, Jenkin was forced to make a tactical retreat. This year he is out for revenge. He will only be stopped if he is faced by dozens of 'Liverpools' up and down the country (...) There must be national co-ordinated industrial action by all council workers the moment any Labour councillor is surcharged, or any Labour council suspended (...) the council workers can spearhead the biggest counter-attack against the Tories so far and prepare the way for their total defeat (...)"

So, back in March the point was made that Labour councils could not defeat the Tories on their own and that

national action had to be taken. Why this action had not been started twelve months before, when the miners strike was still strong, considering that the council workers could "spearhead the biggest counter-attack" is not spelled out - but eight months later after the collapse of the other Labour councils, the Militant were still saying that it was possible to defeat the government, a week before admitting defeat. That, comrades, is deceitful.

Here the question which is posed is whether Liverpool City Council could defeat the Government on its own? The position of the SLG is that Liverpool could not defeat the Tories on its own. This, as we have seen, was at one time the position of the Militant. Where then did the idea originate that Liverpool could win alone? This question has its answer in the unsound theory which characterises Militant.

RELATION TO STATE

Firstly, it has its roots in reformism - the theory of 'municipal socialism' - by which some left-reformists (such as Livingstone) have argued that it is possible to bring about lasting reform by using the local state machine. Indeed, reforms have been won but are of short duration: housing programmes in Liverpool and cheap fares in London are two sides of the same coin. The evident falsehood of such a theory has been proven within the last year - ratecapping, the surcharging of councillors, abolition of the metropolitan authorities and the threat of sending in commissioners - are all effective measures of controlling local government.

Why then does Militant, which claims to be Trotskyist, adopt in all but name such theories? The answer lies in its adaption to social democracy by which it ties itself to bourgeois parliamentary democracy and avoids posing the question at any time of a break with the bourgeoisie and its state. Due to the fact that Militant's position on the state in practice is not a Marxist

position (ie. the state as an instrument of class oppression) it conceives quite naturally the idea that an instrument of local government (the state apparatus at a local level) can somehow be autonomous of the State of which it forms an integral part and that it is possible to transform it - but into what? By its very nature, a local council is not a substitute for a soviet. The British Revolution will not be fought debating with capitalists in council chambers.

In the final analysis it is down to the class nature of the state and the need for the proletariat to build its own class organisations - and by this we do not mean the sham soviets that Militant call 'assemblies'.

UNITED FRONT

The statement continues:

"The Tories saw that Liverpool's success last year resulted in 20 Labour councils defying the government at the beginning of this year in refusing to set a rate. There is no doubt that if these 20 councils had stood together in a united front then the Tories would have had to back down."

The bourgeoisie admit as much. In the Financial Times of 3.12.85 an article states that:

"the government had to stand firm against 'blackmail' by Liverpool City Council because of dangers of similar action by other local authorities, Mr Kenneth Baker, the Environment Secretary told the Commons yesterday."

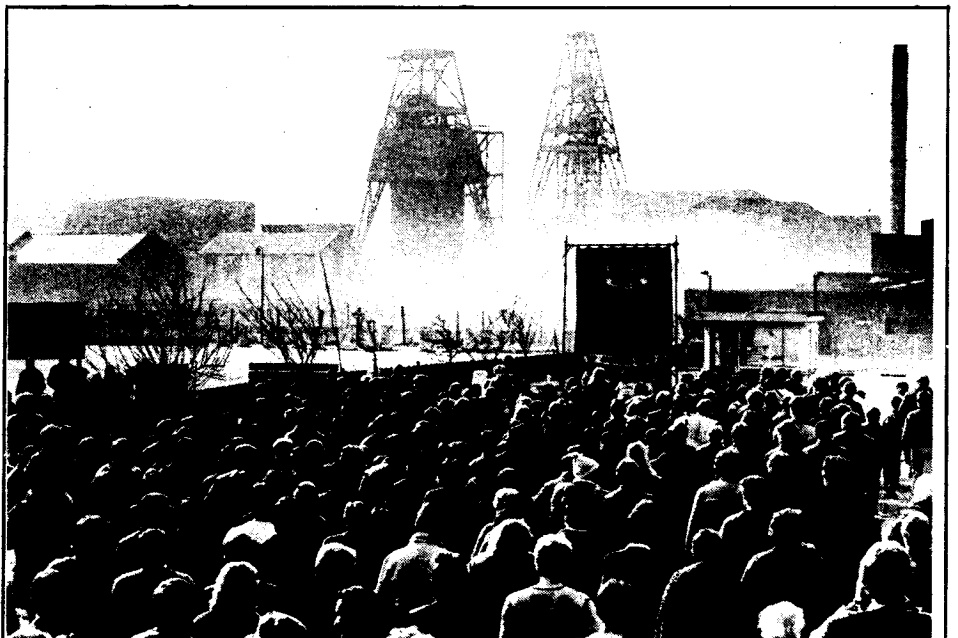
And the Militant are telling the truth when they say that:

"unfortunately, with the first whiff of grapeshot all these councils, with the exception of Liverpool and Lambeth, ran for cover."

But for them to conclude that:

"in spite of this, Liverpool could have achieved a victory again this year - if the resources of the labour and trade union movement had been swung behind their fight."

is nothing short of dishonest and irresponsible - once the other Labour



councils had collapsed, Liverpool was isolated - though better organised than the other councils, it could in no way stand up against the Government on its own. To pretend otherwise was to mislead the workers of Liverpool. This statement also implies that all that was needed was for the labour movement to swing behind Liverpool. Is that all? How was this to be achieved? The leaders of Militant are not so naive as to pretend this could come about without being organised, and the fact is that very little was organised.

SELF-ISOLATION

So let us look more closely at what Militant has done. Militant called a conference in support of Liverpool Council at a time when the miners' strike was still strong - and turned it into a Militant rally and fund raising operation. The conference could have been used to link up the miners' strike, Liverpool and other local authority workers and councillors. It was not.

Liverpool Council's fight could have been linked directly to that of the miners by organising mass pickets with council workers. This was not done. 'Left' leaders such as Ted Knight sculking in the shadows could have been approached, or put on the spot, rather than waiting until the July, one year later. This was not done.

So over 18 months ago that was the extent of the national campaign and nothing was organised since then.

What could have been achieved? Considerably more. Militant could have linked the miners and the local authority workers, they could have organised tours of Labour authorities by Liverpool workers building real links at grass roots level as well as building a united front with other Labour councils - not just one morning of talks with Lambeth by which time it was already too late.

It must be pointed out that Militant never seriously attempted to build a national campaign with any other section of the left, depending instead on its own propagandist organisation to fill the space that was there. Not surprisingly this was not enough.

Militant's historical inability to build united fronts is the problem of its sectarianism which has left it totally defenceless against the attacks of the right wing - and while correctly placing the blame on the treachery of the trade union and Labour leaders, it conveniently forgets to ask the question "How was this achieved?" The answer has to be that Militant allowed it to happen.

On the role played by the trade union and Labour leaders Militant says that it was:

"... unfortunately no different from the shameful role they played in undermining the struggle of the miners, of refusing to back the NGA, in withholding all-out backing for the struggle of the GCHQ workers ..."

Militant unfortunately omits to point out that its tactic of issuing redundancy notices played right into their hands.



What could be easier for those bureaucrats than to make a stand against the entire workforce being sacked, at a time when such tactics must have disorientated many of the workers.

ULTIMATISM

The same applies to the role played by Neil Kinnock; Militant says:

"Regrettably, Neil Kinnock sat on the fence during the miners strike. In the case of Liverpool's struggle, he has gone over to the side of the enemy."

Neil Kinnock may have sat on the fence, but there remains no doubt that one foot always remained firmly on the other side - his criticisms of the miners' leaders and his condemnation of pickets was a pretty clear indicator of the direction he had moved in. However, the whole political terrain in Britain has changed drastically due to the miners' strike. New alignments are taking place and individuals and organisations are moving rapidly under the pressures of the class struggle. The ruptures in the centrist organisations, the movement of erstwhile 'lefts' like Livingstone and Blunkett and the regroupment around the *Tribune* paper in Liverpool (Liverpool Labour Left) and nationally cannot be ignored. The

problem for Militant is, that by posing their political line as an ultimatum it is difficult to organise a united front against the right wing and the apparatus. This in turn lets yesterdays 'lefts' off the hook and allows them to rationalise what is in effect a move to the right. On the question of the Labour Left, this is what Militant has to say:

"Some of those who stand on the left of the Labour Party however, cannot be proud of their role either ... if Liverpool had been completely successful it would have raised questions about their role. This explains their ambivalence, and in some cases, outright opposition to Liverpool's stand."

This is another example of Militant's ultimatism. By posing it in this way it is a barrier to any form of united action, for if Liverpool were successful then it immediately raises the question of their role - some incentive to help Liverpool.

WITCH HUNT

Militant has ignored the threat of the witch hunt at its peril. With 34 expelled in the last two years and a further 44 facing expulsion (see issue 777) it is time they took the threat

more seriously. Of course the answer is not that of forming a 'party outside the Labour Party' with the SWP, but neither is it a question of expecting non-stop growth due to workers idealism. The suspension of Liverpool's DLP and the very real threat of expulsion of leading supporters like Mulhearn and Hatton are serious threats to the left and ultimately the working class. The bourgeoisie will attempt to punish the working class of Liverpool at any rate for following left wing leaders. The responsibility for organising these workers lies with the Militant - they have to make sure that the workers don't pay for Militant's mistakes.

STALINISM

In this context, the role of Stalinism must be thoroughly understood. Militant covers the role of Stalinism in the following dismissive manner:

"the most pernicious tactics of deliberate confusion, dust-blowing and outright lies, came from local supporters of the rapidly dwindling and misnamed 'Communist Party'. They have acted scandalously as a mouthpiece for right wing Labour, and even Tory leaders. If they had consciously set out to sabotage the struggle they could hardly have done better. Fortunately their influence has been marginalised. They have been totally discredited in the eyes of conscious working class fighters, and will play no significant part in the future struggles on Merseyside."

We would urge Militant to take more seriously the role of Stalinism in the labour movement, both locally and nationally.

The historic role of Stalinism as a counter-revolutionary force within the labour movement, corrupting and creating obstacles for the working class should not be ignored or underestimated. The 'rapidly dwindling .. Communist Party', though small, is still twice the size of Militant and its influence within the labour movement far outweighs its physical size as an organisation or organisations.

Representing as it does the interests of the bureaucracy on a world scale, its natural allies are the right wing bureaucrats in the Labour Party and trade unions. It is in keeping with its 'theoretical' position of the Popular Front, as espoused by Hobsbawm et al, that any movement claiming to be representing the working class and its interests, which puts on the agenda an independent Labour government, is straight away at odds with its 'broad alliances' of Labour, Liberal, Church and 'progressive Tories'. Militant, but more so the workers behind the Militant-led council are seen as a threat to this position of class collaboration - the equivalent in national terms to the 'peaceful coexistence' it proclaims internationally.

CLASS COLLABORATION

We repeat, Stalinism is a counter-revolutionary agency of the bourgeoisie within the workers movement, and its role is to police the unions so as to be able to act as a

brake to the process of the permanent mobilisation of the masses, and to subordinate the latter to the demands of class collaboration. The reason that this has to be spelled out is because the hand of Stalinism is linked closely to both the attacks in Liverpool and the witch hunt nationally, and while locally it can depend on the trade union leaders to carry out its tasks (the witch hunt in the unions nationally is not so advanced yet), at a national level it has the ear of Neil Kinnock - and he is only too willing to accept their advice and support. The facts speak for themselves - the CP orchestrated split in Liverpool Joint Shop Stewards Committee, the setting up of Liverpool Labour Left by Tribune, the main organising voice in the witch hunt, and a similar alignment on a national scale, the enquiry into Liverpool DLP.

Think again comrades, Stalinism has not been marginalised. For a while it drew back under pressure and kept a low profile, but it has re-emerged and is on the offensive - and its first target is Militant because Militant claims to be Trotskyist, thus revolutionary.

Unfortunately, Militant has isolated itself from the other lefts in the Labour Party and it is here that the first battles have to be fought as the right wing and the Stalinists attempt to bureaucratically 'purge' the party. Workers are not going to flood into the Labour Party because the Militant are being attacked, so Militant will have to work with those elements that are already there.

FINANCIAL PACKAGE

As regards the final package adopted by Liverpool City Council, Militant says:

"This package represents cuts - but far less than Stonefrost and the measures that the Tories, Liberals and, unfortunately, the Labour leaders were expecting to be implemented.

Liverpool's enemies are now claiming that this option was there all the time and jeeringly ask 'why wasn't this implemented before?'. They are maliciously alleging that it was only 'Trotskyists' lies and scaremongering' that prevented a settlement on these proposals long ago.

This is entirely false. No Marxist would deliberately court confusion and conceal an available solution that would avoid suffering and deprivation for working people - if it were available. But this new package has only become available because of partial concessions by big business because of the magnificent struggle of the Liverpool labour movement.

The £30 million loan from the banks was not available before."

There is a lot more in these lines than first meets the eye. Militant admits that the package represents cuts. This is true and is to be expected in any compromise. It was unlikely that any agreement would prevent some form of cuts taking place. The next two paragraphs are however considerably less clear. The question that is central to this part of the statement is 'was the option which has now been agreed upon available before?' The reply of the

Militant is 'No'. We say that is false.

In an article in the **Financial Times** on November 30th 1985 ('Liverpool rescue plan approved') we find the following statement:

"Under the agreement, negotiated months ago through Phillips and Drew, the stockbrokers, the banks will pay for the building of council houses."

It is also stated in this section that it is the struggle of the Liverpool labour movement "which has allowed this package to be arranged and that it somehow represents "concessions by big business". Let us examine what these concessions are.

CAPITALISATION

In the same FT article it states:

"The solution to Liverpool's financial crisis approved yesterday by the Labour-controlled city council will leave the city's capital resources severely depleted in two years time, Mr. Tony Byrne, the authority's Labour finance chairman, told a council meeting that the strategy depended on the return at the next general election of a Labour government which would increase the city's annual capital borrowing allocations."

So, as we see, the first 'concession' by big business would seem to be the depletion of the capital resources of the city!

On top of this:

"Liverpool will have to repay the banks about £43.5 million, including interest, over five years starting in 1987."

It is very debatable if this represents any concession from the bankers. In the meantime:

"The agreement will free other capital resources to pay for £23.4 million of housing repairs and maintenance charged to this year's budget. Combined with unallocated cuts of £3.8 million in spending and £3 million acquired from other Labour councils in unused borrowing rights, this is expected to be sufficient to close the £75 million deficit."

Again, a straightforward loan arrangement - hardly a concession by big business. The article continues:

"...Phillips and Drew said last night that a second scheme might be available provided the first one was successfully syndicated amongst banks, and that Liverpool set a legal rate and budget in 1986-1987."

The next 'concession' from the banks appears to be, therefore, that Liverpool will have to set a rate within Tory limits in 1986-7!

And then to cap it all:

"Without more borrowing sanctioned by a future Labour government, this would curtail drastically Liverpool's capital programmes from 1987 until at least 1992, Mr. Byrne said."

This would seem to indicate that

Militant will be faced with a choice in the not too distant future, the same as all other Labour councils, that is a choice between a legal cutting budget or an illegal one. The court proceedings would reinforce this fact. Except that next time councillors who have already seen colleagues surcharged will also have to face the immediate pressure of international banking, as well as the Tory government. Capitalisation cannot be used as a way out twice.

THE REAL PRICE TO PAY

Faced with this Militant says:

"We repeat that unless the money is made up in some other way, it will mean future cuts in the house building and repair programme."

That is a truly British understatement. In fact Liverpool may well be forced to sell off its newly built properties to repay bank loans from 1985.

The only cash to be expected will, or will not, come from the government. Assuming that Militant is still in a leading position in a Labour controlled council, this cannot be taken for granted. Once again Militant will have to take on the government - if the people of Liverpool will wear it. But if once the city council steps outside the bounds of 'legality' then the banks will come down on it like a ton of bricks. If Militant took the fight outside the law then both the Tories and the banks will be in line for their pound of Liverpool flesh.

The bank loan package is little more in reality than using Liverpool's assets as collateral against future cuts. These cuts are the real price Liverpool will have to pay, and they may well turn out worse than if Militant had pursued its confrontation with the Tory government to the end in 1985. Militant staved off that immediate crisis by lining up for the future what it said it would never do - make drastic cuts.

The only losers can be the working class in Liverpool.

The SLG does not welcome what is happening to Militant in Liverpool, the working class has nothing to gain from these attacks. It is essential that a discussion on this episode of the bank loans is begun.

REFORMIST ILLUSIONS

The adaptation by Militant to social democracy has led it down the road of an extreme left form of 'municipal socialism'. Militant's belief that the Labour Party can be transformed into a socialist party is a grand illusion, as Kinnock's contempt for them has shown. For Marxists the Labour Party is a 'bourgeois workers' party', which is tied to the bourgeois parliamentary system and cannot bring about

socialism. The failure of the Second International to oppose the imperialist war in 1914 sealed the historic fate of the Labour Party. The tactic of entry in some social democratic parties, put forward by Trotsky twenty years later, in no way signified an end to the counter-revolutionary role of those parties. It was not a tactic of 'transforming' them into Marxist parties.

Central to the problems raised in Liverpool is an understanding of the role of the state. The bourgeois state cannot be 'transformed', even at a local level, into a socialist state. It must be atomised by the working class. Local councils are as much part of the bourgeois state as parliament. This does not imply that revolutionaries should not fight for election and attempt to utilize both parliament and local councils in the interests of the working class. But the limits have to be recognized and they are laid down by the bourgeoisie itself. Militant must now take stock of the consequences of remaining within the effective confines of the state. How does the tactical retreat in Liverpool help in the building of a revolutionary party? The way in which Militant controlled Liverpool council has not in itself been unprincipled, but the interests of the working class cannot be thoroughly protected within the confines of the state, or by recourse to the bankers alone. Rhetoric about national campaigns is all very well. Where was the actual campaign, when it counted?

MISREPRESENTATION

The relationship between a Marxist organisation and the masses must always be based on truth. Militant itself says that it "believes in telling the working class the truth no matter how unpalatable", yet it issues a statement saying:

"Liverpool is a shining example to workers everywhere. The battle has been followed by workers throughout the world. following events even through the distorted reports in the press and the overseas service of the BBC. In strategy, tactics and organization, it is a model to workers everywhere who want to see a victory over capitalism."

To dress up a setback as a victory in this way is to lie to the working class.

Apart from the absurdity of this statement, it has another angle. If the strategy and tactics of Militant in Liverpool was such a 'shining example' to workers, how come the workers in Liverpool itself didn't see this and follow? Why the huge rifts within the mass organisations in Liverpool?

Not once in the article is the real course of the battle analysed and the very real contradictions between the methods of Militant and the needs of

the Liverpool working class brought to the surface.

BLAME

Will Militant put the blame on the workers for not following their lead?

The only way to correct the errors of judgement in the Liverpool fight is to recognize that they were based on errors of politics. The relationship between the masses and revolutionaries is at the heart of the problem. Tactics and strategy are correct, "...provided that the broadest masses become convinced of this correctness by their own experience." (Lenin in Left-Wing Communism). It is a grave error to confuse a demonstration of thousands against Tory cuts outside Liverpool City Hall, with the rhetorical flourishes of Derek Hatton when he addresses them.

IDEALISM

Militant relied far too much on its positions within the council structures themselves and on set-piece media situations. It neglected the building of a mass campaign in Liverpool and in particular the careful construction of a united front of councils nationally. That things went wrong as other councils, led by left reformists, began to back out of the fight, is not the fault of Militant. But the new reality required new tactics and this was never done. 'Correct ideas will win' was the Militant line. This is pure idealism and in any case the notion that Militant had been given a carte blanche by the people of Liverpool was always wrong.

TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

In the end Militant said a lot - but actually did too little too late.

The SLG stands on the programme of the Fourth International, the Transitional Programme, which Militant also claim some reference to. That programme says:

"To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's programme on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives - these are the rules of the Fourth International. It has shown it could swim against the stream. The approaching historical wave will raise it on its crest."

By Henry Waters.

LABOUR HISTORY

The emergence of the Labour Party

By Michael Keene

The founding of the Labour Representation Committee in February 1900 was followed six months later by a Conservative General Election victory, accompanied by a wave of chauvinist hysteria arising from the South African war.

Only two Labour candidates, Kier Hardie and Richard Bell - a rail union leader - were returned to parliament. It was not until 1906 that any substantial parliamentary Labour group existed, which in that year took for itself the name of 'The Labour Party'. Thirty Labour MP's were elected in the tail of the 1906 Liberal landslide. Most were afforded straight fights with the Conservatives thanks to a secret deal negotiated by MacDonald with the Liberals in 1903, with the support of Hardie.

The background was one in which the employers held the whip-hand in industrial struggles. This was partly the result of the Taff Vale judgement, which meant that unions could be sued for damages resulting from industrial action, but was also due to the renewed high levels of unemployment which depressed the level of strike activity. Real wages fell by around 10% up to 1910. To most workers, industrial struggle seemed to offer little prospect of victory under these conditions. However the unions did sustain a slow growth and the election result of 1906 expressed the concentration of the workers' efforts to unshackle the unions and preserve their living standards by political means.

Most organised workers still voted Liberal and this still represented a great deal of illusion in the Liberals' radical reforming promises. As yet, it was still only a vanguard who were actively pursuing the idea of Labour representation.

GREAT HOPES

However, that the process of breaking from the Liberals was slowed down was not the fault of the workers. Responsibility must be laid at the feet of these first 'Labour representatives' and the union bosses who stood behind them. Great hopes were initially placed on the activity of the 'thirty working men' in parliament. But these hopes were quickly dashed by the experience of the reality of the Labour Party in



Labour Party Conference 1906

parliament.

Just over half of the Labour MP's were union bureaucrats, paid salaries by their unions. Their politics differed little from the 13 miners' MP's who still accepted the Liberal whip. The rest were from the Independent Labour Party (see issue no 37), who with the partial exception of Hardie, readily adopted the manners and customs of parliamentary 'gentlemen'. In this, the tone was set by MacDonald, the Parliamentary Labour Party's first secretary, who was himself an arch careerist, a Fabian and a former Liberal candidate.

Their style was the expression of their politics. The new party in parliament, far from being a tribune of workers' struggle, was from its inception aimed at reforming away the 'excesses' of capitalism by parliamentary means.

Its 1906 programme was limited to the restoration of the pre-Taff Vale rights of the unions and measures of modest social reform, as well as advocacy of 'redistributive taxation'.

Not a hint here of any proposals for nationalisation.

So modest, in fact, was Labour's platform, that the measures actually taken by the Liberal Government between 1906 and 1911, reduced the Labour Party to a rather ineffectual appendage of the Liberals in parliament.

REFORMIST MYTHS

'New Liberalism', championed by Lloyd George and Churchill, was quite consciously seeking to block the emergence of mass working class politics. They attempted this through measures like the introduction of Old Age Pensions and Social Insurance, which were modelled on those of Bismarkian Germany, as well as projecting themselves as the proponents of 'cheap food', Irish Home-Rule and opponents of aristocratic privilege. In other words, they made a limited and often demagogic appeal to the 'common man' in order to tie the workers to bourgeois politics.

This was reinforced, rather than challenged, by the Labour Party. MacDonald was an open advocate of building the Labour Party as a sort of progressive outgrowth of Liberalism. Hardie, while adopting a different stance, still saw the question of Labour politics as one which must 'reject the propoganda of class hatred'.

Contrary to reformist myths, the pre-1914 Labour Party can in no way be viewed as a simple expression of the movement of the working class.

Rather, Labour's parliamentary record was one of compromise and manoeuvre. Thus Labour MP's sat on their hands when the independent socialist MP Victor Grayson was expelled from the Commons in 1908 for daring to disrupt the proceedings over unemployment. When the official policies of the Second International called for a halt to the military build-up resulting from Anglo-German imperialist antagonisms, especially after 1907, the Labour Party never departed from advocacy of 'adequate defence' of nation and Empire. Its record in Parliament, with the exception of George Lansbury and Keir Hardie was one of effective opposition to the fight for Votes for Women, at least up to 1912.

NO MASS ORGANISATION

Particularly after 1910, when the Liberals depended on Labour and Irish support for a parliamentary majority, Labour MP's were preoccupied with keeping the government in office. The need to reverse the Osborne Judgement of 1909 which took away the right of trade unions to finance the Labour Party was given priority and used as an excuse for supporting the government.

It must be understood that before 1914 there was no mass political organisation through which the

working class could influence these reformists. Where local labour organisation existed, it tended to rest upon a Trades Council to provide electoral organisation. Alternatively, it consisted of ad hoc arrangements between trade union branches and local socialist groups. Individual Labour Party membership and a constituency structure were a post-1918 development.

MARXISTS

Lenin called the formation of the Labour Party a 'first step' towards an independent and socialist workers' Party. He understood that even this hesitating and timid parliamentary group were only there because of fundamental changes occurring in class relations. Yet these changes did not automatically bring forth a political vehicle which the working class could take into its own hands and use in its own interests. The sectarian errors made by the Marxists in the Social Democratic Federation who abstained as an organisation from the battle to forge the Labour Party in this period was an additional factor enabling the Labour MP's to distance themselves from political control by the workers.

These same deep-seated tendencies in the class struggle asserted themselves in a forceful way from 1910 onwards. What developed between 1910 and 1914 was a period of class struggle far surpassing the wave of 1899 and unparalleled since the days of Chartism.

An economic upturn created conditions for an upsurge in trade union struggles and the workers attempted to regain lost ground in terms of wages. The great strike movements of these years saw national strikes on the railways, in the docks and transport, in the coal industry and localised general strikes in Liverpool and Dublin. Trade union

membership rocketed from two and a half million in 1909 to four and a quarter million by 1914. This was not simply an economic movement but also a product of an accumulation of tension built up by a long period of aggressive management and the changing structure of industrial production.

Now workers were striving to create 'Industrial Unions', uniting all the trades in a particular industry. The NUR and Transport Federation were products of this period. But the absence of a mass political framework and disillusionment with the Labour Party in parliament meant that this industrial movement became a vehicle for the attempts by the workers to forge their movements and get to grips with the leaders.

SYNDICALISM

'Syndicalism' flourished in these developments as an ideology which sought to emancipate the working class through 'industrial control' achieved by 'Direct Action' and the General Strike, which was posed as a timeless objective. Tom Mann appears here as the founder of the Industrial Syndicalist Education League. In South Wales a rank and file syndicalist development focussed around the Miners' Reform Movement and a notable Manifesto entitled "The Miners' Next Step."

Strikes in this period tended to be successful and often began on the basis of solidarity with other sections of workers. Generally these movements began unofficially and often forced belated recognition from union leaders. A lasting consequence of this period was the move by sections of employers to establish collective bargaining mechanisms which placed a (hitherto unprecedented) reliance on the services of union leaders in developing 'conciliation' practices within particular trades or industries. Another lasting feature was that the coalescence of a shop steward's movement began on an informal basis. Importantly, the striving of workers to actually change their leaders was successful in a number of cases, including in South Wales, where the Liberal leaders of the South Wales Miners' Federation were replaced by syndicalists.

These mass struggles found an echo in the realm of political organisation. The Independent Labour Party went into deep crisis in 1909-10. Around a third of its membership broke away in 1911 and were joined by the SDF and militants from the industrial battles, in forming the British Socialist Party. This initially regrouped more than 30,000 adherents. But for a number of reasons, including the dogmatic and sectarian approach of the SDF leaders, the BSP was politically unprepared to seize hold of the openings offered by the industrial movement to pose a challenge to parliamentary Labour's servility. This in turn led to a withering away of the forces organised



Keir Hardie



Ramsay MacDonald - on the right as usual

in the BSP before 1914. There were however those who drew political conclusions and sought to redirect its orientation. This resulted in its decision to affiliate to the Labour Party in 1914.

This battle outside Parliament formed a component of a deep political crisis. Other aspects were manifested in the constitutional crisis of 1909-10 over the House of Lords Veto, the threat of civil war in Ireland and the turbulent womens' suffrage movement. This crisis paralysed and threatened to undermine the Liberal government.

The Labour Party's response was not muted. It was in these conditions that Arthur Henderson MP proposed in 1913 that strikes which were 'unofficial' and not called by a secret ballot be made illegal. These years then, saw a marked gulf between the challenge of the workers to British capitalism and the attitude of Labour MPs which ranged between fudging and the outright treachery of Henderson. In recent times we can compare this with the response of the PLP and Kinnock to the miners' strike.

The outbreak of war in 1914 gave the ruling class a respite from this situation. For the period the industrial movement evaporated under the weight of a tide of chauvinism. The Labour Party gave its support to British imperialism in the war. Henderson replaced MacDonald as

Labour leader and joined Asquith's first coalition government. He was later to be included in the War Cabinet. The Labour Party in Parliament agreed to an 'electoral truce' for the duration. The TUC also declared a truce in industry. Both gave their support to the military recruitment campaign.

This collaboration deepened with Labour and TUC support of measures aimed at regulating labour supply and imposing arbitration in industrial disputes, and in 1916 with the Labour Party's decision not to campaign against the introduction of conscription.

The rank and file of the ILP adopted a pacifist stance on the war issue. Many ILP'ers suffered fierce repression for being conscientious objectors. The heroism of many of these socialists, who in a confused way were seeking to stand by what they regarded as internationalist principles contrasts markedly with the cowardice of the main ILP leaders. A group of the ILP MP's threw up their hands in horror at the carnage developing in Europe. But this did not prevent these 'anti-war MP's, including Hardie, MacDonald and Phillip Snowden from at speaking at recruitment meetings and voting for wartime budgets.

A fierce battle opened in the BSP against its old leaderships, who had taken a blatantly jingoistic pro-war

line. This paralysed the BSP politically for the first 18 months of war. In its practice it sought to agitate around 'class issues', including softening the economic impact of war on food distribution, employment and the conditions of soldiers' dependents. In this period it elaborated a line of 'workers' control' of war production, denounced war profiteering and replacement of the standing army by a workers' militia. Further the BSP pointed to the way in which the state control of industry that capitalism was forced into by the exigencies of war should be continued on a socialist basis 'after the war'. The big issue, however, was how was the war to be ended and the unity of the international working class asserted. Behind the BSP's approach lay a compromise with imperialist war which was only broken at Easter 1916, when the open chauvinists were forced out of the Party and it came down broadly in favour of the Zimmerwald Manifesto.

The chauvinist wave began to recede. The impact of enormous casualties during the second Battle of the Somme reinforced tensions developing in industry. These flowed in particular from the regulation of labour through measures including 'Lloyd George's 'Munitions of War Act'. Industrial workers, particularly those on 'reserved' trades in the munitions and engineering industries had to respond to a progression of attacks on the positions they had won prior to 1914.

Firstly, there were fights which focussed on securing a uniform exemption from military service and later defending shop-floor militants against victimisation which implied conscription as a punishment for militancy. Secondly, both the 'voluntary' efforts of the union leaders and later the governments' compulsory labour legislation posed a direct threat to wage rates and working practices and the right to strike itself. All, of course, in the name of 'the war effort'.

CLYDESIDE

The response of the workers in war-industries was to seek to defend their position as workers, even if this clashed with the needs of war production. As the war dragged on and the casualty lists grew massively, discontent was expressed in action. The mood of workers' reaction changed and they began to draw political conclusions.

This process was of course uneven in its development. Striking tramway workers in Deptford in the autumn of 1915 castigated their employers as 'unpatriotic' for not taking up their offer of providing transport for munitions workers to get to Woolwich Arsenal. This the strikers would willingly do if the employers would not demand any fares!

In contrast stands the situation developing on the Clyde at the same time.

For there, a great and protracted struggle developed, centred on the workers in the munitions-related engineering and shipbuilding industries. This movement sucked in wide sections of the working class in the Glasgow area and broadened its scope to encompass wider social problems exacerbated by wartime conditions, such as housing.

A 'labour withholding committee' was set up to circumnavigate the official union leaders, which later became the Clyde Workers Committee. Integral to this development were the Marxists of the BSP and also the De Leonite 'Socialist Labour Party', who introduced a distinctly anti-war and internationalist component into the mass movement. Whilst only a section of the workers engaged in the Clyde battles could be said to have responded to the Socialists' anti-war position, significantly the mass were not hostile.



Anti-Trade Union War Propaganda

Before the war, MacLean and the BSP had conducted fierce anti-militarist agitation. MacLean was lecturing weekly to groups of up to 600 shop stewards and militants on politics and Marxist economics.

At the end of 1915, 'Vanguard' began publication as the newspaper of the most clear internationalists in the BSP, centred on Glasgow. It was suppressed by the government. Leaders of the Clyde Workers Committee were interned and MacLean was continually imprisoned for 'seditious' activity.

As the war developed, the impact of the horrendous slaughter cut through the initial surge of chauvinism which had spread across the working class. It is important to note that the movement on the Clyde was mirrored in varying degrees in all the great centres of industry. It went further on the Clyde precisely because of the role of militants in the BSP and SLP, who could give it a political perspective based on the independence

of the working class and opposition to the imperialist war.

But the general tendency was there. Not only were whole layers of the working class - including many women - drawn into trade union organisation for the first time, but they found that to cope with the problems of capitalist industry in wartime meant that they had to rely on their own resources and strength. The war years saw a massive resurgence of the 'unofficial' movement of 1910-14. The Shop stewards and Workers Committee movement burgeoned.

Wartime developments impelled the growth of the trades unions from 4.1 million to 6.5 million between 1914 and 1918. At the same time, the cravenness of the TUC and Labour leaders' support for the 'war effort' posed the problem of finding ways round the existing leaderships.

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The impact of the Russian Revolution on the international working class was felt in Britain too. A discernible trend can be observed in which powerful rank and file developments identified with the Russian 'workers' councils' or Soviets. When the British imperialists sent troops into Northern Russia to assist the counter-revolutionaries, workers in Britain responded. 'Councils of Action' took up the defence of the Russian Revolution. These had real roots in the mass movement: so much so, that Labour leaders like MacDonald were forced to identify with the resistance to imperialist intervention against Russia. Lenin talked of the reformists being willing to 'shout for Soviets' if that was what was needed to preserve their leadership position.

Certainly the whole dynamic of the workers' movement in the years up to 1921 was one of intense political development, combined with an aggressive drive to unionise and to resist the employers.

This aggression was fuelled by the post-war boom, up to the summer of 1920, when unemployment leaped to 17.8% of insured persons within one year.

WORKING CLASS STRENGTH

The strength of the working class and its combativity at the end of the war was mirrored in the demands of the Miners Federation in 1919: for a six hour day, a 30% increase in wages and nationalisation of the mines. It was in this period that the pre-war proposal for a 'Triple Alliance' between Miners, Railwaymen and Transport workers was revived. This in fact collapsed when the miners were betrayed on 'Black Friday' - April 15th 1921.

The immediate post-war period was one in which the ruling class could not simply lean on methods of repression to deal with the working class, which came out of the war combative and strengthened. Lloyd

George's immediate policy was often characterised by partial retreats and concessions. Not unimportant in this was the fear of the capitalists that the example of October 1917 might be taken up by a powerful working class, millions of whom now had training in arms and expected the 'democrats' to deliver on their social promises.

Important too in this respect was the fact that the British state was in the throes of a crisis provoked by the revolutionary war of the Irish people for their independence. A confluence of the British class struggle and the Irish national movement could have brought down their system - and well they knew it.

If the period between 1910 and 1920 is viewed as a whole, we can see the emergence of a pre-revolutionary situation in which the tendency was towards revolutionary struggles and the breakdown of control through normal state institutions.

In this context, the development of the Labour Party as a mass membership organisation with an electoralist structure can be understood. In part it represented what was needed by the ruling class, in terms of adapting its political party system in order to give the reformists a more important and direct role in subordinating the working class. It also represented the needs of the reformists in placing themselves at the head of the drive for political organisation, lest the 'bolsheviks' step in.

GROWTH OF LABOUR PARTY

Despite all its political limitations as an organisational form and despite the definition of socialism given by 'Clause 4' of the 1918 Constitution of the Labour Party, it did emerge as the mass political framework of the workers movement in Britain. From 1918, the Labour Party would begin to decimate the remnants of Liberal allegiance in the organised working class.

The emergence of the Labour Party as a mass party only after the First World War contrasts markedly with the pattern of development of continental social democracy. The young Communist Parties of the Third International were built upon a break of vanguard layers from the reformists. But in Britain, the decade following the war saw the growth of the Labour Party through the attempt of masses of workers to use it as a vehicle for the first time.

Thus it was that Lenin and the Third International saw the importance of the Labour Party in Britain. Whilst strict separation of Communists from the reformist parties was the norm, the British Communists were urged to intervene politically in the life and development of the Labour Party.

In the next article, we will look at how those who came out of the BSP, the SLP and the industrial movement, and who wanted to build a Communist Party, faced up to this problem.

BRAZILIAN WORKERS' PARTY MAKES ITS MARK

By winning 15% of the vote in local by-elections held throughout Brazil, the Workers' Party has redrawn the political map in that country. Fortaleza, capital of the Northeast region, an area ravaged by famine, was one of the gains in a fight against corruption and poverty, and for democracy.

The elections involved the compulsory vote of 19 million voters (a third of the national electorate) in 201 local areas, including 23 state capitals and two regional capitals.

The parties involved were:

PTB: Brazilian Labour Party. Has links with Getulio Vargas, the former dictator. Janio Quadros is its main leader.

PDS: Party of the dictatorship.

PMDB: Democratic Mobilisation Party of Brazil. The party of President Jose Sarney, a broad coalition including the Brazilian Communist Party.

PFL: Liberal Front Party (split from the PDS). Together with the PMDB, forms the Democratic Alliance which is in power today.

PDT: Democratic Party of Labour. Opposed to the military dictatorship. Brizola is its most important leader.

PT: Workers' Party. Result of the break of certain trade union leaders with the important trade unions tied to the dictatorship. Lula is its best-known leader.



Metal workers in Sao Paulo support the PT

On November 15th elections were held to choose a mayor for each of the main capital cities in the country. The Workers' Party of Brazil had a huge success in these elections.

The importance of the elections lies in the fact that they were the first of this type since the military dictatorship gave up power. The influence of the political forces taking part was therefore put to the test, but the elections also gave an indication of the peoples' attitude to President Sarney's coalition government, the Democratic Alliance (made up of the PMDB and the PFL). We have analysed these results and have tried to draw out some lessons.

-A massive vote against the Sarney government.

Although the coalition government, especially the PMDB, managed to win 15 of the 23 state capitals, we must compare the results of this poll with the importance of each urban area.

The PMDB actually lost the main cities, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro,

Porte Alegre (state of Rio Grande du Sul) and Fortaleza, where the number of votes amounted to nearly two-thirds of the national total voting in the elections.

The result is therefore a vote against the coalition government parties, the PMDB and the PFL. In the few places where the PFL put up independent candidates, it lost.

-Those who won were those who offered alternatives to the Governments' politics.

Janos Quadros, a bourgeois politician and the leader of a small party of the right, the PTB, won in Sao Paulo, a city of several millions. At the same time as receiving support from the PDS, the party of the dictatorship, as well as the PFL, member of the coalition government, Quadros led a campaign against corruption and directly opposed to the government and denies receiving support from any other party than his own.

Another significant fact : the PDS, which was once the all-powerful party of the dictatorship, was swept aside.

In Rio de Janeiro and Porte Alegre, the two main cities after Sao Paulo, it was Brizola's Democratic Party of Labour that won. This populist party, which has a certain influence in the poorest sections of the population, was noted for its opposition to the dictatorship.

Finally, the most important fact is undoubtedly the spectacular growth of the PT, with 15% of the national vote. In Fortaleza, the capital city of the Northeast region with 1.5 million inhabitants, the PT won. At Goiania, a city near Brazilia of nearly a million people, the PT got 44% of the votes, despite a spectacular electoral fraud, which reversed the official results, giving 44% to the PMDB and 42% to the PT. The governor had already announced the PT's victory, when there was the sudden 'discovery' of 10,000 ballot papers in favour of the PMDB. Lula, the main leader of

RTY

the PT, who was in Goiania, called for the election to be declared null and void.

-The election result has opened up new prospects.

Free elections to a genuine Constituent Assembly, and direct elections for the presidency of the Republic are now being called for.

One growing certainty in the minds of the Brazilian people is that Sarney has no right to be President, not having been voted in (as vice-president he assumed the presidency when Neves died); that he'll have to go, and that there will have to be free elections for the Assembly.

Brizola himself based the PDT's election campaign on the slogan of direct elections in 1986.

Shortly after the results were published, the government had to intervene in order to prevent three banks from collapsing. A new wave of financial crisis is sweeping across the country.

-The growth and development of the PT's implantation on a national scale has been confirmed.

On the electoral level, we have witnessed the result of the battle led by the PT in agitating for direct elections.

Today the PT stands as the party which organises the working masses who want to be in the forefront of the fight for socialism and against dependence on imperialism. It is carrying on its campaign for constituent elections, it is supporting the steelworkers' demand for a 40-hour week, it is developing a powerful campaign against repayment of the foreign debt, and rejects totally the idea of a coalition government made up of parties bought and paid for by the IMF.

The PT has also led internationalist campaigns in defence of Nicaragua and of Solidarnosc, the Polish trade union, and against the dictatorship in Chile.

In the course of the election campaign, the PT launched the slogan calling for the formation of popular town councils. This proposal has had a huge response in the face of the anarchy and corruption which are rampant in the towns and cities of Brazil.

**Translated from
Informations Ouvrieres
By Carlos Alexis.**

WORKERS' PARTY LAUNCHED IN PERU



Workers march in Lima

The founding conference of the Workers' Party was held in Lima on November 1st-3rd.

Those attending the opening session included Genaro Ledesma, the president of FOCEP*, and a member of the National Senate, Leonor Zamora, mayoress of Huamanga-Ayacucho, Hector Garcia, general secretary of the Glassworkers' Federation, who also represented the July 19 popular movement, Moises Palomino, secretary of the Iron, Steel and Mineworkers' Federation of Peru. International delegates included one from the Venezuelan MIR and from the Fourth International (ICR). A message of support was received from the Brazilian Workers' Party, who could not attend because of the election campaign in Brazil. Fraternal greetings were also received from the North American group Socialist Action, Lucia Pavletich, the president of the COSALC, and from the FSLN of Nicaragua.

The Workers' Party founding conference has announced to the working class and the labour movement that there is an organisation willing to demonstrate its solemn undertaking to always prove its words by actions.

In the internationalist tradition of Jose Carlos Mariategui the conference pledged itself to fight for

an independent mass revolutionary International.

It welcomed Leonor Zamora as a leading member of the Party, proof that as well as the fight against imperialism and barbarism the Workers' Party is pledged to conduct a battle for the emancipation of women.

The conference elected a National Executive Committee, made up of trade union and popular leaders whose record in the workers' movement stands up to close inspection. Alejandro Tazza was elected president of the Workers' Party and Maximo Paz Calle general secretary.

The conference ended with the following appeal:

"We call on workers in the towns and countryside, we call on the youth, women and progressive intellectuals to join forces with us, to build and strengthen local committees of the Workers' Party. Long live the political independence of the working class! Imperialism out of Peru!"

*FOCEP was an anti-imperialist alliance based on workers, peasants and students in the period after 1979. It moved the famous 'Red Motion' in the Peruvian parliament and organised a popular movement.

By Carlos Alexis.

Thesis 37



The fight against revisionism

The most powerful revolutionary upsurge has been developing during the last period of forty years. It has led in a number of countries to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in the course of victorious revolutions, without our International having led the mass movement to any of these victories. Furthermore, despite this upsurge and these victories, our International has undergone a permanent, dislocating crisis.

The crisis is due to the same causes that explain why the counter-revolutionary apparatuses which control the mass movement have retained their audience. Our International came into existence in the period of retreat and of the gravest defeats - the retreat had begun well before - and it spent its early years in this period. For this reason the cadres of our movement at that time had no objective possibility of developing within the workers' movement. They retained very largely an intellectual, propagandist character and our movement could not be built by proletarian leaders. Our International was founded against the current. The counter-revolutionary apparatuses were consolidated in the period following World War Two because, in a certain sense, we continued to swim against the current, to the extent that the mass movement remained under the control of the bureaucratic leaders.

Nevertheless, our International grew, developed and had the possibilities of further growth and development, despite the relative strengthening of the apparatuses and our own weakness. It even had the possibility of taking power in Bolivia, which would have changed everything.

PABLOISM

Pabloism has had devastating effects on our International. After capitulating to Stalinism, Pabloism began to capitulate to every leadership or apparatus which controls the mass movement. This capitulation was disguised by a false objectivism: the pressure of the mass movement is so strong that it will oblige all the leaderships to adopt permanently a revolutionary centrist course. This course will always be more progressive and will lead them unconsciously towards Trotskyism. In

this way the Pabloite leadership trailed the glorious, stainless banner of our International in the mire of opportunism and betrayal.

BOLIVIA

The elements of Pabloite betrayal came together in action in Bolivia. The POR of Bolivia, the section of our International, under Pablo's personal leadership, committed one of the greatest betrayals of the revolution in this century. A betrayal as great as, or greater than, that of the Mensheviks in relation to the Russian Revolution, that of the Social Democrats during and after World War One or that of the Stalinists in China, Germany or Spain.

In Bolivia the working class had been educated by Trotskyism and at the beginning of April 1952 it had begun one of the most perfect workers' revolutions ever to be seen. It destroyed the bourgeois army, it formed workers' and peasants militias as the only real power in the country and it organised the COB (the Bolivian Workers' Centre) to centralise the workers' movement and the militias. The bureaucracy which led the COB handed over the power to the bourgeois nationalist party, the MNR. Bolivian Trotskyism was powerful; it had great influence in the workers' movement and among the working masses. It had participated in the leadership of the workers' and popular insurrection which destroyed the army. The International Secretariat, under the leadership of Pablo, laid down a treacherous, reformist line of critical support to the bourgeois government. The crisis of Trotskyism in Bolivia today, the crisis of the whole Fourth International today, the strength of Stalinism in Bolivia today and of all the petty bourgeois nationalist movements in Latin America, have their roots in this criminal, class collaborationist policy which Pablo compelled our whole International movement to operate in Bolivia. The revisionist Pabloite principal was always the same: the MNR under the pressure of the masses would find itself obliged to make a socialist revolution.

Not satisfied with handing over the Bolivian Revolution to a bourgeois government, Pabloism also extended the betrayals to France and East



Germany. In 1953 a large-scale General Strike broke out in France, against the wishes of Stalinism. Pabloism had not only operated entrisism in the Communist Party but had adopted its treachery. It did the same when the political revolution began in Eastern Europe. When the East German workers began the General Strike in Berlin against the bureaucracy, when the Russian tanks came in to repress the strike, the International Secretariat came out against the demand for the Soviet army to be withdrawn. It thereby made itself an accomplice in the bureaucratic repression of the workers' movement in East Germany. It did the same at the beginning of the Hungarian Revolution against Stalinism.

WITHOUT PRINCIPLES

Pablo pushed this revisionist deviation to its ultimate theoretical and political conclusions. But revisionism was not restricted to this person alone. A wider current undertook at that time to keep our International in a state of permanent crisis. Like every revisionist current, it is a front without principles, made up of different shadings and tendencies. This revisionist current, which took hold of the leadership of our International in 1951, is characterised by systematic capitulations. Through thirty years it has not ceased to capitulate to the bureaucratic or petty bourgeois leaderships of the mass movements.

At the same time, it abandoned our intransigent struggle against these leaderships, which we conduct as part of developing our parties as the only possibility of overcoming the crisis of revolutionary leadership of mankind.

In this way revisionism, instead of denouncing the bureaucratic, petty bourgeois leaderships, characterised these opportunist currents as progressive and transformed itself into their left wing, abandoning all independent Trotskyist activity which was clearly differentiated from all these opportunist currents. Given the character of revisionism as an unprincipled front, it has had different leaderships and personalities at its head in different stages of its development. But all these leaderships and personalities have in common their line of capitulation before the

opportunist currents, in order to divert the movements and to betray the masses. This is why revisionism capitulated in the first stage to Titoism, and then to Maoism, and then in general to Stalinism in its different varieties. This is also why it capitulated to the MNR in Bolivia. The first stage of revisionism was followed by the second, that of the capitulation to Castroism.

CASTRO AND THE FSLN

The fact that Castroism was a petty bourgeois current in the mass movement, and not a directly Stalinist current, when it took power, has provided revisionism with a justification for its capitulation from 1960 until the present time. This capitulation to Castroism, defining the Cuban state as a revolutionary

workers' state and not as a bureaucratic workers' state, went through several stages. The first stage was the refusal to construct the Fourth International in Cuba. Then the United Secretariat capitulated on the Latin American scale to guerillaism. This line was then extended to Europe, with the capitulation to petty bourgeois ultra-leftism and the so-called 'new vanguards'. Finally, it was the turn of the FSLN in Nicaragua. As always, there are different nuances today: there is the clearly revisionist current, the leadership of the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA, which like Pablo in 1951, pushes its positions to their conclusion, which means capitulating not only to the FSLN but to Castroite policies in all their aspects, to the Vietnamese leadership and to the Stalinist bureaucracy.



Hungary 1956 Workers fight for socialism against Stalinism

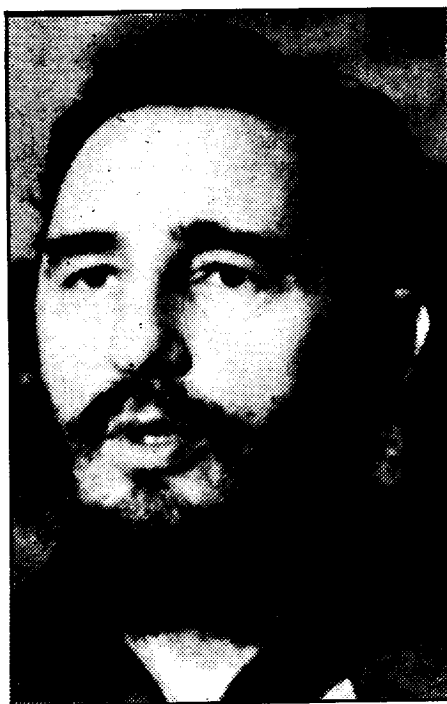
At the heart of revisionism, there is in fact a centrist current, which follows like a shadow that wing which expresses its revisionist policies clearly and without circumlocution, as Pablo did in his time and as the SWP leadership does today. This centrist current of revisionism has developed some of the most important theoretical points, such as the existence of 'neo-capitalism' which develops the productive forces, and other revisionist theoretical variants of the same kind. There are two things which characterise this centrist current. The first is that it does not formally break with certain Trotskyist formulations. The second is that it is an integral part of revisionism even if it carries on internal discussions with revisionism, as it will not denounce it for what it is but confines itself to assurances that tactical or 'theoretical' errors compatible with the Fourth International and its programme are the issues. In other words, its formal defence of Trotskyist positions serves to let revisionist positions be more easily smuggled in. There is in fact a division of labour between these two nuances, a relation very like that which existed between Bernstein and Kautsky from 1914 onwards.

POSITIONS OF PABLOISM

We may summarise the different positions which have characterised revisionism in the past thirty years as follows:

1. Revisionism replaced the class struggle, as the driving force of history and a single world wide process, with the confrontation of 'camps' or 'blocs' and the 'theory' of sectors of the revolution. This led to denying the objective base of proletarian revolution. It declares that the productive forces of humanity continue to grow in a so called new imperialist stage, which it defines as neo-imperialist or neo-capitalist.
2. It also states that the leaderships of the mass movement - bureaucratic, Stalinist or petty bourgeois - can adopt a centrist course which leads them to objectively revolutionary positions. More concretely, it argues from the fact that the bureaucratic or petty bourgeois leaderships have been able, in exceptional circumstances, to expropriate the bourgeoisie that these leaderships have a revolutionary mission. It gives up the direct struggle against them as opportunist leaderships.
3. Consequently, revisionism claims that there are sectors of the workers' movement and countries in which the construction of Trotskyist parties in order to defeat these counter-revolutionary leaderships is not posed as an urgent question of the first importance.
4. In particular, neither the construction of Trotskyist parties nor the political revolution are posed in Cuba.

The centrism which is within revisionism justifies its organic links with the currents which are clearly revisionist by declaring that our definition of them as revisionist is a fractional exaggeration, that 'revisionist' is not a Marxist definition but a term of abuse. Centrism argues that revisionism is characterised as a current in Marxism which reflects the interests of the bureaucracy and of the workers' aristocracy, and that there has never been a bureaucracy in our International. Half of the centrist argument is correct: there is no revisionism except when, behind it, there are social forces hostile to the historic needs of the working class. Their mistake is to say that the bureaucracy and the workers' aristocracy are the only sources of these expressions of social forces hostile to the historic needs of the working class.



The revisionist currents which the history of Marxism has known were not all the product of the bureaucracy which controls the workers' organisations. The first revisionist was Bernstein, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century; his revisionism did not find support in the bureaucracy at first or openly, but among the petty bourgeois intellectuals who had joined the German Social Democratic Party. It was from that starting point that revisionism provided 'ideological' weapons for the bureaucracy which was then in process of formation. In our movement, the same thing happened with the rejection by the Shachtman current of the defence of the USSR. It was a petty bourgeois, intellectual current which called into question all the fundamental principles of our movement, because it reflected a sector of a class foreign to the movement of the workers and of its most exploited layers.

Pabloite revisionism and its centrist partners have their roots in these same sectors. For this reason, their method of reasoning is the same as that of the opponents of the defence of the USSR (the 'anti-defencists'). The characteristic of modern revisionism, which it shares with anti-defencism, is that it also rejects the defence, not of the USSR, but of the Fourth International, the greatest subjective conquest of the world proletariat. This is the way in which it expresses the pressure of the bureaucracy on the Fourth International. It ceaselessly oscillates between the conflicting forces in the political revolution, for example, in East Berlin and in the second phase of the Hungarian Revolution. It oscillates in this way in the Nicaraguan revolution, between the petty bourgeois leadership and the proletariat, and, in Afghanistan, between the Kremlin bureaucracy and the defence of the rights of the masses.

DEFENCE OF THE USSR

Those who opposed the defence of the Soviet Union said: counter-revolutionary Stalinism is the product of the advance of the counter-revolution. The USSR is also counter-revolutionary as a state, which means that they place an equals sign between the counter-revolutionary leadership of the workers' state which has degenerated because of the bureaucracy and the foundations of the workers' state itself, the new social relations constructed by the October Revolution which the rule of the bureaucracy threatens, but which it has not been able to destroy. Trotskyist revisionism did not see that we are dealing with highly contradictory phenomena and that, at the present time, these phenomena form part of the whole, the degenerated workers' state. Today Trotskyist revisionism places an equals sign between the advance of the revolution and the counter-revolutionary, bureaucratic leaderships. They say: as the revolution advances, the leaderships at the head of the mass movement, bureaucratic or petty bourgeois as they may be, inevitably advance with it.

From a formal point of view, this line of reasoning has profound logical implications. If the opportunist parties continue empirically to lead the international socialist revolution, why be a sectarian and try to struggle against these parties and replace them with ours? Those who reason this way reject the distinction between the two highly contradictory poles of contemporary reality, which form momentarily a unity due to special circumstances. They place an equals sign between them; the rise of the revolution equals the transformation of the petty bourgeois leaderships into revolutionaries.

This line of reasoning leads finally to the conclusion, which may be expressed clearly or remain implied, that the Fourth International is no longer necessary and that it can transform itself into an international Fabian society for the epoch of revolution. This is the way in which the revisionists become defeatists in relation to the Fourth International. They deprive it of its reason for existence - the intransigent struggle against the opportunist leaderships from the beginning of the revolutionary upsurge to the final defeat of the counter-revolutionary apparatus within the mass movement or within the bureaucratized workers' state.

INTELLECTUALS IN THE LEADERSHIP

These two forms of revisionism, the opposition to the defence of the USSR as well as Pabloism or the centrist current which protects it, have the same social foundation; they are the work of leaders who have not been forged under test in the struggles of the workers' movement, who are not capable of adopting the viewpoint of the interests of the proletariat, who have reached positions of leadership as intellectuals. This class character of the revisionist currents explains their survival, as well as the centrist role for the benefit of revisionism which the other nuance has played. The whole of revisionism with its different nuances has this common class basis, which exposes them to accepting the impressions conveyed by the analyses of 'great events' in the press of the bourgeoisie or of the bureaucracy.

This fact in itself means that, like all petty bourgeois currents, they believe neither in the working class nor in its revolutionary struggles nor in the Fourth International. This is why they are always looking for short cuts and for substitutes which will relieve us of the hard, terrible task which we must undertake as intransigent fighters against the bureaucratic apparatuses of the mass movement and as the builders of Trotskyist parties in every country of the world.

This possibility has not been able to be really grasped in the course of recent decades, but this is due, not to objective circumstances, but to the disastrous role of Pabloite revisionism.

The year 1951 cuts the history of our International into two: **before** and **after** Pabloite revisionism. Starting from this date in which the leadership was taken over by revisionism, our International entered a crisis and broke up. Earlier, we had experienced another crisis, with the assassination of Trotsky, but its character was very different. His death provoked a crisis of leadership which, given the youth and inexperience of the members,

prevented our International from making great progress after World War 2. The removal of Trotsky was a qualitative event in the history of our International. It meant that we found ourselves in fact deprived of our historic leadership. In general our movement remembers the disastrous August 21, 1940 from the viewpoint of the biography of our master and does not lay stress on what it meant from the political point of view, for the world proletariat and for our International. Nor do we stress enough the fact that the assassination was not motivated just by revenge, but a precise counter-revolutionary purpose, that of leaving without its historic leadership the post-war revolutionary upsurge and the Fourth International, and to break the thread of continuity.

During the war the leadership and the centre of our International were to be found in fact in the hands of the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA. Even though this party played a positive role in reconstructing our International, it refused in this period to take on the role which fell to it, namely, to convert itself into the axis of leadership. Therefore, at the end of the war, the leadership fell into the hands of the new European leadership, principally that of Pablo.

Yet, because the Fourth International existed, thanks to its method and programme and thanks to its defence of the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky, the Fourth International was nonetheless the only current in the workers' movement to



Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin divide the world at Yalta and Potsdam.

If the Fourth International had not been proclaimed, Stalinism would probably have attained its object. Nonetheless, the assassination of Trotsky left our International without the leadership forged in the class struggle and rich in experience which would have enabled it to deal with the new, terrible problems which the war and the period which followed it were to pose to us, the combination of the inter-imperialist with the counter-revolutionary war, the division of Germany and its disappearance for decades as the centre of the revolutionary process in Europe, the occupation of part of Europe by the USSR, the transformation of all these states into bureaucratic workers' states, the cases of Yugoslavia and China, the 'Marshall Plan', the capitalist reconstruction of Europe and the economic 'boom'. The documents of our International after the death of Trotsky are sectarian and rudimentary. Their strong point is that they formally defend the teachings of Trotsky.

know how to give a Marxist analysis of all these phenomena, however belatedly. All this explains our correct definitions of the new workers' states, dominated by Stalinism, as bureaucratic.

We slowly got over the crisis of leadership which the death of Trotsky caused, to the extent that the new leadership of the International began to mature, especially in the French and the British sections at that period. Yet these sections had been shaken by deep crises which obstructed their development, crises which arose for the very reason that problems had been resolved belatedly. These crises were intensified by the methods of Pablo and of the International leadership who incessantly tried to replace the selection of a leadership with the orders of an International Secretariat which claimed to be infallible.

Pabloite revisionism brought to a sharp end this process of the overcoming of the crisis of leadership. The pressure of the 'Cold War' and of the new, bureaucratic states, under

the domination of Stalinism, on the new leadership of our International, which had not been forged in class struggle, had catastrophic effects. The slow progress and maturation were rudely interrupted. Our International was thrown into disarray, even though the destruction which Pablo intended was not complete.

STALINISM

The fact is that our International leadership was essentially an intellectual leadership. It was not capable of standing up to the pressure of Stalinism and of the official leaderships of the mass movement, on whom their control of the new workers' states seemed to confer omnipotence and who were confronting US imperialism in the 'Cold War'. Under the dual pressure of imperialism in full counter-revolutionary flood and of Stalinism, which had occupied Eastern Europe in order better to control and to try to crush the independent, revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat of these countries and the world proletariat, Pablo completely capitulated to Stalinism and to all petty bourgeois, bureaucratic leaderships in the workers' movement. His policy of entrism 'sui generis' ('Entry of a special kind' involved the liquidation of the Trotskyist forces into the Stalinist parties - Ed), his analysis according to which the 'Cold War' would compel the Communist Parties to take the road towards civil war and the workers' revolution, his theory of 'centuries of transition', all these added up merely to an attempt to smuggle into our ranks a global conception in the service of Stalinism, a conception which could perhaps justify his politics of betrayal and disorganisation. This form of revisionism was concretely summed up in its claim to be developing the Fourth International and its sections by abandoning the most intransigent struggle against the principal counter-revolutionary apparatus in the mass movement, Stalinism.

Thesis 40

Despite all the victories which the revolution has won, humanity is on the edge of the abyss. Marxism, Trotskyism, have warned that, as long as imperialism rules, as long as the crisis of the leadership of the proletariat is not resolved, a descent into barbarism, into a new regime of slavery, a consequence of the imperialist rule, threatens mankind. Socialism alone will enable the world to go beyond necessity and to enter

the world of freedom. Either we shall experience the degeneration of mankind into barbarism, or we shall enter, through socialism, into the world of freedom.

The enormous means of destruction available to imperialism means that the danger which mankind has to face are even greater. It is no longer a question only of the descent into barbarism, but of the possibility of transforming the planet into a lifeless desert by means of the terrible armaments which have been accumulated. Neither the bureaucracy nor the apparatuses offer any way out in the face of these dangers. On the contrary, their subordination to imperialism helps to push mankind to the edge of the abyss. The only way to avoid it is to get rid of national frontiers, imperialist domination and capitalist private property. There are no other methods other than the permanent mobilisation for this purpose of the world proletariat and the unification of its struggles.

HISTORICAL CONTINUITY

But the liquidation of national frontiers, of imperialism and capitalist private property by the revolution, as well as the permanent mobilisation of the proletariat and its allies, can be undertaken as its tasks by only one organisation, the Fourth International. It is defended by only one current in the workers' movement, Trotskyism. For this reason, despite our extreme weakness, the alternatives are clear. The choice is no longer between Socialism or Barbarism, but between holocaust and Trotskyism.

Furthermore, we are applying in a consistent way the living, rich, Marxist method of the **Transitional Programme**, as these theses show, to observe the new phenomena and to enrich our own programme and analyses, without abandoning any of the principles which characterise our International and which reality has confirmed. We are betraying none of our principles, we are not capitulating before the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and we are not delegating any historic mission to them. On the contrary, we continue to denounce them systematically as agencies of counter-revolution in the ranks of the workers' movement.

On the other hand, we believe more than ever in democratic centralism. We believe in the only authentic democratic centralism, which is based on the revolutionary programme, the programme of Trotskyism, the **Transitional Programme**. We will never accept a spurious democratic centralism in the service of the revision of Trotskyism and of the liquidation of the Fourth International, just as we denounce any combination of a federal type for constructing an unprincipled front against Trotskyism.

This is the reason why the World Congress which the Parity Committee has called sets itself the task of going

forward in the direction of the reconstruction of genuine democratic centralism in the Fourth International, which has been destroyed since the crisis which Pablo-ite revisionism provoked in 1951. We fight not merely for the **Transitional Programme**, but for the Bolshevik organisation of our International on the world scale, as it was in Trotsky's time and in the ten years which followed his assassination.

Our intention to reconstruct our International on these programmatic and organisational bases does not mean that we are going to abandon to their fate all the groups, tendencies and militants who claim to be Trotskyists but whom the confusion provoked by revisionism still keeps outside our ranks. We are aware that we have all made mistakes. But these mistakes can only be explained by the crisis of disintegration of our International which revisionism has provoked. As Marxists, as defenders of the world unity of the class struggle and, therefore, of the International, we have all been marked by the effects of its disintegration, those who form part of the Parity Committee as well as those who do not. This is the reason why we do not intend to abandon to their fate and to the destructive effects of dispersion or national isolation one single militant or one single organisation which claims to be Trotskyist.

DEFEAT REVISIONISM

On the contrary, the reconstruction of the Fourth International means also that we intend to adopt an aggressive attitude in order to defeat revisionism once and for all by means of united activity and discussion without pre-conditions with all those who stand for the continuity of the programme of the Fourth International and who believe that the unity of Trotskyism is indispensable, whatever may be their positions. We are far from restricting ourselves to a purely defensive attitude to our principles and to the **Transitional Programme**. For this reason, we address a fraternal appeal to all the comrades and organisations who are prepared to discuss with us and to join with us in common activities on the basis of Trotskyism. For this reason we shall be the best defenders of every possibility of unity of action of those who claim to stand for the Fourth International. This is the way in which the imperative necessity will be proclaimed, a little louder each day in the class struggle, for one single Trotskyist organisation in the world and in each country: the reconstructed Fourth International, the genuine Trotskyist International. This is the only way to draw the line in practice between the camps and to enable the Fourth International to cleanse from its ranks the revisionism which has lodged itself there in different variants.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Black Revolution against Apartheid has begun

The last two issues of **Fourth Internationalist** have focussed on the current events in South Africa. They have outlined the main aspects of the developing revolution of black people against the racist, apartheid state; a process which began in 1984 with the mass actions against the constitutional reform of the Botha regime which attempted to set up separate powerless parliaments for Coloureds and Indians.

The article below is based on a translation from **La Verite**, the magazine of the PCI, the French section of the Fourth International (Organising Centre for Reconstruction). Whilst it doesn't claim to offer a definitive answer to all the political and theoretical problems raised, it puts forward the first elements of a Marxist analysis of the situation in South Africa and the lines of development of the revolution there.

THE COLONISATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The costs of colonial rule and white supremacy in South Africa stretch back over 300 years. From the very beginning, when the first Dutch settlers began to arrive in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the history of white colonisation was one of conquest, plunder and dispossession of the indigenous Black peoples.

In 1652, the Dutch East India Company decided to establish a permanent port of call on the site of what was to become Capetown, as a refurbishment station for its trading ships sailing to and from the Dutch colonies in Asia. Some time after, the company agreed to allow some of its employees to settle there as "free Burghers", obliged to sell their produce to the company.

But the land so generously given to the white settlers had first to be secured through the conquest and extermination of the indigenous peoples. These first wars of dispossession provided the settlers with part of what they wanted - abundant land, but they still required the labour to work the land. To supply the labour demands of the settlers the Dutch East India Company agreed to the importation of slaves into the Cape. By the end of the 1700s about 25,000 slaves, (mostly Africans but also many from Asia) had been pressed into servitude in the Cape colony.

In 1806, Great Britain occupied the Cape, which was quickly drawn into the main channels of world capitalist trade. There was no fundamental difference between the policies of the British and the Dutch settlers toward the African peoples. Blacks were kept in a totally subservient position and the British settlers enjoyed the same privileges as the Boers had already carved out before them.

By the early 1800s, however, the British capitalist class was coming out against slavery, viewing it as an inefficient and costly form of labour. In 1828, Britain declared the equality of the races in the colony and in 1832 abolished slavery.

The opposition of the Dutch settlers to the ending of the slave trade provided the impetus for the "grand trek", the migration of the Boers in large numbers towards the interior of the country. The subsequent setting up of the independent Republics of the Orange Free State, Transvaal and Natal was on the basis of first defeating and then dispossessing the native peoples through wars of conquest.

The co-existence of the Boer Republics and the British Colonies was marked by a series of bitter conflicts. British merchants in Capetown feared the Boer Port Natal (Durban) would develop into a rival port to that of the Cape. So in 1843 the British annexed Natal as another direct colony. Some thirty years later, the discovery of diamonds in the Orange Free State led to its annexation by Britain; and in 1877, Transvaal followed after the first Anglo-Boer war.

In 1886, the discovery of gold in the Transvaal led to a massive emigration of Europeans, overrunning the Boers who possessed neither the capital nor the technology to exploit the mines. The attempt of the Boers to maintain their control was crushed by the British who responded militarily in the second Anglo-Boer war which began in 1899. The end of the war in 1902, saw the defeat of the Boer landowners before the most powerful imperialism of the time, and signified the complete and definitive integration of the whole of the territory into the British empire. The constitution of the Union of South Africa was achieved on the basis of a political compromise between the British and the Boers, which was defined as follows by Rosa

Luxembourg (in 'Accumulation of Capital', Volume 2),

"It was capital which officially took the reins of power in the new South African Union, replacing the small Boer Republics with a large modern state, realising the imperialist programme of Rhodes. The struggle between capital and labour succeeded the former conflict between the Dutch and the British: a million white exploiters from two nations concluded a friendly agreement to deprive 5 million black workers of their civil and political rights."

For the black majority the Union of South Africa changed not one whit their position as a subjugated people. Their country continued to be plundered of its human and material wealth by white capitalists who employed force and coercion to extract superprofits. They faced national oppression in all spheres of life. The apartheid system was developed and perfected in direct relationship with world imperialism and its need to maintain its domination over the African continent.

WORLD IMPERIALISM AND SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is a leading pillar of world imperialism because of its natural wealth in raw materials, its strategic position controlling the sea passage between the Indian and Atlantic oceans and its role as the final white bastion in Africa.

The following table indicates the economic weight of South Africa with regard to raw materials.

	World Reserves	World Production
Platinum	73% (89%)	46% (91%)
Vanadium	49% (90%)	40% (56%)
Gold	48% (64%)	58% (73%)
Chromium	81% (84%)	34% (51%)
Manganese	78% (93%)	20% (36%)

(The figures in brackets show the proportions for capitalist countries only.)

The Republic of South Africa is also one of a group of leading exporters of coal, iron, uranium, antimony etc. Eighty percent of petroleum traffic from the OPEC countries passes through the Cape, as does 75% of traffic in raw materials and 25% of food produce bound for Europe, to give but a few examples.

SOUTH AFRICA'S REGIONAL ROLE

The South African Republic (RSA) has intervened militarily in every country in the region: Namibia is under permanent occupation, and direct military incursions have occurred into Angola, Mozambique, Botswana and Swaziland. These purely military aspects are combined with the economic dependence of all the states in the region on South Africa, a dependence in relation to markets, capital development, currency (mainly via the hiring of migrants in the mines) technology, etc.

At the same time, the RSA is economically dependent on imperialism. Its gold mines largely belong to the Anglo-American Corporation (AAC) which also owns many mines in other countries of Africa.

By and large, industry is financed by foreign capital (mainly British but also US, Japanese and European) which realises profits of the order of 20% to 25% (among the highest in the world). The foreign debt of the RSA is growing massively and these same imperialists are the prime commercial partners of the RSA.

If the RSA is therefore a vital stake for imperialism, that doesn't flow from its position as an independent state, from the autonomous position of South African capitalism in the world market. It flows above all from the role of the apartheid state as a political and military guarantor of stability in the region, as a source of raw materials, as a field of investment for capitalism and as a point of pressure for penetration into the African markets.

COLONIAL POLICY

Based on the need for a "sacred union" of white society, comprising all social classes against the colonised peoples, internal politics has been, since the constitution of the union in 1910, an attempt to preserve "social peace" and the economic interests of imperialism against the black majority.

The basis of the establishment of the South African Union, implied the maintenance of Black people in a situation of colonial oppression with only one right: that of serving the white colonial society. The attempts to incorporate a section of the former black ruling classes into the system was abandoned and the Black working class grew numerically with the development of industry, but in conditions born of colonial domination.

The foundations of the Union are to be found in a legal system which set up:

- a system of reservations, and prohibitions on Blacks to own, acquire or cultivate land for themselves outside of the 7% of territory assigned to them (for over 70% of the population)

- a colour bar (reserving certain jobs for those of one 'race' in circumstances where the skilled jobs are for whites only), limiting black urbanisation through the system of white areas etc.

Some of the privileges formerly enjoyed by a layer of favoured Blacks (access to the markets on the same lines as whites, a theoretical possibility at least to be a voter in the British colonies) were abolished.

The ethnic differences became blurred under the colonial yoke and little by little, national organisations emerged, succeeding the former military resistance to the conquest which had been organised on the ethnic lines of the pre-colonial African societies. In writing them, the colonisers united the colonised peoples against them.

In 1912, the South African Native Congress (SANNC) was founded. The first inter-ethnic organisation, it essentially brought together representatives of the black bourgeoisie and the native aristocracy, anxious to negotiate their integration into the colonial system (and the maintenance of certain privileges obtained under British colonial rule, suppressed with the unification with the Boer colonies in the framework of the Union)... This organisation later became the African National Congress (ANC) in 1926.

The black working class also began to organise. The first strike in the Cape took place among dockers in 1857. In the mines, the first officially recorded strike of black workers developed in 1896, the result of the massive use of blacks in the mines.

Black workers took part in the May-day demonstrations from the very outset (1907). On the other hand, the white working-class were dragged along more and more in defense of their privileges as 'whites' against the black workers, demanding jobs be assured for them and preferential treatment in hiring etc.

THE BLACK WORKING CLASS ORGANISATIONS

In 1919, the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) was founded. Organising throughout the whole country with the exception of the mining industry, it was the first national black union, comprising Indian, Coloured and Black workers. It enjoyed an uneasy relationship with the SANNC since the latter took the view that Africans should not organise as workers, but solely in the framework of SANNC. This stemmed in part from the fact that the ICU had begun to organise among black agricultural labourers, some of whose bosses were blacks also and members of SANNC.

At its high point the ICU had over 100,000 members. It disappeared at the end of the 1920s, however, essentially because of the corruption

of certain of its leaders, who sought to use it as a means of exerting pressure to secure privileges within colonial society. It was therefore not in their interests to engage in militant struggles.

The disappearance of the ICU did not mean the end of the black workers' movement. Despite the economic crisis, which affected them in the first instance, black workers organised in large numbers in many different unions, on the basis of industry and region during the thirties.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) at this time was a young organisation with few roots in the working class. It had emerged out of a fight within the South African Labour Party but bore all the legacy of its origins in the politically backward white labour movement. Its manifesto, while openly calling for a socialist revolution, did not have anything to say about the national liberation struggle of Blacks.

In 1928, the Communist International demanded that the SACP 'disengage itself from the layer of the labour aristocracy' where it had its mass base, and organise among black workers. After several zig-zags in policy, during which it adopted the slogan of a 'Black Republic', it went into the African National Congress (ANC).

Before it could overcome the weaknesses deriving from its origins, the party became a docile instrument of the Stalinised Communist International, reproducing in South Africa all the changes demanded by the needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The left opposition in the party was expelled and two organisations, both claiming to be Trotskyist, were formed. Some of these militants (like the Coloured leader Max Gordon), played an important role in the black unions which went to form the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) in 1942. This was the first black trade union federation to include migrant mining workers. The Trotskyists were also active in the ANC and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) founded in 1943. Its programme called for complete equality including full franchise for all, freedom of speech, press, association, movement and occupation, land reform and other democratic demands. However, most of the South African Trotskyists abandoned the struggle for an independent revolutionary party, directing all their energies into the NEUM.

1948 - THE NATIONAL PARTY IN POWER

The end of the second world war marked the beginning of brutal repression of black people. A strike of 70,000 black miners in 1946 was viciously put down by the police, resulting in the murder of 13 strikers.

In 1948, the National Party came to power and began to perfect its

policy of apartheid. This consisted in the systematic separation of blacks and whites, further accentuating the oppression rooted in the colonial system. Some whites, linked to British imperialism were moderate opponents of this policy. Their preference veered toward a system which would allow the eventual peaceful transition to a neo-colonial regime, more in keeping with the direct interests they represented. These comprised primarily the mine-owners who recruited labour from outside the Union and who wished above all to avoid an explosion even at the price of certain concessions.

The programme of the National Party consisted of the following:-

- * the classification of the whole population on a racial basis;
- * the exclusion of Indians and Coloureds from the white areas where they were previously tolerated;

- * the development of 'townships' by race and a severe limitation to the legal urbanisation of blacks through the 'pass' system. This was an attempt to stop the migration from rural areas causing labour problems for the white farmers. At the same time it reassured the white labour aristocracy who feared that a stable black working class would be more liable to acquire skills and qualifications;

- * the systematic racial segregation in all public places without exception and a ban on inter-racial marriages;

- * the direct intervention of the State in education;

- * separate systems of health care for each racial group;

- * a ban on all multi-racial organisations and on trade union representation for blacks;

- * extension of the colour-bar, recognition to the white trade unions whose function was to negotiate the maintenance of their privileges

accorded as whites;

- * the suppression of communism;
- * participation in the Korean war, etc.

These measures were clearly directed against the black masses and the workers' and democratic movement. The leaders of these organisations were arrested and the movement suffered a setback under the weight of the repression. Even so, numerous boycotts and stayaways were organised in protest at the 'pass' system and for a minimum wage for Blacks.

FIGHTING ORGANISATION

The ANC during this period was the main fighting organisation. The weight of Stalinism on its leadership was soon to become masked, as the support of the international Kremlin apparatus allowed them to withstand better than other currents, exile or repression.

The SACP adopted a new orientation. The apartheid regime was characterised as fascist, subordinate to the monopolies, and therefore made necessary the unity of all progressive, anti-monopoly forces - including the white 'progressive' bourgeoisie.

The ANC adopted this line and attempted to build a movement called the 'Congress of the People'. They held a conference in 1955 with the participation of ethnic organisations (such as the South Africa Indian Congress founded by Gandhi) and the liberal bourgeoisie. This Congress adopted the Freedom Charter, whose preamble stipulated that South Africa belonged equally to all the different races living in it, but failed to put forward the central demand of the South African revolution: the elementary democratic demand for 'one person, one vote'.

Strictly pacifist demonstrations were organised under the leadership of

the ANC and on this basis also, the ANC sought to rebuild the trade union movement in SACTU (South African Council of Trade Unions, formed in 1957).

In response to this orientation, described as treacherous and capitulationist before the white liberals, a split occurred within the ANC, and in 1958 the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), a black nationalist organisation linked with the American Blacks, was formed.

These two organisations involved the masses in a succession of peaceful demonstrations. The 'forces of law and order' of the apartheid regime responded brutally. In Sharpeville, on March 21, 1960, thousands of unarmed, peaceful demonstrators were fired upon by the police and 69 were killed.

Believing that it had dealt a critical blow to Black nationalism, the government decided to declare independence, transforming the Union into a Republic. Meanwhile the PAC and ANC were proscribed and the leaders (including Nelson Mandela) were arrested and imprisoned. With this, the apartheid regime experienced a few years of relative calm, which helped to reassure the foreign investors and a period of consolidation of the South African economy opened up.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The creation of the South African Republic changed nothing fundamentally for the white minority in power. Also, for the majority of blacks, nothing changed with the severing of the final links between South Africa and Britain.

Even the Constitution of the South African state remained the same, except for the replacement of a president of the Republic for the



Governor General - though their powers remained the same.

The whole of the apartheid system remained intact and the black majority continued to be deprived of all political rights.

Apartheid rested on two main props:-

- * dispossession of their lands and the penning of the African population in reservations incapable of supplying the basic food requirements of the people. This was the system of bantustans;

- * complete control of the movement of Africans, the division of the country into white and black zones. This carve-up, together with the police control in putting it into practice, meant that the blacks were only into 'white zones' where labour demands necessitated it. The 'idle' black was legally forbidden to stay in the white areas.

But with the apartheid system, as with the foundation of the Republic of South Africa, one reality remained: the exploitation of the black majority, the colonial plunder of all its resources (including the labour force) for the benefit of white colonial society and of imperialism.

It is important to raise here the positions developed by the SACP which were subsequently taken up by the ANC in relation to the tasks of the South African revolution. Since 1962 they introduced a new 'theory' defining the situation in South Africa as one marked by 'internal colonialism'. What does this mean?

A report of the central committee of the SACP in 1962 explains this analysis as follows:

"South Africa is not a colony, but an independent state... The granting of independence to South Africa by Great Britain in 1910 was not a victory over the forces of colonialism and imperialism... The evils of colonialism as far as the non-white majority were concerned were perpetuated and reinforced."

An ANC document states that:

"...the dominant nation took root in our country during more than three centuries. It is no longer a foreign body except in the historical sense of the term."

This Stalinist theoretical feat can be summarised in two points:

1. since there is no metropolis, there is therefore no colony;
2. since there is no colony, therefore the colonials cannot be colonials.

In summary, according to this analysis, South Africa has the colour of colonialism, the taste of imperialism - but isn't colonialism!

These theoretical gymnastics, if one followed through the logic, lead to very peculiar positions. For example:-

- * the provinces of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were only colonies between 1902 and 1912 since prior to that they were independent white, Boer republics and after the foundation of the union they were only provinces of an independent state.

Were not then the wars of resistance of the African peoples an attempt to halt the colonial conquest?

If three centuries are enough to lose the character of a foreign power do we regard as colonials only those white non-Boers who came to South Africa from the eighteenth century onwards? Perhaps this means that the Portuguese who, after all, were installed in their colonies for over five centuries, were victims of a baseless liberation movement?

If one ignores the aspect of national oppression then one can draw very wrong conclusions. For example, one can see the position of white workers simply as a specific variant of a 'labour aristocracy' in the sense of a classical capitalist country. But white workers in South Africa are not simply less exploited in a quantitative sense than black workers. Trotsky posed the question very differently. Replying to those who argued that the demand of a 'black republic' was as damaging to the cause of the revolution as that of 'South Africa for the whites', he wrote:

"With regard to the whites it is a question of maintaining complete oppression; in the case of the Blacks, it is the first step toward their liberation. We must accept absolutely and without reservation, the complete and unconditional right of the Blacks to independence. Only on the basis of a mutual struggle against the domination of the white exploiters can the solidarity of Black and White workers be cultivated and strengthened."

Behind the 'original' analysis on the part of stalinism is a political line which poses the abandonment of all national and democratic demands in favour of unity with the 'white liberals' representing the 'progressive' and 'democratic' bourgeoisie.

A SLAVE COLONY

Trotsky wrote in 1935:

"Great Britain's South African possessions form a dominion only from the point of view of the white majority. From the point of view of the black majority, South Africa is a slave colony."

The proclamation of independence of the South African Republic only meant the dissolution of the last institutional links with Great Britain. For the Black majority, the South African Republic remains a slave colony, as Trotsky said.

After 1910 as following 1961, it is the reality of colonial domination which determines the tasks of the revolution, above all, that of national independence. These will be achieved under the leadership of the Black working class, the only class capable of fighting through to the end.

The South African working class occupies the decisive role in the struggle against apartheid not only in the historical sense but in the immediate sense as well. As we saw

above, from the first decades of this century it marked its imprint on the liberation struggles of the black majority and today it is the working class which is shaking the apartheid system.

The difference between South Africa and other African colonies is that in the former, the black working class is not a marginal sector in relation to the whole of the colonised population. In fact it constitutes the majority of the oppressed.

THE LAND QUESTION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF THE BANTUSTANS

The Bantustans are the reservations in which the black population are enclosed. As colonialism has developed they have seen their name, as well as their role, change. They became 'Bantustans' invested with an 'autonomous' administration while some industry was encouraged to be set up at the edges to benefit from the abundant labour outside the white areas. Following that, they were called homelands, then national homelands, having an illusory 'independence'. Since the creation of the South African Union, thousands of blacks have been deported from the white areas, often to be 'returned home' to Bantustans.

These areas comprise 13% of the total land in the Republic - intended to support 75% of the population! In 1983, infant mortality was estimated to be between 27% and 40%, depending on the region. Every black person is assigned to a Bantustan on the basis of their ethnicity despite the fact they may never have lived there. Black people are given a passport of an 'independent' Bantustan to replace the 'pass', reserved for nationals only.

The land question in the Republic of South Africa is directly determined by the colonial system in existence. As far back as 1953, an official report concluded that the reservations were unable to provide the basic food requirements of the people living there because of soil erosion, the small size of the plots and the lack of irrigation.

The main feature of the black peasantry in South Africa is the fact that they are almost totally without land. More than that, a significant proportion of the landless peasants are integrated at different times of their lives into the working class of the mines and towns. This dual characteristic must be the starting point for the elaboration of a policy of agrarian reform which the black working class has to take in hand after the seizure of power. This will pass through the complete destruction of the present system of land ownership in which some of the local population dies of hunger whilst South African capitalist farmers export food.



THE AWAKENING IN THE 1970s

The 1970's is often considered to be the period of the awakening of the black struggles. It began with the miners' strike in Namibia in 1971, followed soon afterwards by a wave of strikes, primarily in the Durban area in 1972/3.

Trade Union organisation grew out of these strikes, some unions joining together to form federations like FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions) and CUSA (Council of Unions of South Africa).

Along with the growth of trade union organisation, the struggle of the black masses developed, particularly among the youth. The uprisings in Soweto in 1976, where the regime murdered 600 students, is evidence of this. This movement radicalised and organised an important section of the youth. It developed around the ideas of the Black Consciousness movement which originated in the late 1960's. Under the leadership of Steve Biko, the black students broke away from the National Union of South African Students, a mixed race organisation led by progressive liberal white students, and they founded the South African Students Organisation (SASO) opposed to the Bantustan system and Bantu education.

At the beginning of 1970, the Black Peoples Convention (BPC) was formed around the ideas of Black Consciousness. Severe repression followed, these organisations were banned and Steve Biko, after being tortured, was murdered in a police station.

The National Party itself faced a deepening crisis with deep divisions between the 'hardliners' and those 'liberals' like Botha, who were prepared to abandon certain aspects of apartheid. It was the latter who proposed the introduction of the Indian and Coloured 'Parliaments' in an attempt to divide the black peoples. It was precisely this 'new constitution' which led to the current upsurge.

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The trade union movement represents the main organised force against the apartheid regime, although it does not include the unemployed, whose numbers have been growing with the intensification of the economic crisis, the latest estimate being three million.

The relative dispersion of the movement is a hindrance which it has attempted to overcome in a short period of time. Discussions were opened toward the setting up of one trade union federation, involving most of the existing unions.

In the course of the discussions dubbed the 'Unity Talks', the Stalinists put forward all kinds of differences - real enough but of a tactical nature - to foment divisions. On the basis of such 'differences' they and some small unions withdrew from the talks, hoping this action would bring them to an abrupt halt.

The continued growth of these class organisations, despite the economic crisis and the repression, put a stop to these divisive manoeuvres and the Unity Talks today involve the following:

- *the two national federations (FOSATU and CUSA) including importantly the Mineworkers Union (NUM), founded in August 1982 and representing nearly 200,000 workers, a third of all miners.

- *the GWU, a general union composed mainly of dockers and which organises in the Cape Province.

- *the FCWU, organising food workers.

- *the Cape Municipal Workers Union.

- *the Commercial and Catering Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA).

Together these unions organise more than 500,000 workers, more than 80% in black, independent trade unions. The discussions are proceeding quickly towards the formation of one central union federation, whilst at the same time the unions are in the front line of the mobilisation of workers around their own demands and the class struggle.

THE NATIONAL FORUM COMMITTEE

The National Forum Committee came into being a couple of weeks before the UDF and as yet is only a regroupment and not an organisation. The groupings comprising the NFC nevertheless drew up a manifesto in June 1983 and decided to launch a campaign for a boycott of the elections in the framework of the new Constitution (the bogus Indian and Coloured parliaments).

This Manifesto of the Azanian people stated:

"Our struggle for national liberation is directed against the racist capitalist system which keeps the Azanian people in slavery for the benefit of a small minority of white capitalists and their allies, the white workers and the reactionary sections of the black middle classes. The struggle against apartheid is the point of departure for our fight for freedom. Apartheid will only be destroyed together with the racist capitalist system.

The black working class, imbued with revolutionary zeal, is the leading force in our struggle. Only it can get rid of the system in force today because only it has nothing to lose. It has everything to gain in a democratic, anti-racist and socialist Azania. The historic task of the black working class and its organisations is to organise together the poor in the town and country, with the radical sections of the middle classes and put an end to the system of oppression and exploitation by the ruling white class.

The victory of our struggle for national liberation depends on principles which will ensure the national struggle for freedom will not be turned against our people by treacherous and opportunist leaders. The most important of these principles are:

- *anti-racism and anti-imperialism.
- *non-collaboration with the oppressors and their political instruments.
- *the independent organisation of the working class.
- *opposition to any alliance with sections of the ruling class."

The NFC poses the first task as the building of a workers organisation, independent of the State, the employers and reactionary petty bourgeois leaders (...) popularising the demand for a united front of workers in direct opposition to the strategy of the Popular Front (...) popularising and explaining the slogan for a Constituent Assembly, in opposition to the demand for a National Convention.

Among the organisations belonging to the NFC is AZAPO, which has essentially the same programme as expressed in the NFC manifesto. AZAPO addresses itself to the ideology black consciousness and its leaders include the founders of the Black Peoples Convention, following their release from prison.

CUSA also belongs to the NFC as well as Action Youth (a black youth organisation which includes in its platform support for the Nicaraguan and Polish peoples), the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM), a student organisation belonging to the black consciousness movement. In all, more than a hundred organisations, national and local, belong to the NFC.



UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

The United Democratic Front (UDF) does not have a programme. It was formed in August 1983 on the sole basis of opposition to the new Constitution. T. Lekota, responsible for UDF propaganda, explained the position of the Front as follows:

"The UDF must be seen as a process. It is a response to government action and therefore an organisation based on protest (...) We believe that the central principle is common opposition to the 'New Deal' politics (...) We are not concerned whether our members adhere to the Black Consciousness movement on the Charter for Freedom or any other programme. Our concern is to gather together those organisations who are opposed to the legislation..."

The UDF comprises around 700 different organisations; local community associations (residents, sporting, etc), the NUSAS, Black Seal (a white, liberal, charitable body), trade unions etc. All these organisations have the same number of representatives in the leading bodies, irrespective of the number of members they have. There is no

individual membership of the UDF, only organisations.

While CUSA is a member of the Front as well as the NFC, FOSATU and the GWU (among others) have criticised it as an 'alliance bringing together the enemies of the working class under the leadership of the bourgeoisie'. This has not prevented them from working together on specific campaigns. But the trade unions did not allow the UDF as such to take part in their unity committees organising May Day activities or the massive 'stayaway' in November.

CRITIQUE OF THE UDF

The main critique of the UDF made by opponents of apartheid concerns:

*the absence of any programme or principles (the impossibility of securing an agreement between the organisations of the UDF on the proposal for a referendum among the Indians and Coloureds on a new Constitution is one example; some organisations demand it should be held, others oppose it).

*the presence within the UDF of white bourgeois and petit bourgeois organisations defending their own class interests.

*the participation of ethnic organisations (the Natal Indian Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress, the Muslim Congress, the Association of Coloured Shopkeepers in the Cape etc) raising doubts on its position with regard to a multiracial South Africa instead of a non-racial South Africa.

*its structure, giving the same weight to every organisation whatever their importance.

*the demands of its leaders in relation to the holding of a 'National Convention' to negotiate with the government.

MANY LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Outside these two regroupments, there exists in South Africa a multitude of local organisations of the black community and trade union organisations which have no affiliations. As an example, the African Peoples Democratic Union of South Africa (APDUSA) has re-emerged after several years silence following imprisonment of its leaders.

APDUSA was one of the main components of the Unity Movement, based on the platform of the Non-European Unity Movement. It was active at the start of the 1960s. APDUSA is not a member of the UDF since it considers its platform insufficient and it criticises the UDF as being without principles, regrouping organisations with different class interests.

SIGNIFICANT UPSURGE

This article does not claim to examine all aspects of a situation leading to one of the most significant upsurges of the second half of the twentieth century. Even less does it claim to give a definitive answer to all theoretical and political problems which the South African revolution places on the order of the day. It attempts to provide the first elements of a perspective which has to be deepened through struggle within the framework of the organisations fighting apartheid.

BLACK REVOLUTION AGAINST APARTHEID

What we are seeing in South Africa is the beginning of the revolution, the beginning of the black revolution against apartheid, against a state organised on the basis of apartheid.

It would be futile to speculate on the rhythms, the precise moments of development of this revolution. Like all revolutions, it is certain things will not proceed in a straight line. But it is irreversible. It will not stop until it achieves its objective - the smashing of apartheid from top to bottom.

The repression has been unable to stem the rise of the mass movement or its growing organisation. The depth of the crisis is already evident in the sharp oscillations at the top of the racist state apparatus. It has gone from promises of 'significant reforms' to Botha to make any changes. Then to new statements proposing changes in the laws regarding citizenship and the abandoning of the 'pass system'. The confusion, indicative in its contradictory measures is not confined to Pretoria. The Reagan administration is in difficulties with regard to its support for the racist regime. It is faced with a powerful movement against apartheid in the US itself and it has to be blind to ignore the impact of developments in South Africa on the black masses in the United States. It is putting pressure on Pretoria to 'modify' apartheid. But it was precisely such a modification, that is the new Constitution giving Indians and Coloureds the right to vote in 'separate', powerless parliaments that unleashed the current revolutionary wave.

ONE PERSON, ONE VOTE

"One Person, One Vote" - this is the demand at the heart of the South African revolution. But the achievement of this demand implies that not a single stone of the edifice of apartheid remains or of the state apparatus, which is inseparable from it. This objective is inextricably linked with the destruction of imperialist domination and of the specific colonial system of oppression of the black population and with the re-integration of the Bantustans into a unified Republic.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1935 in a letter to the South African Trotskyists:

"Insofar as the victorious revolution will radically change the relations not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the social revolution in South Africa also have a national character.

"We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.

"Nevertheless, the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by its own methods."

And Trotsky added:

"A victorious revolution is inconceivable without the awakening of the black masses and that in its turn will give them what they lack today - confidence in their own strength.

"Under these conditions, the South African Republic will emerge

first of all as a 'black' republic; this does not exclude of course either full equality for the whites or brotherly relations between the races - depending mainly on the conduct of the whites."

DEMOCRATIC DEMANDS

Thus, these elementary democratic demands concentrate the revolutionary objectives of a movement which already has disturbed the apartheid system to its foundations and will not end without having effects worldwide.

This struggle against a barbaric form of oppression which has clear origins in slavery is led above all by a powerful working class (numerically the most important in the whole African continent) concentrated and strongly organised in unions who are in the front line of the fight against apartheid.

The fact that capitalism has outgrown any progressive capacity, along with the reactionary nature of imperialism, are evident in their defence of a regime based on horrendous oppression. And it is in the country, where the majority blacks are the most deprived of any rights that the most powerful working class in the continent is emerging, taking upon itself the revolutionary struggle for the rights of all.



It is not only that the views of Trotsky on South Africa impress us with their relevance today despite the fact they were written nearly fifty years ago. What is being shown today in South Africa is a new and burning verification of the theory and method of Trotsky and the programmatic bases of the Fourth International.

The theory of permanent revolution is the point of departure - as a generalisation of the dynamic of the workers revolution in one epoch - which allows us to overcome the tasks and problems of the South African revolution.

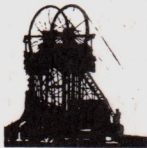
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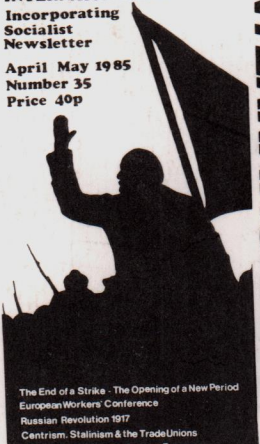
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