

INTERNATIONAL
ING
MARXIST GROUP

**REVOLUTIONARY
SOCIALISM**

why and how

INTRODUCTION

In March 1977 only a pact with the Liberals saved the Labour Government from being bundled out of office, postponing an inevitable rout at the polls. In those 'uncertain' days preceding the vote in the House of Commons the **Financial Times** share index fell by 19 points. When the Liberals did their rescue act the index rose again. The best guarantee that the employers have got for the continuation of wage freeze had been saved.

David Steel, the Liberal leader, then boasted that his 'pact' made sure 'socialism was one thing this country was not going to have'. He could have been more accurate and said: 'Socialism is one thing this country has never had.' Nothing that this or preceding Labour Governments have ever done has taken the working people one step nearer to socialism. Time after time Labour has entered office offering reforms. Time after time Labour Governments have discarded these reforms and finished up attacking the living standards of the very people who put them into office.

All the Labour leaders can offer is more cuts in the social services, more reductions in living standards and bigger dole queues. They are impotent before the increasing wave of racialism, unable to stem the tide of the growing menace of the fascist National Front. They have attacked the most elementary basic democratic rights by their vicious Prevention of Terrorism Act. It is they who arranged the deportation of Philip Agee, whose revelations about the CIA have done more for freedom and

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Pennington is the National Organiser of the International Marxist Group [IMG]; and a member of its Political Committee. He joined the Communist Party when he was working in the pits during the late 1940s but left because he disagreed with the reformist British Road to Socialism which was first published in 1951.

During the 1950s he worked for two years as a full-time organiser for the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers Union — the blue union. He was then a member of what is now the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Until he left the Socialist Labour League — forerunner of the WRP — he was from 1957 until 1960 a full-time worker for them.

socialism than any Act or Bill put down by this Labour Government.

This pamphlet argues that there is an alternative to the class-collaborationist policies of reformism and that the central task confronting socialists and militants today is to build such an alternative. That alternative, says the pamphlet, cannot follow the parliamentary road, and to be successful it has to base itself on the mass action of the working class and its allies.

Most importantly it puts the case for mass united action in the context of a programme that can not only meet the immediate needs of the working class but can take the working class in the direction of creating its own alternative socialist society. The pamphlet says why there is a need for an internationalist revolutionary party, explaining both the tasks of such a party and showing that the growth and influence of the revolutionary party is inextricably bound up with the emergence of mass united working class action.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE
BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

Socialist
ORGANISATION FOR REVOLUTION

Challenge
ON CAPITALISM

Socialist Challenge

Socialist Challenge will be out for the first time on 9 June 1977. It will be a committed paper, pledged to full support for the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle, and aiming to be a voice and an organiser for the socialist revolution.

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What's behind the crisis?

Unemployment climbing steadily towards the two million mark. Prices going through the roof— in January 1977 prices jumped 2.6 per cent and the annual inflation rate zoomed from 15.1 per cent to 16.6 per cent. The staggering sum of £8,000 million cut from the social services and more cuts on the way.

This is the result of three years of a Labour Government and its Social Contract. Translate the statistics into human terms and they say you have less money to buy food. You cannot afford the clothes that you need. Hundreds of thousands of working women whose wages were essential if the family was to even try and keep up with rising prices have been forced out of their jobs and back into the home. At the same time, wages buy less each week. A family who had an income of £60.80 in April 1975 has suffered a cut in real wages of £9.50 a week because of price increases over the last two years.

The cuts in the social services are having devastating effects on health, education and care for the young and aged. Three quarters of Britain's hospitals were built before 1918. Most of these tottering, decaying buildings are a menace to the very health of the patients they accommodate. But Labour has cut by £80 million the hospital building programme, so plans for new hospitals lie buried in some file — postponed to an indefinite future. Working class children are taught in overcrowded class rooms, often in buildings that should have been pulled down years ago. At the same time the Government has stopped the school slum clearance programme and cut expenditure in primary and secondary school education from £610 to £365 million.

To demonstrate its compassion for the old people, the children and the handicapped, the Government has reduced by half the number of residential homes for their use.

In Ireland the British Army's bloody war of repression against the Catholic minority drags on. The racist thugs, encouraged by the speeches of Enoch Powell, the racist immigration laws of the Labour Government, and the total failure of the trade union and labour leaders to offer an alternative to the crisis, grow ever more bold and ever more vicious. The limited rights that women won under the 1967 Abortion Act are under attack. Despite the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts, women are still regarded as little more than a source of cheap labour who can be despatched off back to the home when capitalism no longer needs them.

Normality has become raging inflation and lengthening dole queues. Poverty and insecurity are an in-built feature of the lives of millions of people, bringing about growing frustration and violence. There is an increase of violence in the home, there are more battered babies, more battered wives. The confidence of just a few years ago has begun to dissolve into a growing despair as fewer and fewer people feel sure about their future. The crisis is no longer a word simply used by Marxists. It has become accepted into our every day vocabulary. The crisis is no longer exceptional, it is now part of every day life.

This crisis is not due to some strange fluke of circumstances, or because some Chancellor got his sums wrong, nor is it due to the fact that people have not been working hard enough.

The crisis is caused by the capitalist system — a system which puts profit above the needs of people.

Politicians, journalists and 'learned' academics have innumerable phrases to describe our society and the economy on which that society rests. They talk of the 'mixed economy', 'western democracy', 'parliamentary democracy' and even 'the free society'. There is however one word that really describes our society and that is capitalism.

Capitalism is a system that is based on the need to make profits. No goods are produced by the capitalists unless they think that they can sell them for a profit. Each firm or combine individually decides what, and how much, it will produce and only plans its production and marketing in consultation with its own directors and 'experts'.

Meanwhile their competitors pour resources into producing identical commodities, desperately trying to keep their plans secret from their rivals as they race to be first on the market. This inevitably causes an enormous waste of resources. In the end the only people who pay for this wasteful duplication of resources are the workers who produce the commodities and the consumers who buy them.

The drug monopolies provide a classic example of the waste and anarchy of capitalism. Despite all their boasts about how their 'wonder' drugs are beneficial to people's health, investigation shows that most of their claims are a fiction.

In Britain it has been estimated that 42 per cent of the drugs they manufacture are ineffective. In the United States 10,000 out of 15,000 drugs tested were found 'to lack any kind of efficacy'. In the insane competition to make people swallow one pill as against another — neither which differ in quality — millions of pounds are poured into advertising. All this does is push up the price of the medicines and leave less money for research. For example, in 1965 the drug companies spent £15.6 million on advertising and only £11.6 million on research. This waste of resources and lack of concern for social need is a feature of all capitalist enterprises. Britain suffers from a chronic shortage of housing. The Child Poverty Action Group say there are more than one million families on the waiting list. The big building firms answer this desperate social need by increasing their work overseas. Wimpeys for example have increased their overseas work by 76 per cent. Money goes where it finds the highest return.

Because it is tied to the profit motive capitalism is unable to plan production in a sane, rational way. It dissipates fortunes in advertising — passing the cost on to the consumer. It deliberately produces for obsolescence so you will have to keep re-buying goods which should, and could, be made to last for far longer periods.

Its competitive nature compels it to constantly seek new ways of exploiting its workforce so that its production costs are cut. If it fails to do that then its rivals will drive it to the wall. Scientific and technological developments like automation and atomic energy offer untold possibilities for increasing production and giving everyone a massive increase in living standards. Instead they are simply put to use to make profits for the small minority who can afford to purchase them. Alternatively they are used to develop the most horrific weapons of destruction which hang like some menacing shadow over the future of humanity itself.

This anarchic system creates untold wealth and power for a few people. For the great majority it means low wages, inadequate housing, worsening health care, the threat of the dole queue and the insecurity of old age. When capitalism has used up its workers it simply refers them to the Social Security.

The capitalist system ensures that economic power is concentrated in the hands of

a small group of people. In Britain 100 firms control some 60 per cent of private manufacturing. Two hundred big monopolies control 80 per cent of all production. Only five per cent of the adult population own any shares and most of that five per cent only own a few quid's worth. A tiny clique of one per cent of the total population own 70 per cent of all privately owned shares. No wonder that over half of Britain's personal wealth is in the hands of five per cent of the population.

The bottom half of the population, made up of 80 per cent of the people, own less than 20 per cent of the private wealth. Here are some examples of the extraordinary power that some people exert over industry.

Leading Industrial Shareholders 1972 figures.

NAME	FIRM	£ millions
Sir Jules Thorn	Thorn Electrical Inds.	25.6
Sir Charles Forte	Trust House Forte	28.9
Lord Samuel	Land Securities Inv. Trust	28.0
Sir Godfrey Mitchell	George Wimpey & Co.	20.0
Maxwell Joseph	Grand Metropolitan Hotels	10.6
Hyman Kreitman	Tesco Stores	10.0

Apart from their inherited and accumulated wealth many of our top people get huge annual incomes. The figures below (taken from the January 1977 issue of **Labour Research**) are just a few examples of some annual salaries.

CHAIRMAN	COMPANY	SALARY (£)
Sir Frank McFadzean	Shell	91,842
Sir Arthur Bryan	Wedgwood	91,000
Sir Val Duncan	Rio Tinto-Zinc	77,796
Sir Eric Drake	British Petroleum	75,438

The former owners of the railways are paid some £50 million a year to compensate them for the nationalisation of the railways which were making a loss under private ownership. They are therefore free to re-invest that money to amass bigger profits and make the public pay for their compensation by higher rail fares and worse services.

The wealth of the capitalists gives them enormous power over the press. Only the really wealthy can find the amount of money that is needed to give them control of a newspaper. They are the people who choose the editors who control the day-to-day running of their papers. And quite clearly if they pay the piper they intend to call the tune. The editors are only too well aware what views they should put forward. They also make sure that their feature writers — although they may be free to criticise this or that aspect of capitalism — do not advocate getting rid of capitalism as a system. No capitalist newspaper could exist without advertising. If they had to depend on sales alone they would soon be out of business. The big companies would soon withdraw their advertising from any newspaper which advocated a socialist solution to Britain's crisis.

John Davies, the Tory politician, was earning £55,000 a year from one of his directorships and also drew an income from 15 other directorships. Sir Brian Mountain — a busy man — is a director of no less than 44 different companies and chairperson of 20 of them!

This concentration of wealth enables these people to exercise tremendous power over society. The banks and the finance houses, along with the insurance companies, can and do dictate terms to the Government.

The **Daily Telegraph**, when discussing Healey's January White Paper in 1976, explained how the Bank of England put the screws on the Labour Chancellor when it wrote 'The Bank of England has kindly arranged things for the Chancellor so that whatever happens he is bound to lose. Already with little more than the six months period of grace elapsed, it seems 1,500 million dollars of the 5,000 million dollars credit has been spent... The likely outcome is, therefore, a pound still in trouble, a labour movement further disillusioned, and the need to seek IMF help on IMF conditions...'

Joe Haines, Wilson's former press secretary, has revealed how the so-called neutral civil servants at the Treasury created an artificial run on the pound by conspiring with the Bank of England and deliberately took no steps to back sterling on the world money markets. The aim of this operation was to force the Government to introduce a compulsory incomes policy.

When the Government needs money for public spending these are the people who call the tune. They dictate the terms of interest. They get the rake offs. In 1968 a council house could be built for £6,000. Now it costs £14,000. In that period the interest rates have gone up from 7 per cent to 14 per cent, so instead of paying £420 per annum interest it is now £1,960 per annum. Nine years ago local authorities were paying out £449 millions per annum in interest. By 1974 this had reached £1,126 millions.

But it is not just the financiers who feed on public expenditure. Because the capitalists claim they have no incentive to invest — i.e. they insist on bigger profits — the Government has a deliberate policy of encouraging investment. Healey's 1974 Budget handed out concessions to industry in the form of tax relief on stock profits which benefited these companies to the tune of £800 million a year. Special handouts are given to firms through the National Enterprise Board.

The nationalised industries — often attacked by the capitalists for their non-efficiency and non-profitability — are used to prop up the profits of private firms. ICI has a special contract, which lasts until 1984, that enables them to buy gas for £20 million a year. The market price for this gas is £110 million a year.

Tory politicians are the natural allies of big business. Many of them are business men themselves. Their party is heavily subsidised by private companies and the Tories as the traditional party of the ruling class champion free enterprise. Big business does not however restrict its contacts to Tory or even Liberal MPs alone.

When Harold Wilson went out of office in 1970 he was subsidised to the extent of £20,000 a year by a group of 'kind' business people. Woodrow Wyatt, an ex-Labour MP and quite a pal of the private enterprise system, writing in the **Sunday Mirror** on Harold's nest egg said:

'It is not at all unusual for well wishers to help important politicians carry out their work effectively.

'The alternative for Sir Harold would have been to depend on the Labour Party Headquarters. This would have made him more subject to influence from the Labour Party National Executive....' Instead of being responsible to the highest elected body in the Labour Party it is presumably better for Labour politicians to be responsible to wealthy business men whom no-one elected!

Wilson belongs to a long tradition of Labour leaders who have always felt responsible to capitalism. Ramsay MacDonald set the ball rolling in 1931 when the Bank of England ordered a big sale of sterling. To save sterling the bankers demanded cuts in dole money and the pay of public servants.

When MacDonald and his cronies in the Labour Cabinet could not get all their proposed cuts through he joined the Tories in a National Government. Pay packets and dole money went down — unemployment rose to three million.

The first two post-war Governments both had Labour majorities. Stafford Cripps the Chancellor brought in wage restraint. His successor Hugh Gaitskell introduced prescription charges in the new National Health Service which Labour had previously boasted would be free. Labour's Attorney General, Sir Hartley Shawcross, prosecuted seven dockers at the Old Bailey for daring to lead a dock strike which aimed to get dockworkers a living wage. On at least two occasions that Labour Government used troops to break dockworkers' strikes.

In 1965, just a year after being elected, the Labour Government set up the Prices and Incomes Board. This body had a simple task. That was to maintain high profits for the capitalists and peg down wages.

In 1966 Labour introduced a legally binding wage freeze for six months and cut public spending by £500 million. The same Government also tried to ram through the infamous 'In Place of Strife'. This would have curtailed trade union rights and left the working class defenceless whilst the employers increased prices and profits. Only independent trade union action put a stop to that. The last two Labour Governments have been no exception to this dreary round of betrayal.

As the economic and social crisis has bit ever deeper, threatening to sweep away the gains of the post-war years, so it was inevitable that most workers would react with apprehension and worry. The trade union leaders immediately seized on this mood, exploiting it in the interests of the capitalist class.

It was Jack Jones, the 'left' of yesteryear, who was the architect of the Social Contract which ensured living standards dived down so that profits could go up. It was Jack Jones and Len Murray along with the other TUC bosses who threatened to smash the seamen for daring to want to strike for a living wage.

It was Hughie Scanlon and Jones who backed the bosses' strike threat to the striking Leyland toolmakers. It was Scanlon who told the members of his union at Heathrow to get back to work. Not only did the trade union leaders oppose any attempt by their members to strike against falling living standards but they also acted as the chief justifiers of the Labour Government's pro-capitalist policies.

They have claimed that 'wage restraint could reduce the rate of inflation' and 'cutting down on strikes and harder work will encourage investment'. Such policies, they insisted, would 'strengthen international confidence in sterling'.

By their use of their control of the trade unions to prevent any national action against the pay laws, and by their role as advocates of Labour's pro-capitalist policies, they have been decisive in dragging the mass organisations of the working class behind the interests of British capitalism. They have been nothing more than the policemen of the ruling class.



Leyland workers' response to Jack Jones when he visited the Longbridge plant in February.

Inflation and some 'left' solutions

THE LABOUR and trade union leaders join in a chorus with the employers and Tories to claim that inflation can be ended by cutting down on public expenditure and moderating wage claims.

But in the last two years there has been a drastic **drop** in the rate at which wages have increased. At the same time inflation has galloped ahead at an average of between 15 and 20 per cent a year. So despite the fact that Callaghan and Healey have had their way over wage restraint, nothing has been done to control inflation. This is because it is not wage rises that cause inflation but the expansion of credit.

Ever since the 1950s, all the capitalist economies ran up an ever-increasing volume of debts. These debts range from loans by banks to big companies to finance investment projects to mortgage and hire purchase schemes. The effect of this massive expansion of credit was that the level of spending power in the economy has tended to run further and further ahead of the value of goods and services currently being produced. This increase in spending power expresses itself as a vast increase in the supply of money. In the United States, for instance, private borrowing escalated from \$566 billion in 1960 to \$870 billion in 1965, and reached \$2,000 billion by the end of 1974. The greater part of this amount of money was **private** rather than public debt. Yet the rate of increase on manufacturing output actually fell as compared to this acceleration in credit. This inevitably means the devaluation of the currency. Or to put it another way, each unit of currency purchases less and less goods.

The causes of inflation lie in one of the foundations of the capitalist boom of the 1950s and 1960s. At that time governments all over the world decided that an expansionary supply of money and credit was needed to stimulate demand and investment. However, the resulting inflation turned into one of the plagues of post-war capitalism. The volume of debts rose faster and faster, while less and less of the borrowed money actually went into increasing production.

Credit policy was not the only cause of inflation. The biggest price jumps in recent years have been triggered off by periodic orgies of speculation. Between 1972 and 1973 gold, land, diamonds and objets d'art became objects of massive speculation. The basic commodities did not escape the attentions of the speculators. Consumer prices shot up. In Britain the rate of increase of retail prices doubled in one year from 7 to 14 per cent, in the USA from 3.3 per cent to 10.2 per cent and in Japan from 4.3 per cent to an almost unbelievable 23 per cent in one year. These ravages in the living standard of the working class were not brought about by wage rises — in none of these countries did wages rise by anything like these amounts. But the boost behind these leaps in prices was capitalist investors deciding that the value of their investments would be best preserved by buying durables rather than retaining their money in paper currency or in plant and machinery.

Increases in prices have also had enormous effects on public spending. The state is now the biggest employer and biggest spender in the British economy, accounting for over 50 per cent of the national income. Such a vast organisation cannot be

funded out of taxation alone. Like a private company, it has to borrow money from the banks to finance its projects. In times of economic stability the banks and the finance houses are quite happy to oblige. Under such conditions such 'gilt edged' securities are considered to be safe, reliable investments which offer a guaranteed yield. Now all that is changing. Inflation puts up the cost of goods and services that the state needs which means that its borrowing requirements increase enormously. This is one of the reasons why the public sector 'borrowing requirement' rose from £1,378 million in 1971-72 to the staggering figure of £9,000 million in 1975-76 — a six-fold increase in the public debt in five years! At the same time the banks became increasingly reluctant to extend their credit to cover this debt — not only because banks would instinctively draw back from customers who are getting ever deeper into debt, but because the banks themselves were getting into deep water with inflation. If the value of money is falling then so is the value of bank assets. The banks therefore cut down their credit facilities. This applies especially to long term borrowers — which the state is.

The Government has a number of ways in which it tries to get round this problem. It can increase interest rates. This aims to induce the banks to lend money to the state. However, this can only be for short term loans, since the state by increasing interest rates puts itself further and further into long term debt. Increasing interest rates also makes it harder for private industry to borrow money for investment and sharpens a recession in the economy.

The problems of the exchange rate are also caused by the need of the capitalists to get the highest possible return on their money. At any one time the banks will hold money on behalf of the capitalists who live all over the world. If profitable outlets appear outside Britain then, without hesitation, they will shift their money there. This worsens the crisis of public expenditure, because it depletes the money available to the banks. Furthermore it affects the exchange rate, because sterling is sold and foreign currency bought. The price at which the pound exchanges drops, imports become dearer, which means that the rate of inflation climbs.

So the credit that appeared good for capitalism yesterday is turning poisonous today. Credit which expanded so rapidly is increasingly going to save firms from bankruptcy. The employers are not increasing production, they are increasing their debts! This is why speculators rush off to buy in commodities and do not want to invest in machinery and production. Industry, particularly British industry, is steadily going bankrupt.

When the right wing Labour and trade union leaders claim that sacrifices and national unity can save British capitalism, they offer a bankrupt political solution for an economically bankrupt system.

Not all social democratic politicians defend the Social Contract and propose a policy of deflation. Many supporters of **Tribune** and many of the lefts inside the trade unions argue for a reflationary policy and claim that really the employers are making huge profits. Often they will trot out imposing profit figures to prove that it's just a capitalist conspiracy which claims there is a profound economic crisis. They get the most vital fact wrong. They do not understand that what matters is not the mass of profit but the rate of profit, or the rate of return on capital. Even in a crisis the mass of profits can rise (through tax concessions, by using different accounting procedures, by Government grants or even increased sales) but the rate of return is often behaving quite differently. It is this rate of return which is really vital in determining the behaviour of capital.

Reflating the economy has an attractive ring. However, it only makes sense if you believe that British capitalism is simply mismanaged. Such a policy demands that you do all the things that are needed to make capitalism virile and healthy. This is

why the left want import controls. They believe that they will protect a weak, decaying capitalist system. In the end their policy comes down to encouraging the capitalists to be more co-operative with their workforce and more responsive to the needs and interests of the nation. Unfortunately the ruling class are not won over by such arguments. They know that reflation will send inflation through the roof and that their money will sink in value. They stubbornly cling to the idea — which is correct from their point of view — that only by cutting *real* wages, increasing the workload, slashing the social services and weakening the power of the trade unions can they restore the rate of profit. The right-wing leaders lend credence to the arguments of the ruling class that pay norms and higher productivity will get the economy out of trouble.

The left plaintively urge the capitalists to stop making excessive profits and promise them and the working class some Eldorado where profits can be higher and wages and social services will improve. In reality this is nothing more than a plea to return to the peaceful co-operation of the 1950s. The capitalists remain unimpressed. They are dominated by the need to improve their return on capital and the arguments of the left reformists are even less attractive to them than those of the right-wing leaders.

Our democracy and theirs

Even when the reformist leaders are against measures that the capitalist class might take their only solution is to try and change things through Parliament, which they extol as the most democratic form of government. The democracy of Parliament is in reality a myth, and its power to change anything in a fundamental sense is an illusion. For the great majority of people, democracy lasts five minutes every five years — that is about the time it takes to get into the voting booth and out again. None of the representatives they vote for are accountable and the electorate has no way of ensuring that the platform that the MPs were elected on will be carried out. In Parliament the most incredible frauds can be carried out by the MPs for which there is no come-back, except some five years later when the damage has been done. When members of his local party tried to unseat Reg Prentice, the Labour MP for Newham North East, he retorted that he was elected by the electorate, not his local Labour Party. Prentice conveniently forgot to mention that the policies on which he was elected, and on which he was supposed to have fought for once elected, were not the policies he carried out when he got back to Westminster.

By deliberately flouting the mandate from the electors, Prentice, like Callaghan and Healey, defrauded not just the local Labour Party but also every person who voted for him in Newham North East.

Prentice is not an exception to the rule. Shirley Williams, the Minister of Education, is also a great champion of parliamentary democracy and what she calls government by consent. She says the alternative is coercion. Like all her reformist colleagues, Williams never gets round to explaining who has to give their consent to whom.

A former Labour Party leader, and a man much admired by the 'democratic' Williams, was a gentleman called Hugh Gaitskell. He had some interesting things to say on democracy and parliament. Speaking in the House of Commons on 9 October 1953 he said: 'My own opinion is that if the Communist Party is near to taking power — and you know what the result of that will be — the democratic parties are entitled to stop it by suppressing the Communist Party. In other words democracy can only work if all parties observe what are called the rules of the game. It may be necessary to deprive some people of freedom in order to preserve the greater freedom of society.'

So it may be necessary to restrict their right to strike — shades of Labour's 'In Place of Strife'. You may have to suppress political parties if they have too radical a programme — as Gaitskell was prepared to do. You may have to detain people without trial — as Labour did in Northern Ireland. You may have to attack the freedom of the press — as Merlyn Rees did over Agee and Hosenball. You may have to forcibly separate wives from their husbands, children from their parents — as Labour's Immigration Laws do. When it gets down to harsh realities, Labour has never hesitated to use coercion against working people if it is needed to get the consent of the capitalist class.

As long as the parliamentary system and constitutional government works in this way the ruling class are quite content to allow the 'elected representatives of the people' to carry out the rule of 'consent'. However, when it does not operate on their behalf, they have no scruples about using all the powers of coercion that their wealth, power and connections can mobilise. The situation in Ireland in 1913 shows vividly how much the ruling class respect Parliament when real issues are involved. At the time, the Government was trying to get a Bill on Home Rule through the House of Commons. Important sections of the British ruling class were outraged, and their chief spokesman, Sir Edward Carson, urging open rebellion against this Bill, said: 'I do not hesitate to tell you that you ought to set yourselves against the constituted authority in the land... We will not allow any individual or any body of men, whether they call themselves a parliament or a government, to take away what we consider essential for the carrying on of our rights and privileges.' What is more, Carson got the backing of the top British Army Brass then stationed at the Curragh in Ireland. Coercion worked and Home Rule was ditched.

Contrast this forthright defence of ruling class interests to the shameful, apologetic cowardice of Jack Jones, who exhorts working people to accept the rules of the capitalist game but does not expect the capitalists themselves to obey these rules. Justifying his support for the Social Contract Jack Jones has said: 'Two years ago we could have easily faced a coup in Britain. The fear of hyperinflation was strong. There was talk of private armies being assembled. There was talk of an end to democracy...' Mr. Jones drew the lesson. If the workers are making the capitalists angry by getting too much money — then the workers must be forced to take less. Otherwise we will lose the right of consent!

Parliament therefore functions as long as the elected representatives consent to the capitalist rules of the game. That, however, is only half the story, because whatever these representatives decide, the decisions have to be carried out by a vast army of other people in the administration. If the electorate has little or no control over what their representatives decide, then they have even *less* control over these other people. Some Members of Parliament do act as administrators, but they are generally purely nominal heads of Whitehall departments. In practice the administration is quite a separate and distinct body of people. These are the professional civil servants and include the Whitehall bureaucracy, judges, policemen, heads of local government bodies, military chiefs, managers of public enterprises, etc. No-one elects these people. They are professional appointees.



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There is in fact a *separation* between the legislature and the executive. Nobody *elects* the executive at all, let alone on a regular basis! It is a typical piece of British camouflage to call millions of unelected bureaucrats possessing the power to throw you out of your home, to deprive you of education, to decide what sort of home or school you get, to imprison you, and even to *kill* you quite legally — public servants!

But Shirley Williams would argue that the executive is under the control of the legislature, under the control of Parliament. Power lies in Parliament.

Power does *not* lie in Parliament. In fact power does not lie in any institution. It lies with certain *people*. The people with whom power lies are not the people who are elected every few years, who come and go with the wind. The power lies with a body of people, people who are in power *all the time*. Without these people, no government could carry out any laws. It would, quite simply and literally, be powerless. Hence these people, the executive, effectively have the power to veto a government, no matter that nominally they are accountable to the government and to Parliament.

Take the Treasury, for instance. Nobody elected the Treasury officials. Yet the role of this body in forcing the government to accept an incomes policy has recently been exposed with the publication of Joe Haines' book — Mr Haines was formerly Harold Wilson's press officer. In July 1975, a sudden plunge in sterling hustled the government into an incomes policy. One IMF official said: 'A week or two later, a high Treasury official encapsulated the episode to me in the following terse comment: "We organised a bear raid on sterling in an attempted coup d'état against a trade union government; unfortunately we failed"' (reported in the *Guardian*, 18 February 1977). The civil servants sabotaged the pound to force their own policy on a government. That's power.

Or take the judges. Parliaments undoubtedly have the power to make laws, but

it is the judges who decide whether these laws should be implemented, and indeed make new laws which Parliament never even discussed. Nobody alive today voted for the 1875 Conspiracy Law. Yet suddenly a High Court judge decides, off his own bat, to jail a number of workers under this Act for doing things — picketing — that have been done for years (and which millions of people will have voted for at some time in their lives). That's power.

Or take the army. There are hundreds of cases around the world of the army acting independently of the elected government, overthrowing it and ruling by sheer force. A parliamentary democracy is a *luxury* — a very important luxury, but a luxury nonetheless. Chile is the most outstanding recent case. But, you say, 'Britain is different'. Yet, among the army brass, the notion of acting independently of governments goes back a long way. In 1913, British army officers mutinied rather than obey orders to attack Ulster Protestant volunteers. They knew that these people, Carson & Co., the forerunners of modern-day Loyalism, were a valuable weapon of counter-revolution both in Ireland and in Britain. They weren't going to break that. In 1974, the Protestant Ulster Workers Council strike, aimed at resurrecting the Protestant ascendancy over the Catholic minority, was opposed by the British government. Reports began to emerge of army officers encouraging the strikers.

When Jones was questioned about his revelations over the coup being prepared in 1975 he said that there had been 'loose talking' around the 'top echelons of society'. Nobody except the fascists and a group of extreme right-wing fanatics would vote for a *coup d'état*. Such a question would have been voted for in the swank clubs of the West End or the expensive dining rooms of the rich. But then that is where the real power lies.

In other words, 'power' is *not* under the democratic control of the majority of the population. Not only are governments that remain based on parliamentary democracy virtually unaccountable to the electorate, the government itself is not even *in charge of the country!* This is the reality of the situation, which no amount of democratic phraseology can mask. And it stems from one simple fact: the state is a *bourgeois* state, that is to say it is built by, and for, the purpose of maintaining the rule of one class over the rest of society.

It isn't difficult to see what will happen if the electorate put a government in Parliament that promises to lead the working class to socialism, or even make radical reforms. Millions of people might *vote* for this, but this would not mean that a government, so long as it relied on parliament, could take one single step towards achieving its programme. For it can only rule by the consent of the ruling class. The first line of defence of this class — when all the means of propaganda, repression and witch-hunts have proved ineffective to stop the election of such a government — is the executive arm of the state. The parliamentary road to socialism is an illusion. The only place this road leads to is a mass grave.

Experience proves that only by smashing the old apparatus and building a new state power, *composed of workers themselves*, organised and elected through mass bodies, and armed for the purpose, is it possible to achieve socialism. And such a state will put parliamentary democracy in a true light: that it is a fraud and a sham, a mockery of the very word democracy.

Fortunately, when we talk about a 'more democratic', proletarian state, we are not talking off the top of our heads. Examples of this have already occurred many, many times — yes, even in Western Europe. What we mean by advanced forms of proletarian democracy have already been tried out in the workers struggle — and been found to work. The working class movement has *already*, at one time or another, and in different places, created everything that it needs to build a proletarian democracy. We are not referring to trade unions, or tenants

associations. We are referring to *workers councils*. Everything which is needed to overcome the radically undemocratic character of parliamentary democracy is here.

It is here that revolutionary socialists make their most radical point of departure from the reformists. We insist that there can be no end to the miseries of recession, the horrors of war and the warping and degradation of the human personality, which are in-built features of capitalism, unless the working class organises in the most democratic way the struggle for its own emancipation. Only by using its overwhelming economic and social strength to fight for its own programme, and only by creating its own alternative forms of state power to that of the capitalists, can the working class stop the slide to barbarism and lead humanity to a new future.

In periods of great crisis, time and time again, the working people have shown a potential and a desire to create forms of organisation which not only challenge the right of the ruling class to decide on the great issues of the day, but have made these organisations examples of democratic control that goes far beyond anything ever conceived of by the reformists.

Such organisations, whether they have been called soviets or workers councils, have not arisen because some group of socialists have told the workers that they were a good idea. Often the workers who have set them up have not known or been aware that other workers, in other struggles and in other countries, have done the same thing. Nor have the workers set up these organisations because they wanted to seize state power. They have created Councils of Action because they have wanted to achieve some particular purpose and have recognised that their objectives could not be achieved by 'normal' means.

In Germany in 1918 the war-weary sailors organised Councils of Action to stop the Staff of the Imperial Navy sabotaging the Armistice with the Allies and to prevent the Imperial Staff taking the German Fleet into battle. In Spain in 1936 the workers and peasants organised Councils of Action to build effective resistance to the threat of Franco and the fascists. In 1926 in Britain, the workers during the General Strike built them to make sure that the strikers were organised to defeat the government's onslaught against the miners. In Portugal as soon as the masses realised that Spínola was trying to organise a coup they began to organise in a similar way. In Russia during the 1905 insurrection the first Soviet Councils were set up as strike committees. In 1917 they grew up again. This time their objective was to get rid of the Czar and to make sure that a government was put into power that would end the war. In Hungary in 1956 the Workers Councils were set up to resist the Soviet invasion and to try and make sure that workers democracy replaced the Stalinist regime of Rakósi.

Whenever they have appeared, workers councils or soviets — call them what you will — have been profoundly different from the bureaucratised organisations of the reformist labour movement. Invariably the committees have been directly responsible to, and accountable to, the mass assemblies which make up these bodies. At any time the leaders could be removed and replaced by a simple majority vote of the assemblies. Because they have arisen in times of big social and political conflict they have involved great numbers of people, many of whom are thinking about and doing political things for the first time in their lives. They have therefore been forums of genuine debate and argument. They have demonstrated in a practical way the power and creativity of ordinary working people and thus acted as a powerful stimulus to mass involvement. Unlike parliamentary democracy, which is based on, and is dependent on, the exclusion of the masses, they depend for their very existence on the active, democratic involvement of the masses. This gives them the potential to be the means by

which the working class and its allies can organise a real anti-capitalist struggle and establish its own state power.

Revolutionary socialists therefore counterpose, and fight for, workers councils, for workers democracy to supersede bourgeois, parliamentary democracy. Establishing such councils does not guarantee that the working class will take power. We insist however that these organisations are an essential prerequisite for the working class taking power. To take the step from the workers councils being bodies which organise a struggle over one issue and concentrating *all the power* in the hands of the councils is the decisive matter. In Russia it took the Bolsheviks many long months of hard and intense political struggle to win a majority of workers to this idea. But by rejecting the parliamentary ideas of the Mensheviks and insisting that the choice confronting the Russian people was not parliamentary democracy or revolution — but socialist revolution or the white hordes of Russian fascism — through the Soviets, the Bolsheviks established the first workers' state in history.

Of course the parliamentarians will howl: 'But look what happened to Russia. That only led to a police state. Do you want people to impose that on the British working class?' We agree that workers in Britain, or any other country for that matter, do not want a suppression of democracy and that they will be prepared to fight to change society only if what they replace it with provides them with a better life. Is the Russian experience inevitable? Will workers councils just lead to prison camps and the deprivation of liberties? We would answer those questions with a categorical no. The decline of Soviet democracy lay not in the workers councils and the ideas of the Bolshevik Party which led the revolution, but in the failure of the revolution to extend throughout the metropolitan countries. The Russian revolution took place in a country that was economically and culturally backward. Its road to success lay in the successful advance of the socialist revolution to the metropolitan countries of Western Europe. Unlike the Bolsheviks, the rest of the workers movement was not able to seize the opportunities that the crisis provoked by the First World War offered. The revolutionary wave swirled around the feet of the capitalist regimes and its governments hovered on the edge of drowning. But the failure of the young Communist Parties to establish an authority in the masses and the betrayals of the reformist leaders enabled the capitalists to rule the tide.

The first workers republic was left isolated, its weak industrial heritage from Tsarism even further decimated by years of civil war in which a score of imperialist armies intervened against the Bolsheviks. There were insufficient goods to satisfy people's basic needs and shortage was the common feature of everyday life. In such a situation some people decide who shall have what, and how much they shall have. Shortage causes queues, and queues are controlled by policemen. Poverty and want create despair and apathy in the masses, and people retreat into private life seeking personal solutions. Meanwhile those who have the power of decision control the policemen and the repressive apparatus which is needed to maintain inequality and suppress criticism. The basis for bureaucracy was therefore created. The long years of isolation strengthened the hold of the bureaucracy which, to hold on to its privileges, expelled the masses from all political life and suppressed the democracy of the early soviets.

The socialist revolution in Britain and the other advanced countries would not present the same type of problems. The economies of these countries are immeasurably more developed than that of Tsarist Russia. Immediately after the revolution the standard of living could be enormously boosted. The British working class has a long experience in running trade unions and its own social clubs. It is highly literate and many of the technicians and experts whose aid it

will need are already members of trade unions.

The existence of a highly developed communications industry like television, the radio, the cinema and the press makes sure that people can be informed and involved in all the important decisions that the workers state will have to take. Even if the revolution in other advanced countries did not follow immediately, the problems of poverty and political backwardness imposed on Russia by its isolation would not plague the new workers state in Britain.

A Programme of Action

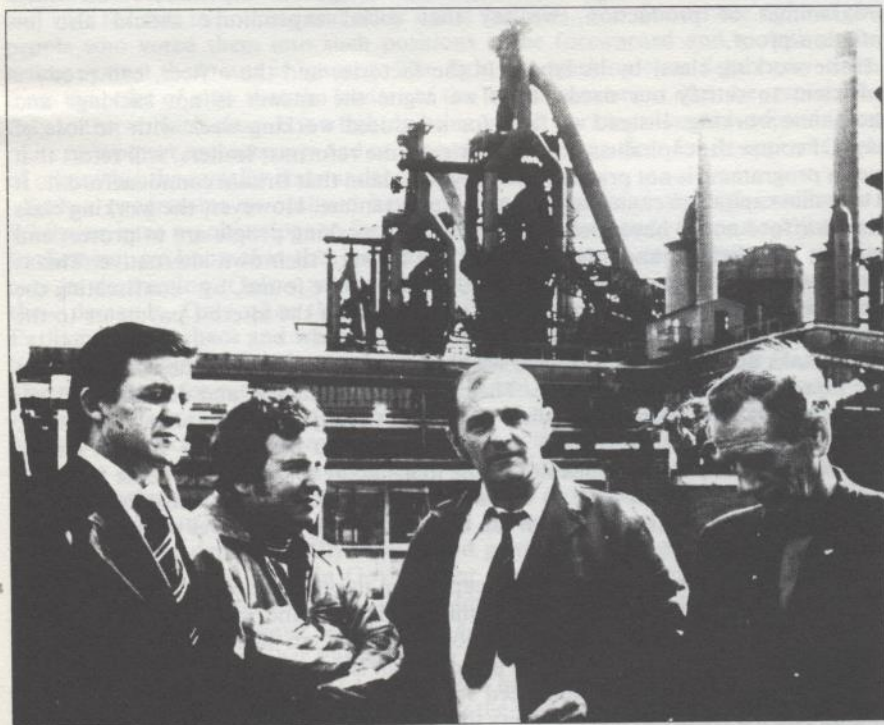
We hope we have established that more than industrial muscle and trade union militancy is needed to defeat the capitalist offensive. Muscle and militancy can and often do win a wage claim, or prevent the sacking of a victimised shop steward, and that is important. On their own they might be enough to win a battle but they cannot on their own win the war against the capitalist system. It is vital that revolutionaries fight for policies inside the workers movement which can meet the immediate needs of the working class — i.e. develop the struggles against sackings, wage freeze and cuts. But such policies have to be both anti-capitalist in their content and socialist in character. Revolutionaries reject any notion that the working class can either defend its immediate interests or establish a democratic socialist society by a policy of collaborating with the capitalist class. The working class is the only social force in society that can lead humanity out of the impasse of slumps and wars — each of which becomes more horrific and destructive, and which are propelling the world towards the abyss of barbarism. Only the working class has the power, and the need, to transform the system from one based on private need to one based on social interests.

Any fight back against the attacks of the ruling class has to have as its central task the aim of involving the working class in a struggle for its own interests. This is why the IMG places to the forefront of its programme and activity the need for working class unity. Wherever workers fight to defend jobs, wherever workers organise against pay curbs, and whenever health workers, teachers, students or other people in the public sector organise to fight closures it urges class-wide action to support these struggles. It calls for the setting up of support committees consisting of as wide a representation as possible from all the organisations of the working class and its allies, to give real strength to these fights.

Whilst rejecting outright the class-collaborationist policies of the Labour and trade union leaders, the IMG nevertheless always insists that a campaign be waged inside both the unions and the Labour parties to win support for these struggles. The needs of the working class demand that they get the maximum united support when they oppose wage freeze, cuts in social services, and sackings, therefore every effort has to be made to involve in active support the traditional organisations of the

labour movement. Many workers have illusions in the reformist leaders. Those illusions are not dispelled or removed simply by the speeches and pamphlets of revolutionaries. Workers have to test out these leaders in actual struggle. They have to see in practice that the policies of the reformist leaders are not only inadequate but lead to defeat.

Right now the burning problem for the working class is how to defeat the pay curbs. We say that the TUC should not even discuss a Phase 3 with the Government and call on the TUC to break off all talks with the Government and organise a special congress to unite the trade unions in a movement that can make sure living standards are both defended and improved. The TUC leaders will oppose such a demand, which means a fight back has to be organised within the factories and inside the trade unions at rank and file level. Militants should try and win their unions in support of this demand. Inside the factories and workplaces, shop stewards committees should call special meetings against the pay laws which pledge support to all sections of the trade unions striking against these laws, and which call on the TUC to organise action against pay curbs. There is no other way out but a return to a wages offensive which is linked to the demand for a sliding scale. This means that all wages would automatically rise every time there is an increase in the cost of living, which is the only effective way of protecting living standards against inflation. Furthermore, the increases in the cost of living index should be calculated by the trade union movement, not by Government statisticians.



Shop stewards of striking electricians at Port Talbot steelworks, who came out in March for £10. Wyn Bevan (third from left) told a supporters' meeting: 'If we fail it will be a victory for capitalism, a victory for the CBI, and a chance for the flag of Phase 3 to fly over the rest of British industry'.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

The IMG campaigns in the labour movement for a programme which can stop sackings, which can both end and restore cuts in the public sector, and abolish wage freezes. Where workers are threatened with sackings and redundancies we say the choice is simple. It is either the misery of the dole queue for workers and their families, or ending the right of big business, in the name of profit, to close down their factories. The IMG therefore advances the demand for the nationalisation, under the control of the workforce, of all firms threatened with closures. Rather than workers and machinery being made idle, that machinery and those workers can produce goods that people really need. The bosses' books and plans should be opened to the trade unions to enable them to formulate those policies. The workforce at Lucas Aerospace showed the way in this respect when they met the threat of redundancy by presenting their own alternative plan. Instead of producing weapons of destruction they demanded to produce kidney machines.

In saying no to all cuts in the social services we raise the demand for a programme of socially useful public works. As the dole queue heads towards the two million mark, hospitals are being closed, less houses are being built, the school building programme is being slashed, there are not enough nurseries or homes for the aged, and our cities and towns are rotting with decay and disrepair. At the same time there are at least 175,000 construction workers out of jobs. Building materials lie in the stock yards unused. Teacher unemployment is at record heights. Nurses cannot get jobs. These people and the necessary resources should be brought together so that we can make the things we need. To safeguard expenditure on such programmes of production, we say that social expenditure should also be inflation-proof.

If the working class, by its labour in the factories and the offices, can produce sufficient to satisfy our needs, then we argue the answer is not sackings and short-time working. Instead we fight for a reduced working week with no loss of pay. Of course the capitalists, and their friends the reformist leaders, will retort that such a programme is not practicable. They will claim that Britain cannot afford it. It is true that capitalism cannot afford such a programme. However, the working class cannot afford not to have such a programme. If working people are to protect and improve their living standards, they must put forward their own alternative. This is why we say that the money can be found, and has to be found, by confiscating the wealth and assets of the capitalists. This means ending the interest payments to the money lenders in the finance houses and the banks.

The banks and the finance houses wield enormous power over the economy and that power is growing all the time. They control the finance, and decide who shall get loans and how those loans shall be used. Already the insurance companies, pension funds and other finance institutions have 50 per cent of Britain's total shares in their hands. Over one third of the loans made to companies come from the banks. These institutions have to be nationalised without compensation, so that this massive accumulation of wealth can be used in a way that serves the needs of the great majority.

Armaments are manufactured under capitalism to serve the needs of the capitalist class and are under the control of their military leaders and their state machine. In 1975, Britain spent nearly £5,000 million on arms, an increase of £24 million compared to the previous year. This is more than is spent on the health service. All arms expenditure should be abolished so that the money wasted on weapons for killing, and the technological ingenuity that goes into creating such weapons, can be turned towards satisfying the real needs of humanity.

When the Labour Government nationalised the mines and the railways it generously compensated the former owners of these industries. This compensation is still being paid and is a crippling burden. Such payments should be ended at once.

In cases of genuine need then the former owners could be paid the average weekly wage of a worker.

By fighting for the maximum united action of the working class around such a programme the IMG also struggles for the maximum democratic involvement of the working class. Unless working people control their own organisations and take their own decisions they cannot offer an alternative to capitalism. Inside the labour movement the IMG campaigns for the leaders and the spokespersons of these bodies to be accountable to their members. This means that any leader can be re-called or removed whenever the majority decide he or she no longer serves their interests. It means an end to all secret negotiations with the employers and the state behind the backs of working people. Democracy is not a luxury. It is absolutely essential if the creativity and power of the working class is to be mobilised. Under capitalism real democracy is stifled and distorted. People elect politicians and leaders over whom they have no control and who take decisions on their behalf without ever consulting them.

The Labour leaders campaigned on one programme and then cynically carried out something entirely different when in office. Most of the trade union leaders are elected for life, others are not even elected but simply appointed from above. There is not one single MP that makes themselves responsible to mass meetings of the labour movement in their constituency. Representatives from the local labour movement on councils and state appointed bodies like the Area Health Authorities and Education Authorities discuss in secret plans to cut back schools and hospitals and vote for cuts in housing and other social facilities. The democratic right of the people who voted them into such positions to be forewarned and mobilised for action against these cuts is ignored. The fight for working class democracy starts from the point of view that the leaders of the labour movement must be responsible only to the working class. It is a fight to bring to the working class an understanding of its own power and interests and to prepare the working class for its supreme task of organising the socialist state under its own control.

Such a programme as outlined here will not be legislated through parliament. Whilst we have no objections to framing any of these demands for passage through Parliament, we know that this institution is there to serve capitalism, not preside over its destruction. Only a mass mobilisation of the workers movement can win these demands. Only when this mass mobilisation is able to throw the state and Parliament into chaos and when the committees established by the mass movement have taken affairs into their own hands will it really be possible to sort things out. The most likely form of such a struggle in Britain, but not necessarily the only one, would be a general strike. In 1926 the Councils of Action, which started life as strike committees, soon found themselves — at least those that had an independence from the control of the bureaucracy — organising food supplies and essential services during the strike. If that strike had been won, there is no doubt that the Councils of Action could have gone on to become real local working class administrations, democratically elected and getting the support and protection of working people. The Baldwin Government would have collapsed and a general election would have returned a Labour Government with an enormous majority. The scene would then have been set for a battle between the reformists and the revolutionaries over whether Parliament or the Councils were the means of carrying out working class legislation. The issue would have eventually been settled either by the triumph of a socialist insurrection, with the Councils taking all power into their hands, or the re-establishment of capitalist rule. The betrayal of the General Strike by the TUC ensured that things never reached that stage, and that the workers of Britain never got the chance to see the real alternatives open to them.

Revolutionary socialists do not look for some simplistic re-playing of the scenario

of 1926. However, we do say that our task is to work for a situation where the workers and their allies can build up their own alternative organisations to those of the capitalist state and use the strength of these organisations to take power.

Neither the reformist leaders nor the Communist Party have any intentions of fighting for such a strategy. Both of them are adherents of the parliamentary road. The task of revolutionaries is to fight inside the mass movement to construct a new leadership that can organise a fight for such policies.

In Britain, the great majority of working people still have faith in reformist ideas and still give their support to the reformist leaders. Often these workers find themselves opposing capitalism on particular issues like sackings, wage freezes, racism, women's rights and issues like the oppression of workers in Spain or South Africa. These partial struggles need the full unstinting support of revolutionaries, who have to be the most consistent advocates of working class unity. Clearly the still small forces of the revolutionary left cannot put their own organisations forward as the only solution for women fight for equality. When black people are facing physical attacks by the racist hoodlums, it would be absurd for us to say that simply by joining the IMG they can defeat the racists. The IMG starts from what best serves the interests of the working class and therefore in its campaign for workers unity it aims to bring into action the biggest and strongest movement possible. This makes victory in such struggles more likely and helps to develop the confidence of working people. In such campaigns the IMG does of course put forward its own socialist alternatives and programme. Furthermore, it argues that these campaigns must be democratically controlled by the workers who are involved. The need to build united actions is not some clever tactic to build the revolutionary party, but is an essential task if the working class is going to be able to defeat the attacks of the capitalists and put forward its own solutions to the crisis. Defeated workers cannot carry through a socialist revolution.

As the attacks on the working people are becoming more savage and as the reformist leaders are more and more incapable of defending their interests, the need for the working class to provide a new leadership becomes vital. This is why the IMG campaigns for the building of a class struggle opposition in all sections of the labour movement. We say that such an opposition should include all those forces who reject wage controls, unemployment and cuts and who are prepared to oppose racism and imperialism and support women's full and equal rights. Such a class struggle opposition will inevitably include people who have different viewpoints on many questions and will put forward different policies than those advocated by the IMG. However, what is most important is that it would bring into common action people willing to fight back. By its activities and discussions on how best to win a particular struggle it will offer a real testing ground for the policies of the various organisations and individuals who are involved. A class-struggle opposition must try and build support inside the trade unions and the Labour Party. It must attempt to involve in action people in the tenants' organisations, from the black community, the women's movement and the students.

In union and parliamentary as well as local elections it should seek to get agreement to support commonly agreed candidates who stand on an anti-capitalist programme, and the organisations involved in such a class struggle opposition — whether that candidate or candidates are members of their particular organisation or not — should put their full resources behind the campaign to get them elected. Inside the organisations of the working class it should fight for all representatives of the working class like MPs, councillors, people on Area Health, Education Committees, etc. to be accountable to mass meetings of the labour movement. People who refuse to accept such accountability should be removed and replaced by those who will. The fight for a leadership that serves the needs and interests of the

working class has to take place at every level inside the labour movement, and has to involve millions of people who right now do not consider themselves as supporters of revolutionary socialism.

Leading the oppressed into struggle

The working class will never build socialism unless it learns to become the ruling class. To do this it must not only conduct an effective suppression of the bourgeoisie. It must lead all the oppressed and downtrodden to a better life — not just those who are in trade unions, who have oily hands, or work in large factories. If it does not do this, then we do not say that the workers will never be able to seize power. In a country like Britain the trade unions are overwhelmingly powerful, as opposed to countries like Italy or Spain where the rural masses are just as, if not more, numerous than the workers. But though the workers might seize power, they will never keep power, much less build a new society, if they do not become the leader and liberator of the oppressed as a whole. More immediately, they won't even be able to fight effectively a new Tory Government.

But the British workers movement is traditionally very slow in taking up problems of other oppressed layers — some of which live and work in Britain, indeed live in the same houses as industrial workers, or in the ghetto up the road, while others live not so far across the water.

Women in general suffer an oppression which doesn't affect men. It is the oppression of spending their entire lives as domestic slaves, cooped up in boxes, ruled economically and sometimes physically by another individual, and excluded, by custom, economic underprivilege and overwork from proper participation in public and political life. Women are, in general, treated as half-persons, generally as not having any brains, and good for little else but breeding, comforting men, or as sexual game. The way in which women are treated in our society is a product of a complex of different factors. These range from the burden of endless child-bearing and child rearing in a society which provides no proper material, medical or financial resources to these tasks, to the political underprivilege which stems from the fact that what they produce at home in the way of housework has no exchange value on the market, and therefore under capitalism no 'value'. On top of all this, when the woman gets a job outside the home, she gets less money and is first out of the door when redundancies arrive, since, as so many of her fellow male workers will tell her, her 'real place' is in the home.

It has too often been assumed that a better life for the male worker is automatically a better life for the woman. This is not true. There are hundreds of ways in which

women will never be as free as men unless society consciously sets out to create the conditions whereby women can change every and any aspect of their lives. Women have been expected to be domestic servants for too long.

On top of this, women have been one of the chief victims of the current capitalist crisis. As long as the labour movement accepts the idea that women belong at home, it will finish up collaborating in cutting jobs and social services. In periods of high unemployment, the bosses and the reformist leaders talk about cutting the 'less essential' services or making redundant those who only work for pin money so that the male 'breadwinner's job' can be saved.

Rather than fight for everyone's right to work, the reformists are quite open about their willingness to put the burden on women. Ivor Clemitson, the Labour MP, said wives should not be encouraged to work whilst unemployment is high. Mr Clemitson suggested getting rid of the extra tax allowance for married couples. Cutbacks in the public services, the highest area of employment for women, mean proportionately higher unemployment for them. But there are other effects. Out of the four million children in the nursery school age group, only 40,000 have nursery schools. Now the Government has stopped altogether the building plans it had for nursery schools. This is a blatant piece of discrimination against the right of women to have a job.

Even worse than this is the fact that the state, despite the limited rights to abortion which women have won, is abandoning the abortion service for women. In 1969, 63 per cent of all abortions were done on the NHS. By 1972, this had dropped to 32 per cent. These restrictions on the rights of women, which imply unfulfilled misery, deprivation, and sexual anxiety, are designed to make women carry the burden of the bosses' crisis.

The employment position for women is getting constantly worse. Six years after the introduction of the Equal Pay Act, full-time women workers are still averaging only 57 per cent of men's pay. This is because the types of jobs which are mainly available to women are in the distributive and retail trades, or in the lowly paid public sector. Yet the Equal Opportunities Commission, supposedly set up to implement the Sex Discrimination Act, has done nothing to change this position. The Commission — a state-appointed body — has little or no powers of enforcement, even if it wanted to use them. The Act itself is only concerned with overt discrimination where women have been trained to be in an equal position with men. But the narrow definitions of what are assumed in practice to be women's jobs is the real problem to be overcome. This can only be done if the forcing of women into part-time work is ended and women are given real training opportunities to do all jobs of which they are fully capable. The other side to this is that where women are employed in factories where the average wage rates are high, the employers, with the connivance of the trade unions, have used regrading methods to keep women's wages well below those of the male workers. Even the Equal Pay Act only covers one-third of women workers. We demand equal pay for all women workers now, with regrading methods to be under the control of the trade unions.

Capitalism sees women as a source of cheap labour and as an auxiliary labour force to be used in times of boom and to be despatched back to the home in a crisis. They are used not just to provide cheap labour in the factories, offices, and the public sector but also as a means of providing an unpaid 'social service' for capitalism. By being mothers they produce labour for capitalism, and by feeding the family they help to provide capitalism with a healthy labour force. By looking after the sick and the aged they save money for the social services.

The IMG stands four square behind the efforts of women to fight against their oppression. Inside the labour movement, it fights all attempts to restrict the abortion laws and campaigns for a woman's right to choose whether she has children or not. We say it is the duty of the trade unions to support all those

struggles which are aimed at ending the oppression of women.

The IMG believes that the ideas and practice of the Women's Liberation Movement have greatly contributed to the struggle against women's oppression. We also recognise that organised movements of homosexual men and women have contributed a great deal to our understanding of human social and political relationships. It is only by fighting in support of the struggle of women and of gay people for their emancipation that we will prepare the way for the construction of a new, more democratic and more humane society, where relationships between the sexes are based on full and free equality, not on oppression.

A second group of the oppressed which the labour movement has got to win to its side are black people. Last year several Asians were killed in a racist upsurge. This was sparked off by the statements of Enoch Powell, by a vicious press campaign against the Malawi exiles, and by the anxiety of unemployment which was gripping many workers. All over the country, black people have been assaulted by gangs of racists.

Capitalism has always had a vested interest in dividing working people and in setting one group against another. This applies to the way capitalism has built world empires just as much as it dominates its workers at home. What capitalist spokesperson could ever admit that declining living standards, bigger dole queues and reductions in social services are caused by their own system? How much more convenient to find a scapegoat. Hence the NF and Enoch Powell have unleashed a stream of racial hatred against black people which has led to violence against them. Newspapers like the *Sun*, the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail* have gone in for scare story after scare story, deliberately playing on the fears of unemployment. Meanwhile, Tory and Labour Governments alike by their immigration controls have strengthened the idea that black people are responsible for unemployment and the housing shortage. Nor have the left leaders inside the unions waged any serious campaign against this mountain of lies and discriminatory legislation against black people. Because they have no socialist alternative to the capitalist crisis, they can't argue effectively against racism. They also know that racist ideas run deep amongst wide sections of the British working class, including even among their own supporters.

For years British imperialism controlled an enormous empire from which it extracted super-profits. To justify its role, it talked of the 'civilising role' of white rule and claimed that it was looking after the interests of an 'inferior' people. This justification was reproduced at home, repeated in newspapers, taught in schools and rehearsed in Parliament. The high profits made by colonial expansion enabled the ruling class to make concessions at home, thereby giving a material base to this racist garbage. Rather than confront this racism, the reformist leaders content themselves by verbally deploring it, or giving it their backing in the style of Bob Mellish, Labour Chief Whip — 'Enough is Enough'.

The 1971 Immigration Act aims to strip black immigrant workers of even the most basic democratic rights. The Act lays down that an immigrant may only come to Britain providing he has a work permit for a specific job. Nor does this include any automatic right to settle. Each year, the Act stipulates, they must re-apply to stay in the country, and only after five years can they apply to become British citizens. The aim is to turn them into contract labourers without any civil or political rights. This is why they need a work-permit and are not allowed to change jobs without permission. And why the Home Secretary has the right to deport them if his advisors think they have not been of 'good character'.

Politicians and trade union leaders have deluded workers into thinking that this Act is there to protect their jobs. Actually the opposite is true. The aim of the Act is to create a group of workers so downtrodden and so devoid of any rights that they

will become a pliable force in the hands of the bosses for lowering wage levels and job conditions. Nevertheless, the black workers have refused to undermine trade union conditions. In strikes at Mansfield Hosiery, Imperial Typewriters, Standard Telephone & Cables, as well as at Grunwick, it has been our black brothers and sisters who have been to the fore in fighting to win better wages and conditions for all workers, despite the role many white trade unionists have played in stopping them from getting equal training, equal pay, and equal benefits from the unions.

A campaign should be launched right across the labour movement against the slanders and untruths peddled against black people. When racist thugs attack and murder black people the IMG says that black self-defence is absolutely vital, and campaigns for the labour movement to mobilise to defend black people. We fight to end the scandal of the divided families caused by the immigration laws. We campaign against the National Front and its fascist thugs by supporting anti-racist demonstrations and pickets. We work inside the labour movement and the immigrant communities to build a movement that is strong enough to impose a policy of 'no platform for fascists'.

The fight to unify the struggles of black and white workers is vital if we are to build a strong anti-capitalist movement. A sustained anti-racist campaign is needed now if the working class is to construct a socialist society. Furthermore, the ultimate beneficiaries of racism will be the fascists. And they will not stop at rounding up black people and putting them into deportation camps, they will quickly round up the communists, the Trotskyists, yes and Jim Callaghan too if the capitalists judge it necessary. The fascists would break up the workers movement in the most literal and physical way. Do we really have to learn the lessons of Germany all over again?

Internationalism

The British working class has heavy responsibilities in relation to Ireland. For eight years the British army has been active in Northern Ireland. This has been a terrible experience for the Irish people. Even such bodies as the European Human Rights Commission have found the British army guilty of using torture in the 'interrogation' of detainees.

But why has all this taken place? Most people think that the army, 'our boys', are only 'keeping the peace'. This is a delusion which could prove fatal when the British ruling class comes to use the army over here.

The British army is not a neutral, peacekeeping force at all. If it were neutral or peace keeping then the Reverend Ian Paisley, and Ernest Baird, leaders of the Ulster Loyalists, would have been locked up long ago. These people stand in control of powerful paramilitary organisations, grouped under the UDA. These two politicians have presided over an organisation whose members frequently carry out political assassinations, and have themselves frequently threatened civil war and pogrom on the Catholic population. The UDA and the UVF have systematically tortured and assassinated hundreds of Catholic civilians already. Everybody in Ireland knows this, but the army does little or nothing about it.

The armed, semi-fascist thugs of the Loyalist gangs and the Loyalist and Unionist leaders of Northern Ireland have deprived the Catholics of democratic rights for the

last fifty years — the right to a job, to a good house, to get effective electoral representation. Yet it is not these people on whom the British Army concentrate. Quite the opposite, by attempting to destroy the armed self defence organisations of the beleaguered Catholic minority, and to wipe out those who oppose a British presence in Ireland, the British Army are actually defending the Protestant ascendancy, the Paisleys, Craigs and Bairds. The presence of the British army only encourages these people, the most reactionary, anti-democratic and bloodthirsty elements in Ireland. The presence of the British army is a guarantee that Britain will not abandon her counter-revolutionary friends.

The British Army is in Ireland to defend the Protestant ascendancy against the democratic demands of the Catholic minority and from the united Ireland which this minority is demanding in order to get those rights. It has nothing to do with peace in Ireland. It is rather to ensure the domination of the whole of Ireland by British economic interests as well as to ensure the maintenance of a reactionary counterweight — which is what the Protestant ascendancy is — to socialism, both in Britain and in Ireland. One of the main motives behind the encouragement of the Ulster Protestants to set up their own counter-revolutionary, pro-colonialist state, i.e. Northern Ireland, was as an insurance policy against Bolshevism in Ireland and on the British mainland.

There is no doubt that the Irish people will eventually win their demands for self-determination. The main form that their struggle is taking at present is the armed struggle of the Republican forces to remove the British from Northern Ireland to create a united state of Ireland. This deserves our support. Various reformists in Britain — the Labour Party and the Communist Party leaders — call for a Bill of 'Rights' in Northern Ireland. But the major obstacle to democratic rights are the Protestant reactionaries, and the best way to break the resistance of these forces is to deprive them of the British connection, their main source of economic, military, and political sustenance. We say that the British working class should support the demand for the withdrawal of troops. Unless this is done, not only will the task of the Irish people take much longer to achieve, not only will more lives be lost, but the dangers which will accumulate for the British workers will increase. So long as the Army remains in Ireland, the democratic rights of workers in Britain are threatened — already the Prevention of Terrorism Act has given police in Britain the most extensive powers of search, arrest and detention they have ever had. Even if this Act were repealed, the police will have been enormously strengthened by their experience in using such laws. But that is not the only danger either. If British workers do not support the right to self-determination of the Irish people, future relations between the workers movements of Ireland and Britain may be irreparably damaged for decades.

Ireland is an oppressed nation. Its struggle for freedom from British domination and control goes back hundreds of years. As socialists we support this struggle, and we firmly believe that the path to socialism lies through national liberation. However, the struggle in Ireland is also part of a developing proces of the break-up and disintegration of the 'United Kingdom'. Movements for devolution and even for independence in Scotland and Wales have developed. In our view, the political choices before the workers in England are similar to that which arises over the case of Ireland, even though the situation in Ireland is very different: namely whether to support the right of nations to self-determination.

This is not to say that Scotland and Wales have the same problems as Ireland. Scotland in particular is not an *oppressed* nation, like Ireland. It is not divided by an imperialist power, not under imperialist military occupation, its political institutions are not being suppressed. It does not even suffer the degree of economic distortion which has arisen due to British domination of Ireland, despite the enormous social

disruption that has been brought about by the oil monopolies. However, the problems which the people of Scotland are facing, because of the way that capitalism is developing in Scotland, are quite different from any other region of the 'United Kingdom'.

Of course, the precise reasons for wanting self-government through a Scottish Assembly differ among different sections of the Scottish people. The Scottish National Party grew up as a party of Scottish financiers who wanted to cash in on the oil revenues. Sections of the population, the middle class farmers, as well as large numbers of workers have been drawn behind the slogan of 'Scotland's oil' and a Scottish Assembly as a way of being able to solve some of their own problems through access to the North Sea oil revenues. However, the movement for the Assembly is also broader than this. A majority of people in Scotland want a democratic institution which they can control and which is directly responsive to their needs, even though differences exist between worker, farmer and financier over the use to which this Assembly will be put and over its structure.

We stand four square behind this movement for democratic rights in Scotland. We urge workers, north and south of the Border, to support the democratic demand for an elected Assembly in Scotland. We believe that the appearance of such an Assembly will rapidly prove an obstacle to capitalism's plans for Scotland — for the broad masses will rally to the Assembly as a means of opposing Westminster and opposing the oil monopolies. It may be that out of the experience of the inadequacy of a bourgeois democratic Assembly workers will see the need to create institutions of workers democracy — workers councils.

At the present time we do not support the demand for *independence* for Scotland. This demand is premature. Of course, we support at all times the *right* of the Scottish people to secede from Britain should they so decide. And we will oppose any attempt by anybody to stop them seceding, once they embark on such a course. But that is a different matter. We do not think at this stage that Scottish workers have anything to gain, either politically or economically, by separation from Britain, even though they have every interest in opposing the policies of the British Government.

The arguments which some Labour MPs, including left wingers like Heffer, have put up against the Assembly are scandalous. They regard the 'unity of the UK', that is the unity of British imperialism, as a sacrosanct principle, as equivalent to unity of the English and Scottish labour movements. Not only will such idiocy drive the Scottish people all the more quickly to adopt the independence road offered by the SNP, it will also convince a lot of people in Scotland that the British labour movement is hostile to the democratic aspirations of a lot of Scottish workers, thereby splitting the English and Scottish labour movements. If workers in Britain don't support the democratic demands of the Scottish people, then people in Scotland will draw only one conclusion: that British labour sides with the capitalists, imperialists, bankers and chauvinists against them.

The most urgent things we demand in relation to Scotland are the right to self-determination for the Scottish people, up to and including secession, and immediate elections to a Scottish Assembly open to all political parties in Scotland. Furthermore, we reject all attempts to limit the powers of this Assembly. The most important things which we urge workers to fight for through the Assembly are for the nationalisation of North Sea oil, and of all the banks, trusts and financial interests in Scotland. This is a precondition for tackling the effects of North Sea oil development and of the rundown of traditional industries — namely through a programme of public works, that is a crash programme of building houses, hospitals, schools, and other necessary facilities.

We are absolutely convinced that the workers in Britain will not be able to make a socialist revolution, much less hold state power and build a new society, unless a lot of their present pro-nationalist ideas undergo radical change towards the international interests of all the oppressed masses.

The Labour leaders in Britain have a shameful record when it comes to supporting the struggles of our brothers and sisters in other countries, and they have reinforced the nationalism and insularity bred in the working class by British imperialism. At the end of the Second World War the newly elected Labour Government sent troops to Vietnam and helped to keep that country safe for the return of French imperialism, thus unleashing a bloody war that was to last for almost 30 years. It was under a Labour Government that the British Army used head-hunters in Malaya. As Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the Labour Party refused to support the democratically elected Government of Cheddi Jagan in British Guiana when the Tory Government sent troops to drive it out of office in 1953. In the 1960s, when American imperialism set out on a path of mass destruction and genocide in Vietnam, Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson stood by the American Government, and acted as an apologist for imperialism's crimes and murders.

Although Labour is supposed to have imposed an arms embargo on South Africa, the truth is that Britain still exports millions of pounds worth of military equipment to South Africa. In October 1976, the Government took the shameful decision to grant a licence to Marconi Communications of Chelmsford for the export of a multi-million pound communications system to the South African Armaments Board. Probably the Labour leaders do find apartheid offensive. No doubt they would like to see the black people of South Africa get a better deal. However, trade comes before sentiment in the practical world of business — and the reformists are practical people, as they never tire of telling the 'utopian' revolutionaries — so Britain's balance of payments come first. Because the whole programme of social democracy is dependent on capitalism being able to afford reforms, and not having an alternative socialist solution, it finds itself dragged into supporting the repressive wars of its own imperialists.

At every step of the way, the capitalists and the reformists are telling the workers that there is always another road apart from class struggle: nationalism. If only, they say, the workers will pull for Britain, if only we have import controls, if only we make Japanese workers redundant rather than workers who are British, if only we could deport the blacks... The idea of the 'national interest' is one of the greatest blocks to advancing the struggle. If the workers in Britain ever set up workers councils and get the bourgeoisie by the throat, one of the things which could well persuade them to loosen their grip is a timely appeal to the 'national interest', talk of an 'alien invasion', etc. Such confusion could prove fatal. There is no doubt that if the bourgeoisie think they might be expropriated, they will resort to the most vile and bloody schemes at home and abroad to con the workers out of taking power. And this will include a great deal of things that are against the 'national interest', such as blockades and economic sabotage of the country. The workers of Britain will then need their friends abroad to break these plans. Yet the labour movement has shown no real urgency to develop foreign policies independent of the capitalists.

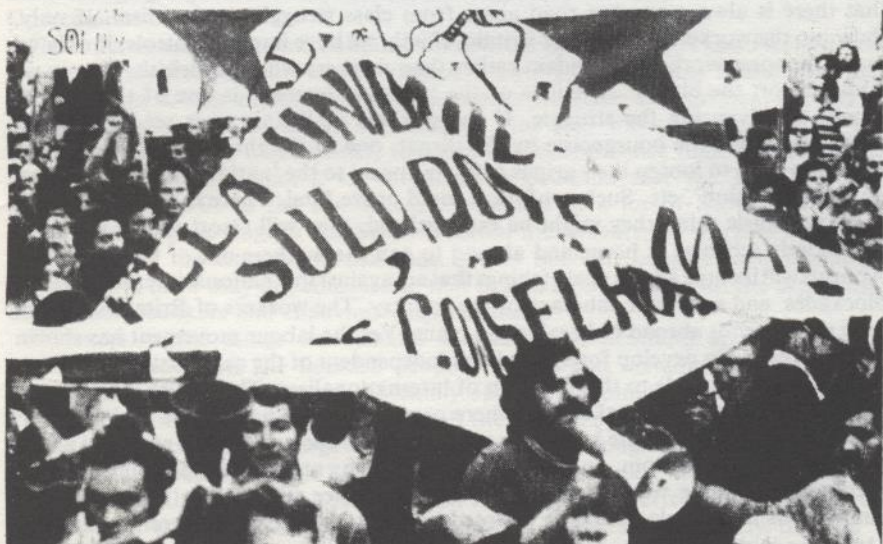
There is another side to this question of internationalism. The British workers are prone to thinking that workers elsewhere can teach them nothing at all in how to fight the employers and the bourgeois state. British trade unionism is regarded as the height of tactical wisdom. In this way, nationalism, and the national insularity it encourages cut the workers off from the experience of workers abroad. Great innovations in struggle are being adopted by workers in many different countries.

If anybody thought that workers councils and revolutionary action were things of the past, then Spain and Portugal have put an end to such illusions. In Portugal, in

1975, the workers took the struggle against capitalism to the highest point reached in Europe for decades. In Spain, even more spectacular examples will be seen. In the factories, the workers of Portugal set up committees to keep open factories that had been bankrupted or where production had been sabotaged, arranging new economic relations with the farmers, under which both the farmers and the workers benefitted. In the media, the workers showed what *real* democracy means when they seized Radio Renascenca, which they used to broadcast news of workers struggles. They set up vigilance committees to deal with the fascist threat, and the soldiers expelled reactionary officers and organised rank-and-file soldiers' committees. The embryos of a workers administration, democratically elected, were coming into being.

It was but a small step to unifying these bodies into a national congress of councils. That step, we are confident, will be taken in Spain tomorrow. And these examples will show to the workers all over Europe — even to the insular workers of Britain — an image of their own future. That is why we are active in solidarity with the workers of Portugal and Spain, why we have campaigned in defence of the **Republica** workers and in the struggle against the heirs of Franco in Spain today.

Another area of the utmost political importance is Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. A successful uprising in Czechoslovakia, Poland or Hungary would transform the situation in Western Europe. The workers in these countries are waiting for their opportunity to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a regime of workers councils. In the West, we must be ready to give them support in this, to do everything in our power to prevent the crushing of these workers by Soviet tanks and the repression of their spokespersons in labour camps and so-called 'psychiatric' institutions. The appearance of a functioning workers state, with democratically elected workers councils, would transform the terms of political debate in the workers movement in Western Europe. No longer would we be confronted with the false choice of capitalism with bourgeois democracy or socialism with Stalinist terror. Today only a few know that this is not the real choice. Tomorrow, millions of people will know it.



Portugal in 1975 saw the establishment of workers councils which also began to organise soldiers and sailors.

For a Unified Revolutionary Organisation

Many workers will be the most tenacious fighters in the workshop for better wages and conditions, but do not understand the relationship between this fight and the various issues which come up in the broader political arena — matters of foreign policy, social issues, in short all those matters most directly involving the state. Some workers who are militant on the shop floor frequently support the most pro-capitalist policies at the national and international level, others are more consistent but see no alternative type of state to that represented by parliamentary democracy. In short, workers do not spontaneously grasp the connections between capitalism in the workshop and capitalism in society at large. The economic struggle alone is not adequate when it comes to the task of generating a revolutionary or socialist consciousness. This is why the existence of a revolutionary organisation is necessary, and why such an organisation must grow into a genuine revolutionary party with mass support in the working class. A revolutionary organisation starts with a global view of capitalism and by its internationalist character attempts to absorb and bring into its ranks the international experience of the class struggle. Only in this way can the party prepare the working class for something much more advanced and difficult than trade union militancy — namely becoming the **ruling class**.

Since Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1848, the world working class has been plunged into the most gigantic struggles — the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. In Germany there was the experience of the workers councils as the First World War came to an end, and the ultimate crushing in 1933 of the German labour movement. In Spain there was the Civil War of 1936-1939. The post-war period has been dominated by revolutionary wars of colonial liberation, and in May 1968 in France the workers and students showed for a brief few days that once again the socialist revolution was raising its banner in Europe. In East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia workers have demonstrated, made strikes against and fought with weapons in their hands the bureaucratic regimes of Stalinism. Most significant of all was that in none of the uprisings in Eastern Europe did any important section of the working class or their allies call for the restoration of capitalism. Always their demands were for socialist democracy. An international revolutionary organisation sets itself the task of understanding these great milestones in the international class struggle. It learns from the victories and the defeats, and puts those experiences and lessons at the disposal of the working

class. In this sense it performs an essential function as the memory of the working class. And unless we construct a revolutionary organisation which is capable of performing just this role, the working class and its allies will go into the coming battles disarmed.

There is no contradiction or some unbridgeable gap between a resistance to sackings, a movement against declining living standards, an opposition to racism, or supporting women opposing their oppression — and the fight for socialism. Exploitation, misery, destructive wars and the crushing of the human personality are in-built features of capitalism. It could not exist without them. Unlike the reformists we do not believe that in times of great crisis the working people should postpone to some indefinite future the establishment of socialism. Exceptional times demand exceptional solutions, converting the ideas of socialism from being the concern of a small minority into a realistic way forward for humanity, as we have tried to show.

But such exceptional tasks require a powerful revolutionary organisation. In our view it is a catastrophe that so many competing groups exist on the revolutionary left. We think that in most cases there is no justifiable reason at all for this. That's why we put forward the slogan '**For a unified revolutionary organisation**' and why we are approaching the newly formed Socialist Workers Party, formerly IS, the largest group on the extreme left, for unity talks, and why we have conducted unity discussions with a number of other organisations on the far left. As far as the IMG is concerned, these talks are not some kind of manoeuvre, aimed at getting a few more members for ourselves. We genuinely wish to create a single unified organisation.

We are quite convinced that if such an organisation existed we would be much more effective in getting across the ideas of revolutionists than with the existence of many parties. For example, in the Stechford by-election, what were the electors to think on seeing two revolutionary left candidates competing with each other? This was a tragedy. Their impact would have been far greater if a single united candidate had been fielded — not only in the size of the vote or the number of people wanting to join up, but also in terms of the impact of their **ideas**. In the recent municipal elections in France, the revolutionists **did** join together. They formed common lists under the joint platform of 'for socialism, power to the workers'. The results were astounding. The far-left doubled or tripled the votes they had gained in past elections when the three major organisations of the electoral pact, the LCR, the Lutte Ouvriere, and the OCT, campaigned separately. What these experiences show is that the differences on the revolutionary left are of a **tactical** rather than fundamental nature.

In general terms, the fragmentation is rooted in the nature of the period that is now behind us: the cold war years. During the cold war and during the boom of the '50s and '60s, Trotskyism was isolated and reduced, in many cases, to a handful of people. Isolation and defeat produced not only bitter recrimination but a proliferation of tactical schemas for breaking out of the situation. These schemas rapidly developed into fetishes of one sort or another — deep entryism, shop stewardism, rank and filism, Labour to power on a socialist programme (entryism without the entry), the 'revolutionary youth vanguard', build the party, and so on. Each tendency built its following on the basis of a particular tactic, frequently one-sided, for relating to the class struggle. Furthermore, the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky, did not escape this process either. Splits from the International, the creation of rival bureaux, in turn encouraged further the process of fragmentation in individual countries, as each tendency chose its tactic on increasingly local, that is national, considerations.

The new rise of the world revolution since May 1968 and the victory of the Vietnamese revolution make it imperative to put an end to the process of fragmentation and dispersal of the revolutionary vanguard. The rich variety of forms of struggle and different processes of political radicalisation that the struggle internationally has thrown up illustrate once again the futility of attempting to build a revolutionary party on the basis of this or that tactical formula. On the contrary, what is required is a **unified** organisation, an organisation unified around the fundamental programme of socialist revolution, but possessing the utmost **tactical** flexibility. It is from this that flows the sort of organisation IMG thinks should be built: a **democratic centralist** revolutionary organisation.

Just as the Fourth International and the IMG recognise that only by controlling their own organisations democratically can the working class synthesise its experience and develop a correct and flexible policy for the struggle, so also it recognises that the revolutionary party, above all, must be the most democratic and creative of organisations. The IMG has no interest in clamping down on discussion and expelling dissidents. It always attempts to provide the conditions whereby the fullest and freest debate can take place within its ranks on how best to take forward the socialist revolution. There is no other way that a revolutionary organisation can move forward. If minorities want to put forward different tactics, strategy and programme, the IMG guarantees them the right to form tendencies to discuss their ideas. After the National Conferences of the IMG, the new leadership functions in such a way as to ensure representation of minorities on the leading committees. Unlike the capitalists and their friends the reformist leaders, the IMG has no need to be frightened of democratic discussion. It is absolutely in its best interests to both stimulate and encourage the maximum participation of its membership. The strength of a revolutionary organisation lies in the commitment of its ranks to socialism and their development as creative revolutionary thinkers.

By encouraging the widest ranging debate and discussion, the IMG creates the conditions whereby all the organisation is prepared to put the majority decisions into practice, thereby testing them out in the real experience of the class struggle.

In fighting for the creation of a unified revolutionary organisation in Britain we will not, however, abandon our work in building the Fourth International. The last quarter of a century has shown that once revolutionaries break with an international organisation they not only develop ever more rigid tactical schemas and dogmas, but they do this largely on the basis of some peculiar feature of the country in which they happen to be operating. We will not put the Fourth International in the way of unifying the revolutionary forces in Britain, but we will not put it aside in favour of building yet another group, albeit large, which is essentially **national** in its outlook and practice.

We want to build an international revolutionary party because we believe that revolution is a world process. That is why we are **internationalists**. The IMG fights under the banner of working class internationalism because it insists that, if the working class has to oppose its own capitalist class on the home ground, it cannot support that capitalist class in the field of international politics. Although capitalism has created an international market and an international division of labour it is however a system based on national states. Because it develops the forces of production to such a level where it can only maintain profits by expansion, capitalism enters into fierce international rivalry. In some instances this leads it to try and massively increase the exploitation of its own working class so that it can sell more cheaply than its international rivals. In other instances it leads it to sending troops to crush liberation movements in the third world, or

plotting with reactionaries to establish sympathetic dictatorships. In other instances it leads to imperialist wars as the imperialist powers fight each other for the re-distribution of the world markets. In order to develop the productive forces to their full potential, they have to be planned on a world scale. Their containment within the national boundaries of the capitalist state guarantees exploitation and the violence of capitalist wars. This also denies humanity the means to plan and organise the forces of production so that they can satisfy the material need of everyone.

Socialist Challenge

Dear Reader,

In this pamphlet the IMG has put forward its analysis of what the capitalist crisis is about. It also puts forward the revolutionary socialist solutions of the IMG.

We appreciate that it may not have dealt with a number of matters that you consider are of vital importance and that you may also consider some of its solutions inadequate. That is why we are opening the letters column of Socialist Challenge to your views and opinions on the pamphlet.

Starting from 9 June — the first edition of Socialist Challenge — until the last issue in July, the newspaper will be printing your letters on the pamphlet. We know that an open critical discussion around our ideas will be of real benefit. The IMG does not claim to be the repository of eternal wisdom. If a revolutionary socialist organisation is to fulfil its real role it can only do that if it is prepared to debate its ideas openly and to learn from the experience of other militants.

To debate and argue with each other on how to make the socialist revolution is not sectarian. It helps us to collectively work out our ideas. It strengthens our ability to work for the only struggle that can offer humanity a way out of its present crisis and impasse. Nothing is more important than that.

We therefore look forward to your letters, your ideas and your criticisms. Letters should be no more than 500 words in length and sent to Socialist Challenge, c/o Relgocrest, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.

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