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January 25, 1978

To the Political Committee`

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are some documents discussed at a meeting of the IMG National Committee in January, 1978. The general line of these documents was adopted by a large majority. The documents are:

1. Resolution from the Executive Bureau to the National Committee of the IMG.

2. A document entitled, "Socialist Unity," by J. King.

3. A draft political resolution for the 1978 conference of the IMG. (Only the cover and point no. 6, "Forces to the Left of the Labour Bureaucracy and the Communist Party," are enclosed.)

4. A document entitled, "Tactics and Building a Unified Revolutionary Organization." (Note: This contains a brief summary of the draft political resolution.)

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Resolution from the Executive Bureau to the National Committee of the IMG.

The National Committee notes certain developments in the move towards regroupment on the far left and puts forward the following policies as the basis for the action of leading bodies:

1) The decisive question in deciding the class character of organisations - whether they are reformist, centrist or revolutionary - cannot be historical or ideological characterisations. The decisive question is the positions they take on the most important clashes between the working class and oppressed and the ruling class and their reactionary allies. The statement 'Our Common Ground' (Socialist Challenge 6.10.77) draws from these struggles a dividing line between revolutionaries on the one hand and reformists and centrists on the other. We therefore put forward this programme as the principled basis for the creation of a democratic centralist organisation. We affirm that any political current prepared to build an organisation on the basis of 'Our Common Ground', or any other platform containing the same qualitative points as that statement, to be genuinely revolutionary forces, regardless of whether they characterise themselves as Trotskyist or not.

2) Consequently the IMG would cease to be an independent organisation and should join any new revolutionary organisation constituted on the basis of 'Our Common Ground', or platform of the same qualitative character, which was constituted on an internally democratic basis.

3) 'Our Common Ground' is not a full revolutionary programme. Such an organisation at its founding conference would have to address itself to additional questions of which we believe the most central are:

- * The united front and how it relates to the task of building opposition to the line of the bureaucracy in the mass organisations of the working class.
- * A programme which included a complete system of anti-capitalist demands.
- * The relation of a revolutionary organisation to such autonomous movements as the women's liberation movement, black and gay movements.
- * For Socialist democracy against Stalinism and bourgeois democracy.

While the IMG would fight for its positions on all these and other questions, the revolutionary character of the organisation would make it unprincipled to split even if these particular positions were rejected, as long as the programmatic basis of such an organisation remained unchanged and internal democracy was safeguarded. The IMG would therefore be prepared to be part of such an organisation even as a minority on the sole condition that its right to fight for its political position was maintained.

4) Among the chief policies for which the IMG would fight would be affiliation to the Fourth International. We recognise the difficulties for organisations without concrete experience of the Fourth International. This could prevent the formation of an organisation which, on all other grounds, would be principled. The IMG would therefore propose that the question of any international affiliations should not be decided upon at the founding conference of any new organisation, but at a later conference, following a democratic discussion in the membership of the new organisation in which the ex-members of the IMG would propose affiliation.

5) Socialist Unity can be one of the chief vehicles for such a process. The political basis of Socialist Unity would be the extended manifesto which the 19 November Conference of that body agreed should be produced. This would provide the means whereby local Socialist Unity groups could be established. Around this national programme a national steering committee would be established which would coordinate the efforts of local groups to intervene not merely in elections, but on as many aspects of the class struggle as possible.

6) In addition the IMG, Big Flame, Workers League, the various forces of ex-SWP members should discuss at national level should discuss together, and with non-aligned militants, both on the programmatic basis of a new organisation and on how to develop the maximum collaboration of work inside the trade unions, the black, women's and gay movements with the aim of developing independent class struggle movements, building united activity in these fields, and continuing to work for an agreement for intervening in the election including the SWP and other class struggle candidates.

7) Such a process would be assisted by a public journal through which the steps towards a unified revolutionary organisation can broadcast and scrutinised by the widest possible forces. We suggest that all those organised currents agreeing with the need to constitute a new organisation on the basis that we have indicated, nominate representatives onto the Editorial Board of Socialist Challenge to make sure this is reflected accurately in its pages. At the same time we can test out whether Socialist Challenge or a paper of its type would be a suitable publication for any unified revolutionary organisation.

8) We recognise that if such an organisation were formed it should recognise that it was only one step along the road towards a revolutionary party and would use its new political and organisational strength to intensify the fight for further revolutionary regroupment and unity.

When the IMG Political Committee decided in the early part of 1977 to stand candidates in elections, it agreed that their campaigns would be based on the need for a united fight back against the pro-ruling class policies of the Labour Government. This meant that its candidates had to campaign around three central themes: 1) the need for an alternative programme; 2) the need for united class-struggle action; 3) the need for a united revolutionary alternative. Such policies demanded a fight for a revolutionary alliance, hence our call to the SWP for joint-candidates.

The Stetchford, Birmingham, local elections, and the LCC elections, were fought under the masthead of the IMG around the above themes. They did however attract the support of organisations like Big Flame as well as some independents. The success of these interventions, albeit of a modest character, had an impact beyond the localities where the candidates stood and prepared the way for the formation of Socialist Unity, and the standing of a Socialist Unity candidate in Ladywood. Because the programme and the organisational form - a united, open, revolutionary alliance - corresponded, both to the needs of the class struggle, and coincided with a growing understanding inside sections of the vanguard for united activity, the Socialist Unity campaign got far more support and far more votes than the SWP in that election. This set the ground for Spitalfields and the Socialist Unity 19 November Conference. The Conference and the meetings that preceded it were the first steps towards turning Socialist Unity from being solely a means of intervening in a particular election, into the basis of a national organisation.

Socialist Unity by standing in elections poses the question of the construction of a party. Bourgeois elections brings the question of politics to the fore for everyone, not just for revolutionaries. At the same time the matter of representation is also posed. This is why all our material in Ladywood spoke of Socialist Unity as a party, not a coalition. In reality - right now, Socialist Unity is a propaganda bloc. The logic is either to bring its participants closer together or to lead to an explosion. But more than this is involved. Socialist Unity is a revolutionary alliance which therefore gives primacy to the mass struggle. Its intervention in elections is aimed at stimulating the mass struggle. The logic therefore is for joint work in the mass struggle, it cannot restrict its activity to electioneering. The question of on-going collaboration is immediately posed, even if not recognised explicitly at first.

A number of the forces working inside Socialist Unity are beginning to see it as a possible vehicle for constructing a new revolutionary organisation. For varying and different reasons which are related to their past positions on the IMG organisations like Big Flame and the Workers League tend to see it as being a more favourable area for them to approach building a common organisation. As far as a certain current inside Big Flame are concerned, the present Socialist Unity conforms much more to their 'movementist view' of the structure and building of a revolutionary party, than does the proposals in Socialist Challenge of a democratic centralist party. We are therefore confronted with a very difficult tactical problem. On the one hand we must respond to those forces inside Socialist Unity who see it as a means of regroupment. On the other hand we must avoid disrupting our electoral project by giving it a final form too quickly. In the present political situation - a Labour Government in power, a crisis of the traditional leaderships inside the workers movement and a development of the class struggle, particularly at the grass-roots - makes Socialist Unity an attractive pole for sections of the vanguard. Its political strength, and attractiveness for the vanguard resides in its insistence on revolutionary unity,

[SU-2] which is brought to the fore in its election campaigns by it being open to all revolutionary forces - particularly the SWP.

At present Socialist Unity is made up of three component parts. Firstly, there are the revolutionary groups - IMG, BF, WL, etc. Then there are those independents who are either revolutionary Marxists or sympathetic to revolutionary Marxism. Most of these people are in the periphery of one or other of the far-left groups. Thirdly, there are some forces who are just breaking from reformism and who are attracted to Socialist Unity because they see it as a means of organising class-struggle forces. Some of these people still look favorably on some of the alternatives put forward by the SWP, and even the CP. However, they are in general repulsed by the sectarianism of the SWP and are becoming increasingly disenchanted with the way in which the CP tails the left social democracy. A key task is to win this section to acceptance of the need for a revolutionary party and there is no doubt that providing Socialist Unity maintains its fight for united action of the revolutionary left it will continue to attract growing numbers of these people.

The Socialist Unity Conference showed the type of forces that it is beginning to draw around it. The composition of the Conference was IMG-110, Big Flame-30, other groups-40, out of a total attendance of just over 300; thus some 120 nonaligned people attended. The vote for the Martin Shaw amendment on future organisation of Socialist Unity reflected a mood amongst sections of the far-left like Big Flame and WL, as well as amongst a fairly high number of independents for a more structured form of organisation. Without doubt amongst these people, there are those who see Socialist Unity as a substitute for a revolutionary party, just as there are others who see it as a means of evading the question of the revolutionary party. The IMG however, has to begin, not from its reservations about the intentions or otherwise of these currents but from the actual dynamic that Socialist Unity injects into the move towards revolutionary regroupment. For Socialist Unity to become a new revolutionary organisation it means that it has to adopt a revolutionary programme. Now, Socialist Unity, is based on agreement around aspects of a revolutionary programme. It would have to be won over to democratic centralism, and convinced of the need for an orientation towards revolutionary regroupment, which means continuing its present course of fighting for united action with the SWP and forces at the base of the CP and left social democracy. If a new organisation comes into existence without agreement on fundamental questions, then all it will spawn will be a centrist formation, destined to split and fragment. Furthermore, if it does not recognise, that it only represents one stage, in the essential fight for revolutionary regroupment, it would simply become another sect. The IMG should therefore make clear that it stands for Socialist Unity adopting the above positions, whilst at the same time, not making conditional, its participation in Socialist Unity, on an immediate acceptance of a revolutionary programme. This means that we should approach the other groups of the far-left working in Socialist Unity, to see if we can get agreement on the long-term perspectives. This will serve a number of purposes. Firstly, it will open the way towards a discussion on regroupment, with the different organisations, and clarify whether or not they see Socialist Unity and joint work simply in the terms of some loose revolutionary alliance. Secondly, because it will take place in the context of Socialist Unity, it will provide a framework for both on-going discussions and work that does not simply place regroupment in terms of fusion with the IMG. Thirdly, providing agreement is reached on the long-term tasks, it will place tactical questions like what structures Socialist Unity needs, within the more overall political considerations around programme.

[SU-3] Until we open up such a debate, it is impossible to say how far things will develop. But what is vital is that we do not conflate our preparedness to go as far as possible with the forces already in Socialist Unity, with the point and purpose of our electoral intervention. Socialist Unity is the electoral expression of how the fight for our conception of how a socialist alternative will be built at this stage. The Socialist Alternative we want to construct cannot be reduced to regroupment of the smaller groups on the far-left, important, in the immediate sense such a regroupment would be as a means of beginning to break the log-jam on the far-left. Even if within a short period of time such a regroupment did take place and a new organization emerged, it would immediately afterwards turn its attention towards building a new alliance for intervention in elections. For a number of reasons the best ground for putting across our conceptions of party building is the electoral terrain. It is in elections that the fragmentation of the revolutionary left is most clearly exposed and where the differences on issues of programme are seen to be minor from a class point of view. Also elections reveal that the differences in social weight between the various revolutionary groups are quantitative, rather than of a qualitative character. It has been around elections that our line for a unified revolutionary organisation has got its best expression - shown in the defeats that we have inflicted on the SWP - and in relation to programme with the CP.

As the Labour Government is more and more affected by the crisis, and as the scabbing role of the bureaucracy is shown up, and as the Lefts - Tribunites and CP - are more and more paralysed by their line, so will the forces prepared to support a socialist alternative increase. Ladywood which took place in the early stages of a new growing opposition, revealed only a glimpse of what can be achieved. Providing we pursue our line for revolutionary unity we can exert big pressure on the SWP, and if we are able to win significant support and votes for Socialist Unity, we can start having a real impact at the base of the CP. This does not mean that we base ourselves on the conception that our biggest gains will be directly from these two organisations. In fact the reverse applies. The main sections we will organise around such a line will be the unaligned forces from the broad vanguard. From the point of the main road forward, we have however to turn the unity offensive in that direction, because they constitute the biggest pole of attraction for the vanguard right now. We have to try and polarise the vanguard around the reformist politics of the CP and the sectarianism of the SWP.

This means that Socialist Unity has to maintain its open orientation and in fact steps up its unity offensive towards the SWP. If the main forces in Socialist Unity do however reach political agreement on the need for a unified revolutionary organisation, and are prepared to come together to build one, and consider that Socialist Unity is the best means of doing so, we must not dissapate that opportunity, otherwise other forces will do the job for us. Given such a situation, then we should take that forward along the lines of fighting for it to adopt a revolutionary programme and being a democratic centralist organisation. We would then campaign for a new electoral alliance, of which Socialist Unity would be a part of.

I suggest the following things be done:

- 1) A letter to be sent to Big Flame, Workers League, and the Liberation Communist Group, suggesting a leadership meeting of these organisations, and the IMG be called, to discuss Socialist Unity and perspectives for revolutionary regroupment. A similar letter could also be sent to Martin Shaw, asking does the group of ex-SWP comrades also want to participate in such discussions.

[SU-4] 2) At that meeting the IMG should put forward its long-term perspectives for Socialist Unity, and explain what it sees are the tasks of Socialist Unity now. It should also suggest setting up a structure for an ongoing discussion on this issue, and for an interchange of political documentation on these subjects.

3) That to take advantage of the opportunities that the May elections provide for raising the issue of a united revolutionary slate and strengthening the process towards revolutionary regroupment, the IMG in every area where it has branches will offer to work for the adoption of class-struggle candidates and pledge its full support to Socialist Unity.

4) To make sure that we have an effective intervention around the May Socialist Unity campaign, the IMG will offer to Socialist Unity the services of Biggs, Cannon, Manzano, Denis, Banner, Drake, Savage, King as full-time election workers for the three weeks of the May elections.

5) That Socialist Challenge will increase its coverage of Socialist Unity and pledge to Socialist Unity that in the six weeks prior to the May elections each week it will give two pages to the campaign and one week it will produce a four-page special for Socialist Unity. The special would be edited and written by elected members of the Socialist Unity Steering Committee - i.e., it would carry the line of Socialist Unity -- and be used for sale in the elections.

6) The IMG comrades on the Steering Committee be instructed to raise the following propositions:

a) The Steering Committee to write to the SWP, suggesting a united slate in the May elections, failing that there be a discussion with the SWP to ascertain whether or not we can get agreement on aspects of a programme which both Socialist Unity and SWP candidates could stand on. Finally, if we cannot get agreement on either of the above, then we suggest a non-aggression pact between the SWP and Socialist Unity.

b) Socialist Unity organising a series of regional speaking tours in the New Year to start preparation for running candidates in May.

c) Socialist Unity making a direct approach to the CP branches in the areas, particularly those where revolutionary candidates have polled higher votes than the CP before, asking the CP not to split the vote and give support to Socialist Unity candidates.

d) Socialist Unity begins preparation of a statement concerning elections, explaining why it stands candidates, what are the aims of its campaigns, what its attitude is to other revolutionary candidates, what attitude it has to independent class-struggle candidates, to the Labour Government in general and left-wing Labour candidates in particular.

e) Socialist Unity organising a national school in the Spring for agents and candidates and producing a bulletin dealing with all aspects of elections - i.e., law, rights of candidates, campaigning, etc.

J. King

POLITICAL RESOLUTION FOR 1978 IMG CONFERENCE

For the National Committee 7/8 January 1978

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 6. Forces to the Left of the Labour Bureaucracy and the Communist Party
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32 pages long

[Point #6, "Forces to the Left of the Labour Bureaucracy and the Communist Party."]

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6. FORCES TO THE LEFT OF THE LABOUR BUREAUCRACY AND COMMUNIST PARTY

21. Despite the opportunities opening up for building a more powerful revolutionary organisation in this period it would be false to believe that the vanguard emerging out of the economic, social, and political struggles can in a unilinear and spontaneous fashion develop into an instrument capable of meeting the needs of the class struggle and building a revolutionary party. Already internationally the complete debacle of the Portuguese and Italian centrist and ultra-left organisations shows that without a successful fight for a revolutionary line the 'extreme left' cannot spontaneously exploit the opportunities of even exceptionally favourable circumstances. Economist, semi-political, ultra-left, and opportunist lines are simply smashed to pieces by manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie and mass reformist parties.

In Britain, even well before the class struggle has reached a point qualitatively comparable to Italy or Portugal, the beginning of a crisis in the most left wing sections of the workers movement can already be seen. The situation where only eighteen months after the bringing down of a Tory government by the threat of extra-Parliamentary action the bourgeoisie and bureaucracy have been able to impose major setbacks and defeats on the working class; the complete bankruptcy of the reformist left; the position of major international developments such as Euro-communism; the lessons of the debacle of Portugal and Italy; the rise of new questions in 'internal' politics such as the questioning of the long-term unity of the British state; inevitably shake up the Marxist left - in particular a left with the profoundly economist, sectarian, and national centred traditions of the one in Britain. Since summer 1975 not merely the reformists but all currents standing to the left of the Labour and Communist Parties have been faced with major discussions and choices at the level of programme, strategy and tactics.

- at the level of programme the qualitative transformation of the economic situation to one of stagnation of the productive forces, the development of a crisis embracing not merely the economy but the whole of social relations, the entry into a situation of crisis of traditional parties and future threat of a crisis of state structures, have posed issues before the working class and oppressed in a sharp fashion. Questions such as the relation of rights and institutions of bourgeois democracy to the struggle for socialism; whether the decisive goal of revolutionaries should be the construction of mass organs of workers democracy finally capable of assuming state power or whether these fit within a framework of maintaining Parliamentary supremacy; the centrality to any revolution of the struggles against the oppression of women; the attitude to take to black nationalism and self-organisation; the need to fight a democratic bourgeois nationalist SNP and the necessity to take a clear position on whether to stand for the right of self-determination of Scotland and Wales; development of the struggle against the oppression of gays; pose major issues of programme which cannot be dealt with by mere combination of minimalist economic agitation with propaganda for the socialist millennium.

- at the level of strategy the decisive question of the relation of revolutionaries to the organisations of the working class and oppressed has been decisively posed by

the international and national experience of the class struggle. Basic questions of whether to consider that the framework of trade unions and parties is adequate for the struggle for socialism or whether other organisations of the oppressed - such as a women's movement, black formations, community organisations, and in the future workers councils and soviets - must be built; whether to attempt to build an opposition within the trade unions or attempt essentially, under whatever guise, to attempt essentially to build a new union movement; whether to support and stand for building the Women's Liberation Movement or to attempt to build a 'communist women's movement' formed around a revolutionary organisation; whether to support building a socialist current within the Women's Liberation Movement or to see such a current as an obstacle to the 'broad democratic alliance'; whether to support black self-organisation or to see it as 'racist division' of the masses; whether to stand for building a day movement or not; these and a whole series of similar basic questions have confronted revolutionaries.

- in tactics the decisive question of the relation of revolutionaries to the bureaucracy of the workers movement, and of united action of themselves, has been posed. In a situation of total retreat by the reformist left all forces in the workers movement were faced with the choice of siding with the direct struggle of the masses, at the expense of totally breaking with the bureaucracy even at a tactical level, or maintaining an orientation to the bureaucracy at the expense of refusing to make any fight for the needs of the working class and oppressed. Willingness to break completely with the bureaucracy and act independently of it was once again shown as a decisive issue for ability to take the side of the working class - a test miserably failed by the Labour Left and Communist Party. Did this however, and the disgusting betrayals of the reformist leaders, mean that revolutionaries should now reject on principle the tactics of the united front or should they still be prepared to enter into united action even with sections of the bureaucracy where this takes forward the struggle of the working class?; within a united front orientation to the mass organisations what role is played by the united action of revolutionaries?; is standing for elections 'breaking the workers united front' or an important chance for propaganda by revolutionaries?; is forming blocs with other revolutionaries in elections an 'obstacle to building the party' or on the contrary one of the ways of taking forward the class struggle and laying the basis to construct a really powerful revolutionary organisation?

Finally these programmatic, strategic, and tactical questions in themselves posed the issue of the type of organisation revolutionaries are attempting to construct. Can a revolutionary party be built out of a monolithic sect built around some particular tactic; or built round a 'leader', or can it only be built out of an organisation built round a definite programme but within which major debates and differences on strategy and tactics are bound to exist? Can revolutionaries consider only their own organisation as revolutionary in the real sense, with all others as centrist, or are there other genuine revolutionaries with whom they should seek to unite?: Flowing from both these is internal democracy and debate a luxury which 'puts off workers' or is it the sole means by which correct policies can be arrived at.

No organisation to the left of the Labour bureaucracy and Communist Party has in the last period been able to avoid giving an answer to absolutely basic questions of revolutionary politics.

22. The posing of major questions before all currents standing on the left wing of the workers movement inevitably creates not only discussion but the necessity to draw out more consistently the conclusions of political positions or to correct previous errors. Even within healthy trends such a process involves struggles. In degenerating, sectarian, or administrative currents it involves crises and splits. The last period has therefore been one of the clarification and recomposition of all trends and organisations claiming to Marxism

- a current whose character has been particularly clearly revealed in the tests posed by the class struggle in the last period has been the centrist forces within the Labour Party who lead the Institute for Workers Control/Spokesman publications. While prepared under certain conditions to engage in united action between the left bureaucracy and the needs of the working class, this current has clearly shown once again that the decisive question for it is the tie to the left bureaucrats. Forced to choose between the needs of the masses and the line of the bureaucracy it has chosen the bureaucracy. While verbally condemning the government's policies, for nearly two

years following the imposition of incomes policy the IWC conference disappeared from sight. When it re-emerged it did not take up the developing struggles against the government on wages but tried to tie forces to the bureaucracy in a 'campaign' on unemployment which the trade union leadership not merely consciously counterposed to the fight against incomes policy, thereby sabotaging the struggles actually taking place, but on which it did not have the intention of taking one single step of serious action.

In an attempt to cover up the bankruptcy of its policies this current has in the last period intensified its polemics against the revolutionary left and attempted to constitute itself on a more coherently theoretical centrist basis. The economic policies based on reflation, planning agreements, and limited measures of nationalisation; the political positions based on concepts of combining Parliamentary sovereignty with soviets; the economist strategies of achieving workers control but without overturning the mechanisms of the bourgeois state; and the various other concepts in left and right variants in the writings of Holland, Hodson, Coates et al, together with the associated left-centrist views of Milliband, represent a much more classical type of centrism than that which has existed for a considerable period in Britain. It furthermore has an international connection in relation to the currents represented within the Socialist Parties by Papandreou, CERES, Cardosa, and others, and has a convergence with the 'strategy' of conceiving it possible to achieve hegemony in civil society while leaving political power in the hands of the bourgeoisie which is represented with Eurocommunism by Carillo, Berlinguer, Ellenstein et al and which has its most consistent advocates within the CPGB in Purdy, Prior, Roberts et al. Therefore while small in numbers this current has significant political potential and poses important tasks of debate.

- the current of national economist sectarianism represented most clearly by the Militant group has also been isolated in virtual total inactivity in the last period. Although separated by its line and tactics from many key struggles this current had gained, in particular in 1973-76, from the growth of the Labour Party, and even more the LPYS, and from the entry into the LP of forces attracted to activity in the mass organisations of the working class but not having any great illusions in their bureaucracies. From the defeats of summer 1975 however this organisation, with no answer to the social or political crisis and tied in its activity to the bureaucracy, found itself in sharp stagnation. This organisation represents a centrist current standing as an obstacle to the building of a revolutionary party.

The other chief component of the national economist sectarian current, the WRP, has departed still further in the past period on the basis of ultra-leftism in Britain ('Down with the Labour Government') and capitulation to the Libyan bourgeois nationalism internationally. While in a struggle against a Tory government this current may retain some forces as an organisation the WRP has no potential to play a progressive role in the class struggle. Its banister methods of falsification and slander however continue to provide a tool for opponents of Trotskyism.

- the most globally unfavourable development for the revolutionary left in the last period has undoubtedly been the evolution of the International Socialists/Socialist Workers Party. Not merely is this the largest organisation to the left of the Labour and Communist Parties, with the biggest base in the working class, but in the period from the mid-1960s onwards this organisation moved sharply closer to revolutionary Marxism and the interests of the working class compared to previous positions - clear support for victory of the forces represented by the NLF in Vietnam in contrast to earlier abstention in the Korean war and China-India war of 1962, movement from simple concentration on trade union struggles to greater emphasis and support for actions of all the oppressed, shift from attempting to revive centrist concepts of organisation under the guise of 'Luxemburgism' to at least theoretical support for building a Leninist organisation.

Unfortunately however, despite these favourable shifts, the SWP continued to contain also in its politics the elements of the economist, syndicalist, sectarian line derived from its origins and the particular variant of its state capitalist theories. Given a democratic internal regime the contradictions between the revolutionary positions and continuing centrist elements could possibly have been resolved in a favourable direction. Instead however the leadership of the IS/SWP attempted to suppress the contradictions through expulsions and suppression of internal democracy in the belief that by astute tactical moves they could outwit the basic historical processes of building a party. The result was that although the SWP went through a significant numerical growth, and played a positive role in campaigns such as against the fascists, it lost a major part of its cadres, eroded its base in the working class,

and found itself heading into a sectarian impasse from which, no matter how much it recruited in the short term, it could never build a revolutionary party. The result was an isolation of its 'rank and file' organisations in various sectors, rejection of the Women's Liberation Movement, and with no internal democracy of the type necessary to build a party.

While the final outcome of the trajectory of the SWP is not yet decided, and revolutionaries should be prepared to unite with the SWP under conditions of genuine internal democracy, nevertheless it is clear that the initiative towards steps in building a genuine revolutionary party will not come from the SWP in this period but on the contrary will be imposed on it by changes in the relation of forces.

- the sectarian degeneration of the line of the SWP in the last period has led to a more important role being played by other forces of the revolutionary left. In the field of political organisations the IMG has been able to move out of a situation of playing a major role primarily only in anti-imperialist campaigns and some student struggles to being able to take initiatives in a wider field; various currents have been expelled from or left the SWP and, while not taking major national initiatives, have been able to play a real role in local initiatives and those in particular unions and industries; Big Flame has moved out of being almost totally a local organisation and adjusted some of its previous extreme positions on questions such as Shop Stewards organisation and international politics and been able to play an increased role in initiatives of the left. Over and above these shifts in political organisations there have been important developments in various movements and currents - in particular in the Women's Liberation Movement, in certain sectors of the trade unions, and in economics and other theoretical areas. While not having the same weight as the SWP both these political organisations, and parts of the more general developments, in the past period have been able to play a role not only in particular struggles but also to some extent in more centralised and co-ordinated role through activity around Socialist Unity, Socialist Challenge, in the women's movement, and in some formations in the trade unions. It is out of this last current that the most important initiatives for overcoming the problems on the revolutionary left have come in the past period. The development of forces emerging out of these processes of recomposition and regroupment begins to raise the possibility of the creation of a new and stronger revolutionary organisation in Britain - one that can fight for the unification of all revolutionary forces.

23. Despite the objective possibilities opening up for building a new more powerful revolutionary organisation it would be false to underestimate the problems which still exist in actually bringing into existence such a formation. The problems lie in the strengths and weaknesses of all the revolutionary currents involved in the present period of class struggle. Sufficient political maturity, and a sense of historical development, shows the differences for what they are - problems created by smallnesses of organisations, inevitable pressures of oneness, and differences which really represent those which should be the bases of tendencies or currents inside a single revolutionary organisation. It should be obvious that the best way to overcome these onenesses and weaknesses, and to develop and recruit to the strengths, would be to form a new united organisation which would attract new forces and provide the best basis for the most healthy ideas to win forces to their line. Such an organisation would be not merely numerically but politically stronger than any existing current as it would aid dramatically in overcoming the one-sidednesses and limitations of its initially component parts.

Unfortunately a whole series of pressures created by isolation of formations from revolutionary class struggles, and in particular the deeply sectarian history and traditions of the British Marxist left, still stand in the way of the creation of the united organisation which is required. False elevation of tactical differences into principled ones; conceptions that some particular tactic or 'style of work' can lead to qualitative gains in relation to other organisations; failure to see that more people can be won to correct positions by joining a united revolutionary organisation with a democratic internal regime than through working in a small group; failure to see what will be lost if unity is not achieved, all stand as obstacles to creating the new revolutionary organisation which is required.

Despite the problems there is no doubt what the orientation of the IMG must be in the coming period on revolutionary unity. The fight for a new united revolutionary organisation is not one which is a sectarian invention of our group but one which

corresponds to the real needs of the class struggle. This need will be increasingly felt throughout the vanguard in the coming period. In the next variant the type of organisation which is needed can actually come into existence. If not then the IMG can hope to win many people to understand this need, build our own forces on a line corresponding to the objective needs of the class struggle, and to convince other organisations in the future of the need for revolutionary unity. If we believe that other organisations fail to meet the tasks of the situation, and thereby create seeds for their own degeneration, by rejecting principled unifications then we must understand that the same applies to the IMG - including if we rejected a principled unification because it would be a minority in a new organisation. Even where we cannot bring about unification the IMG needs to understand not merely the weaknesses but the strengths of others and to learn from them - just as we think we have some contributions others could learn from. The fundamental slogan of the IMG within the vanguard in the next period is FOR A NEW UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION!

7. FOR A LABOUR GOVERNMENT BUT FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

24. The political dynamics of the present period of the class struggle determine the line of revolutionaries in the period leading to the general election. The bourgeoisie has not succeeded in qualitatively shifting the relation of forces in the economic and social fields despite its severe offensive. It has however succeeded in achieving very major successes in the realm of politics. While a development of the vanguard is taking place, this is occurring in a situation of considerable political apathy and demoralisation of the masses. This depoliticisation, and not the strength of the Tory Party, is the chief cause which could lead Labour to lose the next election.

This relation of forces determines the slogans of revolutionaries at the next election. It is quite false to believe that the fall of the Labour government would be a step forward for the working class and oppressed. On the contrary not merely would a Tory government be a viciously reactionary administration on a whole series of fields but, precisely for this reason among others, it would rapidly rekindle illusions in the role and nature of the Labour Party - as occurred in 1970-74. There is no chance in this situation either of creating any alternative for the masses to the Labour Party. Revolutionaries therefore must call at the next election for the return of a Labour government.

While supporting the return of a Labour administration however revolutionaries have simultaneously to fight to build an alternative to the policies of such a government. Such an alternative consists of achieving two interrelated tasks

- (i) Building a new unified revolutionary organisation to fight for a full answer to the capitalist crisis and for socialist revolution.
- (ii) Fighting to build a class struggle left wing of all those prepared to struggle for the most urgent needs of the working class and oppressed.

These two together constitute the socialist alternative to the policies of the Labour government - an alternative which is at present weak but which can be built and developed in the coming period. The slogan of revolutionaries for the general election, and for this situation of the class struggle is therefore summarised as FOR A LABOUR GOVERNMENT BUT FIGHT TO BUILD A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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TACTICS AND BUILDING A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION
For the National Committee 7/8 January 1977

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27 pages long

1. TACTICS IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

a) Summary of the Political Resolution

The chief conclusions can be summarised as follows:

(i) The chief features of the political situation on a world scale are the deepening crisis of imperialism and its major prop, the Stalinist bureaucracy. This crisis is both the confirmation and guarantee of further development of the proletarian revolution. The chief features of the new crisis of imperialism are the victory of the Angolan revolution over imperialism (laying the basis for the Soweto insurrection of 1976) and the development of the political crisis in Western Europe since the revolutionary upsurge of 1975 in Portugal. The rising class struggle in Western Europe, combined with the growth of anti-bureaucratic currents in the East, has given rise to a new current in international Stalinism known as 'Eurocommunism'. This tendency weakens the Soviet bureaucracy through its attacks on the suppression of democratic rights in Eastern Europe. It simultaneously weakens its own standing in the working class through their right wing policies expressed through their support for austerity programmes of the Western European bourgeoisie.

(ii) The counter-offensive of the ruling class in Europe has centred on resolving the stagnation of the productive forces and the declining rate of profit through driving down the living standards of the working class. In Britain this offensive has not succeeded in restoring the fortunes of British capital. The very depth of this crisis demands that revolutionaries advance policies of a type that begin to open the road to imposing a workers' solution to the bosses' crisis. The transitional demands must centre on the necessity of developing and centralising all expressions of workers' control.

(iii) The economic problems of the British bourgeoisie interact with the ever-mourning crisis of social relations. The crisis of the family, the disaffection among youth (particularly black youth), the polarisation of the student movement and the desertion of the traditional mass parties by whole sections of the middle classes indicated the strain on capitalist social relations in Britain. Since the labour bureaucracy will not defend the interests of these oppressed groups, the revolutionaries must put themselves forward as the most consistent fighters for partial demands and democratic rights. The alternative to such a fight is splits and divisions in the working class encouraged by the ruling class and its agents.

(iv) The bourgeois parties are making major efforts to regain the measure of support that would permit them to create a strong movement. The Tories advocate restriction of democratic rights through strengthening of the state apparatus both militarily and through the courts (the National Front acts as a testing ground for more extreme versions of such campaigns, particularly on racism). The Liberal Party has attempted to gain legitimacy as the cop of big business in the Lib-Lab pact. The break up of the ruling class in Scotland and the growth of the bourgeois Scottish National Party not only poses problems for the mass parties in composing governments, but also threatens the very unity of the British state structures. The most enduring element of this crisis in British state structures is the north of Ireland. The downturn of mass struggle in the North and the repressive surge by the armed forces this year and

the political agreements concluded by the Ulster Unionists and the Labour Government have strengthened the hand of reaction. The Irish war has been motivation for a number of attacks on the democratic rights of workers in this country, particularly the Prevention of Terrorism Act. These attacks on democratic rights are part and parcel of the project of reconsolidating the ruling class bloc which suffered fragmentation during the events of 1974.

(v) The role of the Labour Government has been to try and demoralise and disorientate the working class rather than to lead them to head-on confrontation. The chief prop of this attack has been the trade union bureaucracy. For a whole period the Labour Government was the preferred alternative for the bourgeoisie. The Liberal Party was encouraged to keep the Labour Party in power, rather than acceding to the Tories' demand for the downfall of a minority government. Thus while demanding the end of the Lib-Lab pact, the main fire of the working class has to be directed at the Social Contract policies of the Government and their supporters in the Labour movement. The principal obstacle to this settling of accounts with the right wing leadership of the labour movement is the Labor Left and its refusal to fight on the central issue of the day. By virtue of the CP's strategic line of left unity they also comprise part of the block to mass action of the working class. Never before in this decade have these reactionary tendencies in the labour movement been so sharply pronounced. This provides both the necessity and the opportunity to develop maximum work and organisation independent of the reformists, combining it with the tactics of united action with those new forces breaking with those reformist leaders, but not yet won over to the class struggle programme.

(vi) Such a class struggle left wing is dependent on a political leadership capable of advancing a system of demands and alliances to knit together the forces of the vanguard with a base in the mass movements. We must fight to build a revolutionary organisation, which provides an alternative to class collaboration of the CP and the ultra-leftism of the SWP. The continued development of the vanguard provides the basis for the building of cadres for such organisation. At the same time the continued domination of the Labour Party of the masses means that our united front orientation and the continued demand for a Labour Government provide the best possible conditions for the building of a political alternative to the Labour Party. The form such an alternative takes in this period must be considered in relation not merely to the existing forces on the far left, but also new forces radicalised under this period of the Labour Government's office.

b) The political alternative we seek to build

The political forces which support building a unified revolutionary organisation on such a political basis are small in number. Nevertheless, the growth of a vanguard breaking with reformism, a process accelerated by the past three years of Labour government, provide the basis for a rapid expansion of their numbers. Although an organised political alternative to the Labour Party is not a realistic perspective for some years, there is the possibility of building an alternative to the main forces which command the stage to the left of the Labour Party - an alternative to the class collaboration of the CP and the sectarianism of the Socialist Workers Party. It is these forces which are the main competitors for the leadership of those new forces breaking with reformism.

Both the SWP and the CP present themselves as the socialist alternative and as the revolutionary party. This is totally false. The CP is a pseudo-alternative to social democracy. Indeed an examination of its practice over the

past period shows it to be more of an aid to left social democracy than a challenge. The SWP fails to dent social democracy from the other angle. Its activity and practice are such as to 'go around' social democracy. It sees the question of building the party, not as one of authority in the class, but a question of numbers.

The refutation of the claim made by the CP and SWP is obvious if we look at the political reality in Britain today. At the time when the Labour Government made its turn, there did not exist any authoritative alternative to direct the opposition inside the class. There was no organisation that could stimulate the fight back nor force the left leaders to make a verbal turn to opposition against the anti-working class offensive. Nothing qualitative has changed since.

(i) The Communist Party

Despite the moves of the CPGB towards criticism of the denial of democratic rights in Eastern Europe, the organisation remains Stalinist. The characterisation applied to both the major currents within the party. The position of the central leadership of the CPGB on the crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy is both partial in itself and is within the framework of an agreement with Moscow's basic outlook. It backs the policy of detente and peaceful coexistence fostered by Moscow. It refuses in any way to challenge the basic characterisation of the countries of Eastern Europe as socialist and therefore makes no link between its stand on democratic rights and the need to mobilise the masses in Eastern Europe on a programme to overthrow the bureaucracy.

The main thrust of the New British Road is thoroughly reformist. It substitutes the fight to mobilise the masses to overthrow the bourgeois state through the formation of organisations of workers power, the task of struggling for the extension of democracy into every sphere. In this scheme of things, the mass struggle is subordinated to parliament. The Spanish and Italian CPs' backing for austerity programmes against the working class is the future of the British Road. There is no possibility of the British CP evolving towards revolutionary Marxism. Its direction is in exactly the opposite direction. The main strategic line of advance for the CP remains that of 'left unity'. But in the last few years this conception has been put to harsh test in the class struggle, as the left social democrats have moved to the right.

Up to mid-1975, the CP had been in the forefront of nearly every significant struggle of the working class, against the 'In Place of Strife', UCS, the Pentonville 5, even though belatedly, the fight to free the Shrewsbury building workers. In the unions it did some important work, it fought a fierce battle against the entrenched right wing in UCATT, it was a major influence behind the move to the left of the AUEW and T&GWU. In sum, its broad left formations and the LCDTU have had some prestige and authority. But at each and every turn in the struggle, the CP was faced with a choice: to build its influence in the rank and file and create an independent political force for the bureaucracy, or build in the bureaucracy and tie itself to the manoeuvres of the left TU leaders. On each occasion, it chose the latter. As soon as action had gone far enough for the bureaucracy, the CP would then call it off. The CP deliberately fettered the bureaucrats, rather than prepare their supporters against their political orientation and role. Consequently the disarray at the time of the imposition of the Social Contract despite the verbal opposition of the CP, it was unable to call up any serious opposition.

The most signal mark of the right-ward drift of the CP was its stand on the side of the bureaucracy in opposition to all struggles which threatened to smash Phase 2 of the Labour Government's incomes policy.

Our long term political and organisation objective must be to animate a tendency of the CP on the basis of revolutionary Marxism.

(ii) The Socialist Workers Party

Our attitude to the SWP is different to that to the CP. This organisation has moved closer to some positions of revolutionary Marxism since 1968. Its state capitalist basis has not led it to total programmatic degeneration and class betrayal which has been the direction of most currents adhering to this view. The peculiar twist which the SWP gives to 'state capitalist' theories allows it to stand on the gains of the Bolsheviks by positing the capitalist counter-revolution in Russia after the rise of Stalin. It is noteworthy that the first question the SWP stresses to the CP base is their support for the Bolshevik revolution.

The Leninist element in the SWP's politics has meant that it has been able to resist total programmatic degeneration. Indeed, the tendency of this organisation has been to take the side of the working class in many of the decisive class confrontations internationally and in Britain. This in turn has meant that they have been able to base their organisation on the most advanced layers of the vanguard. But without a consistent revolutionary Marxist programme this has also entailed the SWP adapting to the syndicalist and economic tendencies within this vanguard.

Nowhere are these tendencies more apparent than in the SWP's method of building the party. Without a programme incorporating a list of demands which move from today's conditions to the seizure of power the SWP substitute an eclectic mixture of demands (reflected in their approach to the working class struggle in Britain) and maximum demands (expressed through their support for the putschist PRP in the decisive periods of revolutionary struggle in Portugal).

The substitution of party organisation for the self-organisation of the oppressed masses is reflected in the rejection by the SWP of a democratic independent rank and file organisation in favour of 'rank and fileism', and their failure to understand the centrality of the united front tactic in the current stages of the British class struggle and their substitution of party sections comprised of blacks and women for the building of those respective autonomous movements.

All of these errors will prevent the SWP from taking the leap from an organisation of the vanguard to a party based in the masses. Nevertheless we are convinced that the majority of the SWP can be won to positions of revolutionary Marxism and consequently that we should act on the basis of being able to win the organisation as a whole. The major obstacle to such a reunification is the undemocratic regime of the SWP, a reaction to the growing number of oppositions within the ranks which more consistently embrace the positions of revolutionary Marxism. This lack of democracy is therefore a consequence and rooted in their political programme. Any fusion therefore will only be the result of long term political struggle.

(iii) Our Orientation

As against these strategies we see the building of a revolutionary party through the process of splits and fusions - an approach to the struggle which sees the party being built as an outcome of the advance of the struggle itself. The party will be built through the fight for a programme which advances the

struggle as a whole and the clarification and stimulation of whole layers under the present hegemony of reformist and Stalinist forces through the fight for such a programme. In this way it is the fight to build a party, not through organisational fetishism, not by self-proclamations, but by the re-alignment of forces at the base of the mass organisations with those of revolutionary Marxism. None of the present organisations are the sole nucleus of the future party. This orientation does not attempt to subordinate independent movements to the party, but rather sees the best conditions for building the party through the development of the broad movement.

The first step towards the project is the appeal to all forces committed to the building of a unified revolutionary organisation to group themselves as a democratic centralist organisation around a revolutionary programme.

c) A Principled Basis for Regroupment

Already in Socialist Challenge a programme has been published (see Appendix 1) which the Editorial Board put forward as the basis for building a unified revolutionary organisation. Our line for the construction of a unified revolutionary organisation maintains that we will not build such an organisation simply by agreement on the immediate tasks confronting us today. The character of an organisation claiming to be revolutionary can ultimately only be determined by how it acts in the great tests of the international class struggle and by what side it takes in the clash of contending classes.

A dividing line between revolutionary currents on the one side and all varieties of centrism and reformism cannot be determined by merely formal or verbal support for historical programme. Nor can it be determined by support for all the aspects of the full revolutionary programme. Instead such a dividing line has to be mapped out on the basis of touchstone issues like support of opposition to class collaboration governments, standing for the defeat of one's own bourgeoisie in imperialist wars, the necessity of destroying the state apparatus of the capitalist class and replacing it with a workers state.

We put forward this programme as the basis for the creation of a democratic centralist organisation and place no other condition on the formation of such an organisation, believing that this represents a principled basis for the creation of a revolutionary socialist organisation.

d) Our strategy for a Unified Revolutionary Organisation

The politics in Our Common Ground provide no more than a dividing line between a revolutionary organisation and those who are centrist or reformist. Such an organisation also needs initial policies to give it a strategy in the class struggle. The International Marxist Group would propose the following policies for such a revolutionary organisation to adopt at its founding conference.

* For the united front

The main task of a revolutionary organisation in Britain is breaking the domination of reformism over the working class. We believe that this can only be achieved through breaking the illusions in the traditional leaders in mass action. This applies to the Labour Party leaders in demanding that they support all struggles of the working class and demanding that they break with the bourgeoisie. It also represents our main tactic in struggling through the trade unions, seeking to win the leadership from the reformists.

In order to carry out such a fight it is necessary to build in rank and file organisation independent of the union bureaucracy on the basis of organising all those who are prepared to fight against the main aspects of the capitalist, offensive. This means the creation of a new left wing in the labour movement based on the policies of class struggle as opposed to those of the Labour lefts and the Communist Party (class collaboration i.e. - typist).

We demand that the Labour Party form governments believing that such rank and file organisation and the building of a political alternative to Labour is best assisted under conditions where the working class mobilise against their own treacherous leadership.

* For anti-capitalist demands

In order to take the struggle of the working class forward from the demands which are purely defensive in character it is necessary to put forward a system of demands which open the way for a workers solution to the crisis which puts the cost of that crisis on the backs of the ruling class. The kernel of such a programme at the present time of deep economic crisis is in the tactic of workers control. We would propose the adoption of the Socialist Unity Action Programme as an adequate starting point for such a programme of demands. (See Appendix 2)

* For workers democracy

To confront the reformist leaders' defence of bourgeois democracy the revolutionaries must be able to put forward their own superior model of political society based on working class democracy. But there can be no credibility for such a programme unless that organisation has the most internally democratic regime itself. This means the full democratic testing of the line of that organisation by all its members combined with the utmost freedom of discussion through the right to form tendencies.

* For a correct relationship to autonomous movements

A genuine revolutionary organisation opposes all attempts to subordinate autonomous movements such as those which exist on women's liberation and those which are being built for black liberation and gay liberation. Instead it too fights to build these movements within its own militants playing an active political rôle in putting forward a strategy that raises these questions in the working class.

* For a speedy affiliation to the Fourth International

A revolutionary organisation has to be practically committed to the fight for revolutionary internationalism and organisation. All the major struggles internationally have profound importance for the building of an organisation in Britain and increasingly the revolutionary struggle in Western Europe assumes a synchronised character. We would propose that a conference be held after full discussions to determine the question of whether to join the Fourth International and at the same time to continue the work in our tendency of building the Fourth International and its press.

2. OUR LINE FOR THE MASS STRUGGLE

a) Class struggle method

The experience of the past 21/2 years has shown the imperative need for cross sector and cross union organisation which is an authoritative alternative leadership to that of the bureaucracy. Such an alternative needs to be able to offer a political answer to that of the bureaucracy. In other words, it has to be consciously left wing. For, as we have seen, the chief obstacle to the fight back over the past period has been political. All calls for more militancy both missed the point and were unable to mobilise the fight back - even when issued by such powerful figures as Scargill.

Such a political programme has to relate to the concrete situation facing the working class. Struggles to defend living standards and against unemployment cuts in services and wages; to defend and extend women's rights and against women's oppression; struggles to halt the growth of racism and fascism, and struggles to defend democratic and trade union rights, these are the immediate questions facing the mass of workers in this period. Even the most isolated and limited struggles can take on a national political significance in this context, as we have seen by the struggles of the Leyland toolroom workers, the campaign against attacks on abortion rights, the Lewisham and Hyde anti-fascist mobilisations, and the Grunwicks dispute.

A class struggle left wing must be capable of raising concrete demands which can further these struggles, such as the demands in our action programme for a sliding scale of wages, for free abortion on demand, for an end to immigration laws, and for the nationalisation of firms like Grunwicks. It must base itself on extending the independent mass activity of the class and other oppressed layers, whilst demanding that the leaders of the class support and further such mass action (in the abortion campaign demanding an end to the free vote, around Grunwicks demanding TU support the mass pickets and black all essential service). Finally, it must place no reliance on the left leaders, thereby maintaining its political independence, whilst being prepared to struggle alongside left leaders for the implementation of demands placed upon these leaders. It should be on this basis that left bureaucrats be invited to participate within any class struggle left wing.

Absolutely integral to any such formation is real workers democracy. Political independence can best be facilitated by the fullest possible discussion and control of the militant activists. This means the opportunity to discuss the various perspectives offered. Without this, the possibility of building a powerful alternative to the bureaucracy will be undermined by fragmentation. There cannot be a united class struggle left if the various political currents are not allowed to win support for their alternatives.

Such groupings will emerge spontaneously or ready formed. A class struggle left wing will only be built as the result of long term struggle. A class struggle left wing will only emerge through a combination of power of the mass movement and the strength of the consciously class struggle forces, at the base of the unions. To prepare for the latter two types of steps need to be taken, neither of which constitute the class struggle left wing. The first is the fight inside the rank and file broad left groupings both sectorally and nationally for a united left wing on a class struggle programme in the unions. The second, where this is impossible, the launching of groupings which can take

initiatives in their own right but which stand for the building of such a united class struggle left and which can begin to change the relation of forces to push this forward practically.

While this perspective cannot be mechanically applied to mass movements outside the trade unions and Labour Party, we also seek to build left wings as part of a unified mass movements amongst students and women. The growing sentiment for a mass movement against racism and fascism needs to be organised around a left wing which takes on the task of building such a mass movement.

(b) The class struggle left wing - alternative to class collaboration and ultra-leftism

The last two years if Labour rule have, if anything - more shown up the groupings at the base of TUS than even attempts to construct a socialist alternative. These failures have been more critical because right from the beginning - large oppositional minorities have existed which refused to allow the reformist line and succumb to the Labour Government offensive. The 3,000 delegates to the Unemployed Assembly, the mass support for the demonstrations against the cuts, the large oppositional minorities in the union conferences and significant votes in the elections for revolutionary candidates all indicated in their own ways the existence of this broad vanguard. But there was a total failure to organise this vanguard and create a clear alternative authority which could centralise the mass struggle as it began to turn up again. The main responsibility for this state of affairs lies directly with the Communist Party who deliberately sabotaged such a project. This has thrown their 'Broad Left' formations into deep crisis, however. Unfortunately the SWP decided at this time to turn away from the fight in the unions with the direction they gave to the SWP-inspired Right To Work Campaign.

(ii) The rôle of the Communist Party in the labour movement

The open betrayals of the darlings of the CP, the lack of preparation for this in the ranks, the total inability in the last two years to define a course independent of the bureaucracy in the absence of willing left allies has revealed clearly the thoroughly pressure group and electioneering character of the Broad left formations of the LCDTU. But it is the bankruptcy, not of a specific tactic, but of a strategic orientation which is involved.

The orientation and goal of the CP-inspired formations in the unions is the strategy of 'Left Unity'. This is predicated on the notion that the only serious divide in the unions is an ideological one, between Left and Right. Of course such a view describes a real situation. But time to time political divisions do appear in the TU bureaucracy. But to assume that there is an identity of interests between the bureaucracy and rank and file is equally one-dimensional, but a much more dangerous view. The bureaucracy's material conditions of existence, their privileged and social position is bound up with the continued existence of capitalism. The reformist political views and positions of the bureaucracy reflects its material existence and a serious anti-capitalist struggle is inimical to the continuation of its material position.

The continual re-emergence of a left wing in the bureaucracy, however, is determined by the very logic of their position. They must ensure that the struggle remains in reformist channels. But at the same time they must respond to the demands of the rank and file when they risk losing control altogether.

On the other hand, the political position of the rank and file of unions is not determined by its own interests or privileges in capitalist society. In the long run they have no interest in the continuation of the system and the political line of reformism. Whilst, therefore, it is correct to put demands on the TU bureaucrats and to work with them in united action if they respond to such demands, it is quite wrong to tailor the nature of the demands in the name of unity. As such, however, Left Unity is nothing more than the cover for tying the rank and file to the bureaucracy. This is very easy to demonstrate, even during the past two years.

With the steady shift to the right of Jones and Scanlon, the LCOU has become more and more paralysed. The first 18 months of Labour wage cuts failed to produce even the calling of the conference. When a conference did occur it was only to put pressure on the TU leaders against a future Phase III - when irresistible pressure already had accumulated in the ranks of the TUs with no help from the CP. Leading TU figures of the CP such as Derek Robinson, convenor of British Leyland, Longbridge, sabotaged the token strike action called and the CP took a political position against the major struggles that broke out

against Phase III because the whole of the bureaucracy was lined up against such struggles as the Heathrow engineers and the Leyland toolmakers. A similar story can be told for the various Broad Left groupings. Since wage restraint was introduced, the AUEW Broad Left has met only to promote another bureaucrat endorsed by Scanlon for Union President when Scanlon retires.

The CP formations in the unions are based on tying the rank and file to class collaborationist policies promoted by the left bureaucrats. They are not based on independent self-activity of the rank and file, but are only prepared to move with the sanction of the left bureaucrats.

It is little wonder that such groupings are opposed to any trappings of workers democracy. It is a notorious scandal that no LCOU conference takes resolutions from TU bodies. Clearly to allow democratic discussion and decision making might put such groupings on the collision course with the TU lefts. The CP groupings in the unions will have to be thoroughly shaken up and recomposed. They cannot be 'reformed'.

This means a perspective of a fight solely through the LCOU and Broad Left formations is totally ruled out. We have to form a bloc with all those forces around willing to break decisively with the left reformists for mass action of the class. This dictates a bloc with the forces around Rank & File against the Broad Left.

(ii) For broad based class struggle formations - a critique of rank and filism

The rank and file groupings offer themselves as the alternative to the Broad Left, and the LCOU. But they too have been found wanting over the past period. Despite setting up the National Rank and File Movement in early 74, when it came to the crunch the SWP were unable to mobilise any real forces against the Government's turn. The rank and file groupings in the unions went into deep crisis. Their response to this failure - the Right To Work Campaign - only compounded the problem as it fostered an orientation which took the SWP away from the TUs.

All rank and filist theory is based on the view that the main line of divide is a sociological one - between rank and file and full time officials. The stated task of rank and file groups is to group the rank and file. The basis of inclusion is not agreement on demands, but simply being a member of the

rank and file, rather than being a full time official. This is the only force specifically excluded (i.e. bureaucrats). This inevitably means sectarianism, based not on political objectives, but on organisational fetishism. Hence the notorious sectarianism of R&F formations and its offshoots such as the Right to Work Campaign. Clearly this view utterly confuses the question of political independence from the bureaucracy - which may involve unity in action - with organisational independence.

The orientation, therefore, is not to defeat the union bureaucracy politically and construct an alternative leadership for the union movement, but to attempt to go round the bureaucracy. The key objective therefore becomes the establishment of an alternative centre to that of the TUC. There is a permanent tendency to the construction of a union within a union. Hence the celebration of unofficial action and structures almost to the point of principle. But of course unofficial structures are a necessity forced on the class because of the bureaucratic weight on the official structures. The goal has to be to smash that weight - not to leave the official structures in the hands of bureaucrats.

As they are therefore theoretically supposed to group the whole rank and file irrespective of political orientation, politics are excluded from these groups. This is also the reason for refusing democratic discussion. Clearly, if political alternatives are not involved, what need of democratic debate? But of course, there are always questions of orientation to be resolved. This is imposed by the hand behind the scenes i.e. the SWP leadership - not by politically winning a majority, but by a manipulation and, paradoxically, bureaucratic manoeuvrings. Hence the frontist character of these groupings.

In sum, it is clear these formations are incapable of responding to the needs of the situation either. However, these formations do group almost exclusively advanced workers. Such forces will be integral parts of the class struggle left wing. It is vital that a fight is consciously made for unity in action with these forces, leading to a democratically unified left wing in the unions.

c. The Trade Unions

Right now, our tactics in building the class struggle left wing can be summarised under four different headings. The fight for the class struggle left wing in the unions, campaigning for an organised left in the shop stewards movement, the fight for unity of all trade union alliances (like the LCDTU and the R&F organisation) and the building of campaigns in solidarity with other workers in struggle.

(i) Trade Union tendencies

In all trade unions we seek to organise currents based on a programme of demands adapted to the central questions facing members of that union. We attempt to show the need for democratic organisation of the left in the union on such a basis, utilising at every stage the tactic of united action with all other left trade union tendencies. These tactics are not sufficient to force united action in a uniform way on the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party. The struggle for democracy is at the forefront of the tactics. It is that struggle which has enabled us to win leading positions in the Broad Left formations (CPSA), and has forced us to set up alternatives to both the CP (NUT and Socialist Teachers Alliance) and the SWP. In other unions the absence of a left operating in the union as a whole has meant that we have had to set up groupings where none have previously existed (Campaign for Action in NUPE, COHSE Socialist Alliance). The strength of these tactics lies in their ability to consistently relate our programme to thousands of trade

unionists. To the extent that the action at rank and file level can be initiated in every trade union, we will be able to come closer to the formation of genuinely mass-based class struggle formations.

(ii) Towards the class struggle left wing in the shop stewards movement

The ability to mobilise the mass of the working class lies not only in the hands of the trade union leaders, but also on the rank and file leadership of the class at the work place, the shop stewards movement. It is in this layer of the working class that the revolutionary left is least strong and organised. However, over the last period it has been more possible to launch campaigns on a local level for industrial action which have met with some success, albeit not consolidated. (Hounslow Hospital, Birmingham Pay Action Campaign). These actions, built around the left in the shop stewards movement, but organising on the basis of ongoing representation of the mass of the trade union membership give the first indication of the forces of a genuine class struggle wing on a national basis could organise.

(iii) Campaigning for solidarity

The centralised character of the attacks of the bourgeoisie and the cowardly refusal of the trade union bureaucracy to defend isolated struggle of workers against these attacks, puts the greatest political importance on the outcome of these struggles. For these reasons the political tasks of building solidarity with such struggles assumes a heightened political significance in this period. Typical in this respect were the struggles against Phase III of the Labour Government's incomes policy and the Grunwick dispute. Our response has been to call for the building of broad based support committees etc., and at the same time calling for the solidarity of trade union leaders - for them to organise support for these workers in action. Only in the case of the Port Talbot dispute and the Grunwick strike have we organised such action in any way successfully. In particular, despite peculiarities, we were unable to protect the sort of solidarity action that could have mobilised the massive sympathy in the working class for these workers in action. In many cases this has meant that we have to prepare to build action, even when local and national leaderships are difficult to involve, or even antagonistic.

(iv) All trade union alliances

The offensive of the bourgeoisie in the present state of the struggle increasingly dictates that the working class itself has to organise on a centralised basis to meet these attacks. Part of the fight for that centralisation would be the building of a new unified and democratic left wing around a fighting programme of action.

In order to wage a political campaign for this objective it is necessary to organise all those individual militants who agree with the necessity of building a class struggle left wing on a fighting action programme. This current should be organised through regular conferences and caucuses, to intervene in the LCOU and the R&F, wage campaigns of solidarity with the major struggles and to assist the building of tendencies in different unions.

d. The Labour Party

The Labour Party is the mass political party of the working class. Despite its bourgeois programme and leadership, the masses and still the majority of combative workers are still under the political hegemony of the Labour Party. From this flows the need for revolutionaries to have a united front axis towards

the LP, call for the return of the Labour Government and to project the general formula addressed to the reformist leadership, and suitably concretised at each point in time, that they break with the bourgeoisie around the decisive issues of class collaboration of the day.

The fight for a class struggle left wing is also the fight against the left Social Democratic leaders and their programme, the chief means of production of which is the Labour Party itself. The objective of building a class struggle left wing, therefore, is not one limited to the trade unions. It is unlikely that the moves towards the class struggle left wing in the unions would not also be associated with the organisation of an opposition within the LP itself. In the same way that our goal in the unions is the building of a Minority Movement of the 70s, we can say that our objective inside the Labour Party is the building of a National Left Wing Movement.

Whilst this governs the need for a class struggle left wing in the labour movement as a whole there is a relative autonomy between moves towards the building of oppositions in the trade unions and the Labour Party. The chief factors governing the autonomous process of radicalisation in the LP, and the very position of the LP itself are: first that historically the LP, as the bourgeois party of the working class, cannot be won to the side of the working class in its struggle for socialism. - it is necessary to build a revolutionary party. Second, as the avenue of the working class to Parliament and governmental office at this stage, the Labour bureaucracy exhibits a greater stability than do its counterparts in the TUs who find themselves more under the direct influence of the mass struggle. Thirdly, as a mass Social Democratic party the internal situation in the LP is profoundly influenced in a direct organisational sense by the actions of a Labour Government in office. Flowing from the above, the Constituency Parties are more subject to the pressures of routinism, electoralism, resolution mongering, etc., and have a much lower weight than that of the trade unions in the mass struggle. It is the assessment of the specific character of the Labour Party which must determine the weight given to the orientation of revolutionaries to the LP and the tactics employed in carrying out that intervention.

The complete failure of any section of the Labour Party to mount any serious resistance to the Government's line and central attacks on the working class has resulted in a decline of the life of the party over the last year.

The virtual absence of divisions at the level of the LP leadership has had the effect of driving a small layer of radicalising militants out of the Party. Inside the Party, it has had the effect of sharpening a polarisation at the base. The figures for the NEC elections for the Constituency section with a slight shift to the right of the overall vote (though keeping the NEC's composition the same as last year's), there had been an increased vote for the left wing candidates.

The opposition within the CLPs to the right wing leadership is now combined with a move into distrust of left wing leaders who have done nothing to organise a fight back. A small but hard anti-bureaucratic, almost rank and file layer has developed. This layer forms the active support for the Campaign for Labour Party democracy.

This layer is dominated by its local and fragmented character - the moves towards a national opposition which we identified at a slow pace in the 1976 conference having been broken up by a retreat of left wing leaders in

Party and especially public sector unions alike.

This new move amongst a small layer of the rank and file of the party has also fuelled the campaign of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. The forces present at the LARC fringe meeting, at the LARC conference and the basis of support for the demand of the abolition of the free vote is not the traditional

Labour Party pro-abortion sentiment. It involves forces hostile to the policies of the traditional right and left leaders and contains a healthy anti-bureaucratic sentiment.

The precondition for the transformation of this layer for a localised and fragmented opposition in the backbone of the national left wing is the movement of a section of the left leadership towards organising their base. But these forces led by Benn have shown that they are not prepared to act independently of the trade union bureaucracy - the chief proponent of the Government's policy. We can therefore expect no development of a resurgent left wing on a national scale before the General Election.

At the same time this layer, whilst not coalescing into a national left wing, important from the evolution of the overall relationship of forces inside the Party as a whole, does constitute an important layer for revolutionaries to engage in debate and united action.

The relative autonomy of the YS demands a specific set of tactics. Given its political composition of the YS, the whole of the YS would be part of any class struggle left wing and serious campaigning by the YS could take forward the project of building the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions. The principle object to the YS playing this role is the Militant leadership, its sectarianism, maximalist propaganda and tailist practice. The chief task of our supporters was to unify those to the left of the Militant in a fight for a class struggle orientation for the YS. This would involve a fight both for a programme and perspective for the YS and more partial campaigns and initiatives aimed at winning broad unity in action, especially with young Tribunitics of Class 4.

Five tasks are necessary for carrying out the overall intervention of revolutionaries in the LP at the present stage of the class struggle:

- * continuing to fight to involve the CLPs to local united front bodies, support committees for struggles, anti-fascist committees, etc.

- * building a serious intervention into the CLPD and continuing to build ARC and campaign for the abolition of the free vote for Labour MPs on the abortion question.

- * extending their intervention in specific localities, seeking to win positions in local parties on the basis of the action programme, preparing a serious fight around programme through local election manifestos, public forums called by the Party, debates etc.

- * continuing intervention in the YS along the lines outlined, scaled down at the level of resources, more concentrated propaganda intervention at national and local level and a fight against the sectarianism of other left tendencies.

- * intervention at national and regional conferences of the adult party with serious allocation of resources.

e) The Women's Movement

The women's movement is growing rapidly and is in ideological and political ferment. We stand for building the women's movement as a whole. We seek to foster a unitary movement and not to build an exclusively socialist women's movement. We therefore defend the integrity of the women's movement and support all national conferences and central political initiatives.

Crucial to our intervention in the women's movement is our involvement with the debates in the WLM. The theoretical work inspired by these debates both enriched marxism and gives us an invaluable opportunity to explain the links between the fight against women's oppression and the family and the fight against capitalism itself.

All comrades of the IMG must be educated in the fundamentals of these debates but our comrades in the WLM should be encouraged to develop themselves to advance these debates.

It is from this point of view that we should see the development of Socialist Woman and to some of the material we should carry in 'International'. We should also encourage the emergence of a unitary journal from the socialist current of the WLM.

A key part of this orientation is the strengthening of the socialist wing of the movement. A strong left wing will be able to more fully win the involvement of the women's movement as a whole in mass action around its demands. Hence we will fight to involve these forces in the NAC and WWC initiatives. Equally we will be in a better position to draw in the women's movement as a whole into broader political initiatives such as the Women in Ireland, the Women Against Racism and Fascism and the involvement in key workers struggles like Grunwick, Hounslow etc.

Our tactics for raising women's oppression in the unions must flexibly relate to the line up of forces in each sector. We should fight for existing structures in the unions to fight for implementation and extension of union policy e.g. women's advisory committees, working groups, sub-committees etc. This may involve a fight for the union to set up such structures at local, regional and national level. This should be complimented with action committees on particular issues, campaigning women's groups in the unions and women's caucuses. Initiatives like the ASTMS rally and the NJT women's conference are valuable means of pursuing these objectives, as are consistent propaganda initiatives, around national conferences, union journals etc. In each sector our fractions should assess the specific issues to focus our agitation (e.g. in teaching and health, abortion and integrating women's demands into struggles on the cuts, engineering/clerical pay and grading).

In pursuance of these tactics propaganda initiatives around the demands of the Working Women's Charter and support for the initiatives of the WW Charter Campaign will be an essential political foundation. The Working Women's Charter Campaign itself can focus the activities of the vanguard across different sectors, unifying their experiences and taking initiatives to politically centralise the actions developed in different sectors. In particular the newspaper/journal of the WWCC must be at the centre of our tasks of consolidating work on women's oppression in the unions.

f The Student Movement

The extent of government cuts in education over the past period of the three years has been dramatic. Clearly, the bourgeoisie's plans for education have themselves been disoriented by the extent of these cuts. But on the basis of these recent successes in the face of the passivity of the labour movement, a new direction is beginning to emerge - one more closely linked to the whims of the captains of industry. In the coming years we can expect further attacks on the access to education, especially for overseas students. There will be new moves against student union autonomy, more cuts in discretionary awards, redundancy in the university sector as a result of a cut in the UGC grant, a continuing growth in the level of specifically youth unemployment, and as a result, a big tightening up on 'academic discipline'.

Within the student movement, our responses to this offensive cannot be simply at the level of a tactical line for individual struggles, nor simply generalities about winning students to the mass movement, on the side of the working class. That in itself is impossible unless we can demonstrate in the course of such struggles how we can win workers' organisations to the defence of education facilities. That in turn requires a programme, expressing in the demands and tactics of every struggle the strategic framework: for an education system based on the needs of the working people and under the control of the working class. To put it more clearly (!) while it is undoubtedly the case that students will orientate around the fundamental class conflicts in society, we will not be able to challenge for the leadership unless we can turn the student - workers alliance into a meaningful programme for the defence of education facilities and their socialist transformation. This strategic formula can only take on full meaning and content in relation to the rise of the class struggle as a whole and the development of self - organisation of the working class at every level of the struggle.

Over the past three years, large sections of students have been disillusioned with a labour movement prepared to accept plummeting living standards, cuts in the social services and attacks on every oppressed section of society. Unlike 67 and 68 this disillusion has been accompanied by distrust to all sections of the left in the NUS, as the social weakness of the student movement has been driven home to them by the defeat of each successive wave of student struggles for the past three years. Students see the depth of the economic crisis, their own weakness and the absence of any alternative from any significant section of the labour movement and tend to sink back into apathy. This is the material basis for the growth of the right in the NUS and the sharp right turn of the Broad Left over the past year.

As the period of downturn of the class-struggle comes to an end, the capacity of revolutionaries to provide a realistic perspectives for linking students to the working class in defence of living standards, education facilities and a range of political questions (around which the right will be making an offensive) will be vital to determining the future class alignment of the mass of students.

By virtue of their diverse social origins and social destinies, students constitute an intermediate layer of society. As the class struggle intensifies, therefore, there will inevitably be a class polarisation of students. The key thing is not to pretend that this won't occur by avoiding

political issues and concentrating on welfare, but by taking steps to ensure that the overwhelming majority of students line up with the working class in the confrontation to come. Student union autonomy and the unity of the student movement could be vital weapons in the process. It is this understanding which is fundamental to building a class struggle left wing to win the leadership of the NUS.

3 BUILDING PERMANENT CAMPAIGNS

a) Against Racism and Fascism

The mobilisation against the National Front in Lewisham and Hyde, the organisation of defence work for the black youth and the prominence of propaganda against racism and the National Front in the labour movement indicate the possibility of building mass movements against racism and fascism. What remains absent is a strong centralised leadership of such a movement on a national basis capable of relating correctly to the new situation which such activity takes place.

In particular the state response to Lewisham was to attempt to undercut and physically harass the development of mass anti-fascist movements and to 'criminalise' the layer of black youth, who attempt to join forces with anti-racist and anti-fascist militants of the labour movement.

Only a perspective which puts mass action in the context of defence of the black community and the rights of the labour movement to organise effectively in the anti-racist and anti-fascist actions can provide such a basis for a mass movement. All approaches which subordinate independent action to the concerns of the left bureaucracy who are attempting to take the leadership of the movement or reduce mass self-defence to physical attacks by party groupings actually undercut the emergence of the mass movement through their sectarianism.

Our tactics to meet this situation entail the centralisation of the existing anti-fascist movement, demanding mass action from the left reformist leaders, a propaganda campaign in the trade unions against work-permit system and for a repeal of the immigration laws, and our involvement in the campaign in schools against the attempts of fascists to win youthful cadre in these institutions.

b) The Fight for a Woman's Right to Choose

Our pro-abortion activity is guided by :

- * Our overall strategic orientation to win the active support of the labour movement to the abortion struggle as a means of advancing the struggle against all aspects of women's oppression through the central issue of fertility control and to break down the political weakness of the class on the question of the family and women's oppression which represents an obstacle to its unity and combativity.

- * Our conjunctural appreciation of the need of the ruling class in a period of economic and social crisis to stabilise and strengthen the family as a buffer for the effects of the crisis and a regulator of capitalist social relations. The role of the Labour Government, with the collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy, to off load the effects of the capitalist crisis with particularly severe attacks on women. The opportunity and growth of reactionary and clerical forces by the crisis and the labour Government's anti-working class solution to mount an ideological attack on issues concerned with the family and sexuality.

- * The need to direct the activity of the vanguard towards an intervention into the mass organisations around policies which offer a workers' solution to the crisis and draw broader forces into opposition to the Labour Government's attacks and the fight for an alternative to the collaboration of the TU bureaucracy. The

need to oppose any solutions which are advanced at the expense of women and to ensure that women's interests, particularly their right to fertility control are centrally integrated into the fight-back against these attacks.

* The National Abortion Campaign is an adequate instrument to develop these tasks. We identify with the central aims of the NAC and fight to build it as a mass action campaign for these demands which place no reliance on parliamentary manoeuvres or those forces, like the Labour Left, who operate within the parliamentary framework.

c) Ireland

Our tasks in relation to Ireland are defined by the fact that it is our bourgeoisie which is the instrument for the oppression of the Irish people. This situation will not be resolved in the short run in favour of either of the major classes. But the trajectory of the British revolution is closely bound up with the outcome of this struggle.

Our tasks are guided by the understanding that British imperialism has absolutely no right to intervene in Ireland, North or South, that the six county N. Ireland statelet is unreformable and that the bedrock and guarantor of British imperialist presence North and South is that of British Troops.

Our strategic task therefore is that of building a movement in this country which, through its impact on British politics, its effects on the morale of the troops and the aid it extends to the struggling masses in Ireland can make a major contribution to forcing a British withdrawal from Ireland in conditions most favourable for the Irish people to exercise their right to self determination.

This perspective must underline all our tactical initiatives whatever the problem posed by the objective situation. Any 'troops out' current at the base of the mass organisations or amongst students or in the women's movement must be linked consciously to the building of a permanently organised movement for troops withdrawal committed to mass action. In the next period this means organising a movement for troop withdrawal out of the forces mobilised for the Tribunal on British crimes in Ireland.

d) Southern Africa

The second principle counter revolutionary intervention of British imperialism is in Southern Africa. Faced with major revolutionary developments in Southern Africa, involving struggles of civil war proportion and mass revolts by a powerful proletariat throwing up forms of dual power and posing the possibility of a genuine breach in the imperialist network on the African continent, the world working class has a direct stake in what is going on. But when it is our own bourgeoisie whose material interests are tied up with the struggle, and, as a result, our own bourgeoisie that is occupying centre-stage in the counter-revolutionary scenario, the responsibilities are correspondingly greater.

This is not some purely moral matter, nor merely an issue of the general interrelationship between world sectors of the class struggle. Can there be any doubt that, faced with events of these proportions, Southern Africa will become a decisive issue of world politics? Can it help but become a major class issue in British politics that permeates the mass organisations in one form or another: whether, for example, because a future Tory Government carries through the logic of Den's plan, with its bloody implications, or because the reactionary and pro-imperialist character of Labour Government policy becomes nakedly exposed under a Labour administration. Faced with a real threat to white racist power in Southern Africa, the few right-wing nutters who at present latch on to this issue will rapidly be overtaken by the mainstream right wing and reactionary forces, who seek to draw on the instruments of racism and chauvinism to strengthen their own political forces.

This allows us to define our long-term tasks: to build a mass solidarity movement in this country with the developing struggles in Southern Africa, capable of restricting the ability of imperialism to determine their outcome in a way favourable to international capital, and ensuring that the Southern African crisis enters British politics as a force that aids the left and not the right.

In the next period this involves us in making practical commitments to ongoing solidarity activity in this country and in the process to build a left wing in the Anti-Apartheid movement pledged to solidarity with the all those forces fighting against imperialism and white racist domination.

4 BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION.

a. The CP, the SWP, and our progress so far

The key force blocking the resurgence of the broad workers vanguard over the period up to mid-75 was the alliance of the CP/Tribunites/Left TU bureaucrats. Within the rank and file leadership it was the CP which played the key role. The traditional left leaders have been thoroughly discredited in the eyes of the broad vanguard over the past period. The support by the traditional left bureaucrats and the paralysis of the Tribunites has been throwing the CP into disarray. The resultant stop-go policy of the CP has thrown the CP formations into crisis. There is of course a limit to the setback which these elements have suffered. The Tribunites and the CP have moved to take up certain issues - womens rights, racism and the EEC. Indeed, it has managed to pick up the economistic face put over by the revolutionary groups (notably the SWP) and their undemocratic practices to appeal to the layer of the broad vanguard, marking up some advances over the revolutionaries amongst intellectuals and the womens movement. None the less a whole layer is now looking to the revolutionary left - specifically the SWP - and to some extent the IMG.

The credibility of the revolutionaries has advanced over the past period. They were the only force to consistently back all struggles against the pay norms and against the cuts. The participation of the CP in the unholy alliance against the Heathrow and toolmakers strikers was an eye-opener. The success that revolutionaries have had on this front has been unnecessarily limited by the lack of any clear cut alternative to the CP strategically, but the often apolitical ultra-leftism of the SWP, and their predominantly economistic face.

Nonetheless, revolutionaries are enjoying a new respect in the TUs. This has been very much aided by the very dynamic of the crisis which is showing the relevance of demands and tactics for the struggle of revolutionaries. Demands like the nationalisation under workers control of Grunwicks, the sliding scale, through a whole number of claims and minority resolutions; tactics like the mass picket and occupation, as at Grunwick and Hounslow etc. To attack revolutionaries for their 'ultra-leftism' in demands and tactics now means that the bureaucrats and Stalinists are attacking whole layers of workers who identify with these demands.

This sympathetic hearing is being reinforced by the leadership role of revolutionaries on such questions as racism and abortion. This capacity has actually boosted the confidence of the workers vanguard in the ability of revolutionary organisations to actually lead the fight in a serious manner.

One major factor in our success over the next period will be our ability to relate to the crisis in the CP. By this we do not mean primarily the forces which we aim to win directly from the CP will alter the situation much. Rather, what we can show here: as in elections, is the falsehood of the SWP claim that no other force exists on the revolutionary left but themselves. And it gives us one more opportunity to prove the superiority of our method of party building.

The crisis in the CO will not end with the outcome of the Congress. Despite the publicity about Eurocommunism, the leadership hedged its bets and attempted to straddle two hoeses. The simmering discontent exploded over the Morning Star.

The evolution will be to the right. This will ensure big tensions, in which we can intervene through consistent approaches for joint action and debate.

From the other side, the defeated neo-Stalinists are unlikely to go back to their holes for the next two years. They will want to keep the voice that they have been given during the pre-conference discussions. But there will

be big barriers towards wholesale purges, given the way the leadership has projected the party, and the need to get closer to the left social democratic elements. Again this side of the tension can be exacerbated by us.

Given the evolution of the CP to the right, it is clear that we can anticipate winning only a minority of the present base of the CP to revolutionary marxism. The evolution of the SWP is in a different direction.

But there is very little likelihood that the SWP would respond of its own accord to our initiatives in the next period. They have a very narrow cadre base and a large number of politically uneducated members. However, the SWP is very close to the moods of the broad workers vanguard. It very quickly bends under pressure. In the most immediate period, we have seen this in relation to their line on elections even to the extent of backing Socialist Unity, even if only verbally and after the event. This puts a premium on going onto the offensive on the main questions that divide us and not narrowly concentrating on the question of internal democracy. Although this should be one of the points, the main issue is that of the united front and their whole ~~approach~~ method of party building.

We should by no means assume, however, that our activities are narrowly restricted by what agreement we can make with the SWP. On the contrary given the sectarianism and economism of the SWP, there is a very large space for us to operate in. Our goal in the next period must be to alter the qualitative relation of forces between ourselves and the SWP.

Given the character of the vanguard at the present time, it is not surprising that we have found an audience for our initiatives around Socialist Challenge and Socialist Unity. The possibility of taking direct initiatives to build a socialist alternative should not be conflated with the initiatives in action which we possess ala the SWP. All our initiatives must be based on a united front approach. However, given the nature of the period, it should not be our policy to wait for such agreement with reformist forces before we propose and take action. Specifically it is possible for Socialist Challenge to take the lead much more in initiating such action. Our initiatives on programme however, must not be confused with initiatives around unity in action.

But they must be open to involving all revolutionary forces, not simply the small revolutionary groups, and actually stimulating such forces, especially at the base of the CP. It is vital in this regard that we have a correct policy towards the SWP. We must be very clear that we regard the SWP will be a major component in any future unified organisation. We should be continually probing the SWP for a political dialogue on the basis of which a revolutionary party can be built.

b. Socialist Unity

The very fact of Socialist Unity standing in elections poses the question of the construction of a party. Bourgeois elections forces the question of policies to the fore, for everyone and not just for revolutionaries. And, however much we play down the question, that of representation is also posed. This is why all our material in Ladywood spoke of Socialist Unity as a party, not a coalition. In essence, Socialist Unity is a propaganda bloc. The logic is either to push the participants closer together, or to lead to an explosion.

But more than this is involved. SU is a revolutionary alliance which therefore gives primacy to the class struggle. The logic therefore is for joint work in the mass struggle and not just simply electioneering. The question of ongoing collaboration is therefore imminently posed, even if not explicitly recognised at first.

Given our overall thrust for a unified revolutionary organisation we should be the first to explicitly draw out these implications to the forces involved and to do everything we can to encourage a unification of forces rather

than an explosion. For this we must be very clear on what sort of party we are interested in building. For us it is a question of constructing a Leninist combat party. Accordingly we should be absolutely in favour of opening a discussion around these issues inside Socialist Unity.

However, the fight for the revolutionary organisation is not equivalent to regrouping with smaller revolutionary organisations. We of course stand for this, and indeed in the next period it is obvious that it is the WL and BF who will be more responsive to our appeals and with whom we should spend the most resources and patience. However, we should not for this reason redefine our regroupment thrust to that of regrouping with these organisations. In particular, we should not by our statements or projects narrow Socialist Unity down to this. Socialist Unity is the best vehicle we have yet come up with for advancing our strategic line for building a revolutionary party. Hence our debates in Socialist Unity must not be reduced to the basis on which BF, WL and the IMG can get together but must be focussed on our strategic aims. Socialist Unity must consciously counterpose itself to the reformist project of the CP and the sectarianism of the SWP.

If these discussions come out in favour of a regroupment, through SU on the basis of a principles programme, we should build Socialist Unity groups on a national basis taking up central campaigns and activities. Socialist Unity will be the testing bed for a unified revolutionary organisation. Of course, this will entail a renewed appeal for a unified revolutionary intervention in elections, directed towards the SWP. If an agreement on this basis cannot be reached we will continue to build Socialist Unity as an electoral alliance.

c. Socialist Challenge and our system of press

A large part of the vanguard that can be won to the united revolutionary organisation are not organised through any political current. It is this layer above all which has been drawn around Socialist Challenge, through subscriptions and active involvement in Socialist Challenge readers groups. Socialist Challenge was the first vehicle through which we put forward the plan of a unified revolutionary organisation around a definite programme. The political forces at present organised through Socialist Challenge accepted the fundamentals of the programme, but drew back from the organisational conclusions. Perhaps rightly, they objected that Socialist Challenge was not a substitute for the joint work essential to build such an organisation on firm foundations.

Nevertheless, Socialist Challenge through its superior circulation both numerically and geographically, has given us a much more powerful weapon to amplify our ideas and organise a periphery in favour of these ideas.

This current is in favour of our main line project for building the party. This in itself constitutes a force wider than the IMG fighting on this central question. The organisation of these forces is essential to the project of regroupment and wider orientation towards the SWP and the base of the CP. The paper must therefore play a role in educating and forming a cadre around Trotskyist ideas. If the IMG is to consistently pursue its project of organising the left, it must also play a role in educating those we seek to unify. Rather than less articles of a general programmatic nature we must carry more articles outlining the necessity for building an organisation on the basis of our Common Ground, and the sort of policies the IMG would propose such an organisation carry out. In this way the journal can start to approximate more readily to what a journal of a unified organisation would do.

The success of Socialist Challenge cannot be recorded to the same extent as International. As reflected in its contributions, the journal has not yet succeeded in centralising the contributions of the IMG's own cadre, let alone a wider circle of intellectuals and militants. While the stabilisation of the journal and the quality of the articles are to be welcomed, its contribution to building the organisation has been negligible. More external activities

should be organised by the journal including the next 'Marxist Symposium'.

Socialist Woman to date has not been regularised because of the unresolved question of our orientation to the socialist feminist current in the WLM.

Our pamphlets and other forms of propaganda have started to form a solid foundation for ongoing work in campaigns, but notable gaps still exist in the overall propaganda of the IMG.

However, overall the organisation of a system of press for the IMG, one of the main tasks decided by the last conference, has been one of the notable gains of the organisation over the last period, and the possibility of drawing new cadres towards the FI in Britain.

d. Our internationalist responsibilities.

A further contribution to the armoury of our press is the fused international journal Inprecor/ Internontinental Press, made possible by the new situation in the Fourth International. This changed situation makes it possible to energetically renew our efforts to make the IMG's practical commitment to internationalism one of our strongest planks in relation to the left as a whole in Britain. However, this entails more than ever demonstrating how this commitment informs our day to day work.

Above all the IMG has to be in the forefront of building mass campaigns against the principle counter-revolutionary interventions of British imperialism worldwide - in Ireland and in southern Africa. In both cases the IMG will have to be prepared to make a theoretical contribution to the development of a programme for the Irish and African revolutions, in collaboration with the comrades fighting to build strong sections of the FI.

Nowhere is such cadres more urgently needed than in the fight to build revolutionary marxist tendencies in Eastern Europe. The immanence of further revolutionary upsurges in Eastern Europe and their impact in the stalinist parties in Western Europe makes this a vital concern of those sections confronted by stalinist currents.

A similar contribution must be made towards the building of sections in South Africa, the Middle East (particularly Iran), China and the Caribbean. Such propaganda work and material aid will remain a continuous commitment of our tendency in the event of our unification with other political forces.

e. Gaining an industrial cadre

In the industrial unions, where our implantation and our ability to organise a section of the vanguard is weakest, consistent propaganda campaigns are vital as a means of grouping individual militants around us. As part of such campaigns, systematic propaganda around the national political issues confronting workers in an industry or union, produced as Socialist Challenge supplements, pamphlets and bulletins, should be the central task of our fraction leaderships. Where we have members in particular plants and workplaces, and where local bulletins can assist these comrades in agitating for a particular course to be taken in struggles, then branch leaderships should of course produce leaflets aimed at these particular plants.

However, our main task in this period must be the production, by fraction leaderships, of Socialist Challenge propaganda aimed at grouping the most advanced militants around our line on the central political issues facing that industry/union as a whole. Likewise, Socialist Challenge must carry consistent material on our policies, united front approach, and perspectives for a class struggle left wing in the labour movement as a whole, and produce pamphlets drawn from this material.

f. Gaining a black cadre.

Nowhere is the development of a unified current on the left wing more important than amongst black militants. Without a layer of politically formed cadre organised on a national basis, the perspective of activist work in the black communities and building a black cadre from the newly radicalised youth will not be able to be followed through consistently. Such a layer at present exists in the forces organised by Samaj, Flame and ourselves.

However, the process of regroupment will not proceed as part of a general regroupment move. We must be able to demonstrate that we are capable of developing a revolutionary marxist programme in relation to black nationalism and the positions of national minorities in Britain.

Nevertheless, the importance of such propaganda work must not blind the leadership of the IMG to the possibilities of the mass mobilisation demonstrated by the movement of black youth around Lewisham, Ladywood and Notting Hill, which have drawn in the widest layers of black youth, albeit on a local basis. In addition, defence work against police harassment and racist attacks can lay the basis for the self-organisation of youth, as started to be demonstrated by the Southall Youth Movement and work done around the arrests of Caribbean youth.

g. The struggle for youth

In all the sections of the FI, the leaderships are discussing or implementing the setting up of youth organisations. The IMG must be able to contribute to this discussion and make its own plans towards the building of such organisation. However, within the organisation we lack both a developed cadre and programme for the creation of such an organisation. Both can be remedied to a limited extent by the promotion of a vigorous single issue campaign on racism, directed at youth, which can provide a continuous source of practical experience to the discussion which the leadership will launch from the next conference on the tasks in setting up and supporting a youth organisation.

h. Building a womens leadership

The politicisation of the womens movement, expressed through the development of such groupings as Women and Ireland, Women against Fascism and Racism poses both theoretically and practically the question of the revolutionary organisation. The contribution that the IMG has to make on this question relates to the role of the political party and its relation to autonomous movements of the oppressed and the working class as a whole. Through Socialist Woman the IMG can consistently put forward a strategy for building the womens movement that can draw the best militants to our side in this debate.

Quite a different layer of women trying to come to grips with the problems of womens oppression in the mass organisations can also be drawn towards us if we demonstrate that we have a line which respects the different ways in which women organise themselves against their own oppression.

i. Education and recruitment

While all the objective features of the situation point to the continued growth of the left under a Labour Government, the situation under a Tory Govt will be quite different in the degree of attractiveness that the mass organisations and their leaderships have for militant workers faced with the threat of a sustained attack on democratic rights. This means seizing the opportunity for both regroupment and the recruitment of those layers of the vanguard not organised through left groupings. The two processes are not contradictory. It is the IMG which is the most consistent fighter for the unification of the left on a principled basis. Joining the IMG strengthens the thrust of building a unified revolutionary organisation.

However, recruitment on such a basis demands that we politically educate and programmatically clarify those militants drawn to us through our line ^{for unity} on a political level and unity in action in the trade unions and mass organisations. The central role of organising and educating this layer must be through Socialist Challenge. However, other aspects of our press also have a role to play in relating to the different degrees of political consciousness. Through our first venture in book publishing we have the invaluable asset of Mandel's book on Marxism. International can start to make some headway as the only serious Trotskyist theoretical journal on the left, and Socialist Woman can contribute to the political debate amongst the most advanced militants in the women's movement, as well as educating the ranks of the organisation on the important strategic discussions in the socialist current.

j. The sort of leadership we need and the allocation of full-time resources.

It is evident from all that has been said above that there must be a premium on political clarity within both the elected and full-time leadership of the organisation. This not only relates to the political fight for building of a unified revolutionary organisation, but also to the process of assimilating the different political traditions and programmes that would be the inevitable feature of any successes in this project. This emphasis on political experience must be reflected in the composition of the future National Committee and of the leadership based in the centre. This must be tempered with election of the maximum number of worker, women and black comrades capable of leading the organisation.

However, the job of winning and consolidating the gains which can be made in the next period will be done in the areas and localities. The appointment of area full-timers, responsible to area and district committees, but fully integrated into the NC and PC must be the first priority of the organisation after the conference.

4. SUMMARY, THE BASIS FOR A TACTICS RESOLUTION.

a) The deepening of the economic and social crisis lays the objective basis for a successful campaign around a programme of qualitative, anti-capitalist demands. The betrayals of the Labour Govt allow us to pose this programme as a socialist alternative to Labour's betrayals. The lack of any opposition to Labour's policies means that a central feature of such a programme would be the creation of a new left wing in the mass movement based in the policies of ^{class} struggle rather than the policies of class collaboration of the Labour lefts and their CP allies. The main practical aim of such a campaign is the formation of a unified revolutionary organisation which can provide an alternative to the class collaboration of the Communist Party and the ultra-leftism of the Socialist Workers Party.

b) We counterpose the idea and programme of a class struggle left wing to the strategies of Broad Leftism and Rank and Fileism in the trade unions, while intervening in both these sorts of formation with the line of unifying the left in a democratic way on an adequate programmatic basis. At present the class struggle left wing can only be a political rather than organisational alternative to these formations. While not abandoning the perspective for a class struggle left wing in the Labour Party we realize that the internal situation of the LP will continue to be dictated by the degree of mass struggle by the working class conducted through the trade unions. The development of the mass struggle by the working class remains at an uneven level and therefore the priority for mass work is the centralisation and organisation of support for those isolated and fragmented struggles facing the bitterest opposition from their own leadership, the government and the ruling class. Our mass work in the Labour Party, with the exception of campaigns on single issues, is centred on propaganda work and local campaigns. We fight to build organised

left wings in the student and womens movement without surrendering for an instant the fight to unify these movements, We will prioritise the building of a centralised anti-fascist movement.

c) The next stage in our fight for a unified revolutionary organisation will be the attempt to carry out a fusion with the forces organised through Socialist Unity, and the current that already favours such a regroupment around Socialist Challenge. The content of such a move towards fusion will be through joint work and discussion around a minimum programme necessary for principled unity. We will renew our call for a united electoral intervention as part of our ongoing campaign aimed at the Socialist Workers Party and the base of the Communist Party. Whatever the eventual form of such a regroupment and unification we will continue to retain our commitment to the building of the Fourth International, both in the fight for its policies and journals and the building of international campaigns and the building of its sections. Concentrating our attention on the recruitment of industrial workers, women and blacks and youth constitutes the way in which we construct the material basis for the proletarianisation of the organisation. We will devote greater resources to the recruitment and education of cadre, recognising the possibility of a contraction of the vanguard in the event of the return of a Tory Govt. It is for this reason that we will advance in the most energetic way the slogan of "Return a Labour Government in order to better build a socialist alternative" at the general election. The composition of the leadership of the organisation over the next period should be comprised of the most experienced cadre of the organisation to better fight for political clarity during the fight for unity. The development of area fronts of organisation with appropriate full time resources is necessary to lead the ranks of the organisation through this process.

APPENDIX I- "OUR COMMON GROUND" (see Socialist Challenge, 6th October 1977)

APPENDIX II -

Our Action Programme.

For a guaranteed decent standard of living.

No to all wage controls - for an immediate across the board increase to fully compensate for the losses of real wages we have suffered.

Wages, benefits and pensions to be made inflation proof by linking them to rises in the cost of living.

A national minimum income of £50 per week for the low paid, unemployed, pensioners, sick and disabled.

An immediate price freeze on essential goods.

Stop Unemployment - no sackings, no redundancies.

Fight productivity deals and natural wastage. Replace every job lost.

Guarantee jobs for all by a 35 hour week, with full pay.

Nationalise under workers control all firms threatening closure.

No unpaid lay-offs. Work or full pay.

Defence of womens jobs against unemployment.

No public spending cuts - for better services, not worse.

Build more houses, schools, hospitals and nurseries. For a crash programme of public works to create more jobs and meet our social needs.

A free health service, controlled by its workers and users.

Education is a right not a privilege, stop the fees increases.

Housing for people not profits. Stop the run down of direct works.

A freeze on rents and rates.

The right to fuel at cheap prices.

Full Rights and Liberation for Women

Against low pay - for equal pay with no strings.

No discrimination in work or benefits. For legal and financial independence for women.

End the cohabitation rule, the married womens rate and the "Head of Household" rule.

Free abortion and contraception on demand - A womans right to choose.

Nurseries for all who want them, controlled by thoes who use them.

Right Racism Stop the Fascists Full Rights for Black People.

No to all racist discrimination.

No platform for the fascist National Front to spread their racist poison.

End all immigration controls, theres room for everyone except the bosses.

Full support for the right of black people to defend and organise themselves against racist and fascist attacks.

Support the international struggle of the working class - Towards Socialism

For the right of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish people to self-determination, withdraw all British troops from Ireland now.

For liberation of the peoples of Zimbabwe and South Africa - break all British links with racist regimes.

Withdraw from NATO - End all of Britain's military alliances.

Combat the power of the multinationals, build links between workers of all countries.

Build the independent power of the working class. Dont rely on the politicians in Parliament - our strength lies in our own struggles.

The resources are there to meet our needs

End all interest payments to the money-lenders. Nationalise the banks and finance houses without compensation. Abolish arms expenditure. Stop all the compensation payments for the former owners of the nationalised industries.

For the defence of democratic rights.

End police harassment of black people. End state intervention in anti-fascist activities. Repeal the PTA. For an end to attacks on gay people, their organisation and their press.