

# PERMANENT REVOLUTION

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE WORKERS POWER GROUP No.2 Summer 1984 £1.00



ARCHIVE: Trotsky's "Peace Programme"



The miners, the Left and the General Strike



The war threat and the peace movements



EEC or a Socialist United States of Europe?

**—ALSO:**

Central America and the intervention of imperialism ■ POLEMIC: The Bolivian revolution  
REVIEWS ■ Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International ■

## CONTENTS

- 1 The miners, the left and the general strike
- 6 The nature of the EEC and the elections to the European Parliament
- 10 *Archive*: Trotsky's peace programme  
Introduction: Trotsky, Lenin and the struggle for the communist programme on war.
- 16 The programme of peace  
by Leon Trotsky
- 23 The war threat, the peace movements and the communist response
- 27 *Polemic*: Bolivia 1952 - revolutionary nationalism and proletarian revolution.  
Introduction
- 28 In defence of the POR  
by Roberto Gramar
- 31 A reply to Gramar  
by Stuart King
- 39 Central America, the Caribbean revolution and imperialist reaction.
- 42 Declaration of Fraternal Relations
- 46 *Reviews*  
Inside the PLO  
Ireland's British problem  
Obituaries to a revolution  
Welsh miners against fascism  
Sisters and workers  
The rise and fall of the KPD  
In brief  
Books received

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This second issue of *Permanent Revolution* appears during the most important class struggle for a decade - the miners' strike. The first article in this journal deals with a tactic of fundamental importance to that fight, and to the arming of the working class in the struggle against Thatcher and the ruling class - the general strike. It examines the correct and incorrect uses of the slogan current on the British left and argues the revolutionary method of fighting for such a strike.

A major part of this issue is taken up with a number of resolutions from the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI), of which Workers Power is a part. The resolutions were passed at the founding conference of the MRCI in April, and deal with three important questions of the international class struggle - the nature and dynamics of the EEC and communists' attitude towards it; the growing imperialist intervention in Central America and the nature and politics of the FSLN regime in Nicaragua, and the growing imperialist war threat, including an analysis of the peace movements east and west. Lastly, we print our Declaration of Fraternal Relations, which explains the basis upon which the MRCI has been founded, and the nature and tasks of the fraternal grouping.

This issue also contains what will become a regular feature of *Permanent Revolution* - an Archive piece from the arsenal of Marxism which has been hard to obtain in full for 40 years - Trotsky's "Peace Programme", written in 1916. As the introductory article outlines, this programme covers vital questions which are of burning relevance still - the question of communists and war, the question of the unification of Europe. The Introduction situates the programme in the development of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, and examines the roots of the controversy with Lenin over the war question.

The publication of the polemic on Bolivia continues one of the tasks we set ourselves when we launched *Permanent Revolution* - the rescue of theory and tactics from the opportunist and sectarian distortions of the centrists.

The chronic bowdlerisation of the imperialist united front tactic as a means of compromising with petit-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalism by the POR of Bolivia forms the heart of this polemic. It

raises in the argument such key questions as the pitfalls of giving "critical support" to supposedly anti-imperialist governments and the nature and role of soviets. It also examines the use of the workers' and peasants' government slogan and the disastrous consequences for the Bolivian workers and peasants of "worker ministers" and "co-government" as a strategy for the Bolivian revolution.

Finally, the Reviews section takes up a number of key political issues raised in recent publications, including the SWP's approach to Marxism and feminism, the collapse of the Grenadan revolution, and the limits of Republicanism in Ireland, and of its cheerleaders in Britain.

With the publication of *Permanent Revolution 2* in A4 format we hope to put our theoretical journal on a more regular publication schedule. You can help in this project by contributing financially to our £10,000 fund for new typesetting equipment. Send donations to: Workers Power, BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX. □

# THE MINERS, THE LEFT AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

Throughout the 1984 miners' strike, Workers Power has fought for the TUC to call a general strike. We have argued that it is necessary in order to secure a victory for the miners *and* to smash the entire Tory offensive that the MacGregor closure plan is merely one part of. We have been justified by events. At the time of writing, the miners have been for three months a focus of solidarity action from militants throughout the labour movement and an encouragement for other sections of workers to go into struggle. If mass solidarity action or a general strike has not yet occurred, it is because of the treachery of the official leaders of our movement, and the cowardice, muddleheadedness and confusion of the left reformist and centrist "opposition" to them. To put it bluntly, the TUC has been given a free ride!

Thatcher came to power set on drastically restructuring British capitalism at the expense of the jobs and living standards of the working class. The strikes of 1979 had shown the bosses that Labourite class-collaborationism was not going to be able to bale them out of their acute crisis. The Labour government was unable to carry through the decimation and privatisation of whole sections of the nationalised industries, such as steel - "yesterday's industry" in Thatcher's words. It was unable to dismantle the welfare state to a sufficient degree (although under Healey and Callaghan it tried hard to oblige). Most important, its close links with the union bureaucracy meant that it was unable to execute the legal attacks on the unions that the bosses were crying out for.

The Tories' strategy was to play on the sectional divisions within the working class by taking on the weaker sections first. The steelworkers and civil servants were number one targets. Only after this could the carworkers be taken on. The miners were to be fought only after all others had been defeated.

Alongside this, the Tories implemented laws aimed specifically at undermining, and making unlawful, effective trade unionism, picketing, the closed shop and solidarity action such as blacking. Section after section - steel, civil servants, car workers, health workers, railworkers - were attacked by the Tories and kept isolated by the union leaders. At the same time, the anti-union laws were put in place and made effective in the 1983 NGA and POEU disputes.

Although the Tories chose to fight the working class section by section, their goal was to decisively weaken the *entire* trade union movement. The legal attacks were evidence enough of this. It is precisely because we have understood the nature of the enemy's strategy as class-wide that we have argued since 1979 for a class-wide response. In September 1979 we argued: **"The legal attacks are the political spearhead for all the rest. As such they must be met with the generalised resistance of the combined forces of the labour movement...The political general strike is the only tactic which can either put the Tories into headlong retreat, forcing them to abandon their legal shackles, or further**

**mobilise the forces necessary to drive them and the class they represent from power altogether".**<sup>1</sup>

This was no verbal radicalism. It was an objectively necessary response to the Tories' wholesale offensive. The anti-union laws are an essential component of the state attack on effective trade unionism, they effect all workers struggling against closures, cuts, wages or in defence of democratic rights or social gains. Therefore we have argued that a general strike is necessary - first to prevent them getting onto the statute book, and then to drive them off it. The Tories would certainly be unlikely to survive a defeat of such a central plank of their strategy.

We recognise that the transition from the recognition that a general strike is necessary to the achievement of one is difficult. The trade union leaders always fight desperately to prevent generalisation. In the steelworkers' struggle the TUC were able to prevent the development of a general strike in February 1980. The Welsh TUC had called for a general strike in support of the steelworkers. With the help of Bill Sirs, Len Murray was able to get this called off in favour of a "day of action" in Wales and a national "day of action" in May. Despite this betrayal the events showed how our call for a general strike against the anti-union laws could be linked to a sectional struggle.

We used the examples of the police action and the Denning court ruling against the steelworkers to link the strike to the question of anti-union laws. We combined the demands of other public sector workers aroused by the steel strike (a one-day general strike against the cuts in social services was called in South Yorkshire during the strike) with the demands of the steelworkers. We called on other workers - in particular BL workers, water workers and power workers - to strike for their own impending pay claims. At the same time we urged militants to demand and, with action from below, *force* their leaders to call a general strike.

We thus avoided the twin dangers of either exclusively relying on the leaders, or, in a syndicalist fashion, ignoring them and hoping that they would not interfere. At the high point of the struggle we were able to agitate for a general strike around demands relating to cuts, closures, claims *and* the anti-union laws.

Our experience of the steel strike and our use of the general strike slogan has proved immensely valuable in the 1984 miners' strike. Although the MacGregor plan is an attack on one union, it is an attack on one of the best organised and strategically placed unions. As such a defeat for the NUM will bolster the confidence of the Tories and undermine that of the workers in traditionally weaker unions. Although the dispute started over pit closures, the massive use of the police and the interference of the courts demonstrate its wider significance. A victory over the miners will further embolden the police and courts to assert their prerogative to attack striking workers. Finally, though the

# General Strike

anti-union laws themselves have been held in abeyance, there is no doubt that at a critical stage the ruling class will use them. Their very existence is an important factor in intimidating other workers - in transport for example - against taking solidarity action. To ignore these laws would be folly.

It might be objected that because the anti-union laws were not used to the full in the early weeks of the miners' strike, this shows that they are less important than we estimated them to be, or that they should not now be linked to the general strike slogan. This would be extremely short-sighted. The Tory judges attempted to use the anti-union laws in the first weeks. They were met with such a militant mass mobilisation outside the Barnsley headquarters of the Yorkshire NUM that to have sent in the police to seize it and enforce a sequestration order would have provoked first a fearsome resistance and secondly the prospect of a general strike. The fear of mass solidarity strike action and the desire to give no pretext for spreading the struggle made the Tories give the signal to the NCB and the judges to back off. Yet the laws are there and if the miners were to seem incapable of mounting effective resistance, or the rest of the workers movement was unwilling to back them, then the sequestrators would move in once again.

For these reasons we have raised the call for a general strike within the context of a sectional struggle. This sectional struggle, as did the steel strike, gives us a golden opportunity to unmask the nature of the Tories' offensive, and build generalised resistance to it. We have specifically linked the call for a general strike to the immediate objectives of smashing the whole apparatus of anti-union laws and of forcing the complete abandonment of MacGregor's closure plans.

## THE NEED FOR A DEFINITE OBJECTIVE

We have made this demand on the TUC leaders and fought for it *from below* through calling for, and attempting to, bring forward all other sections' claims and struggles into a mass strike wave alongside the miners. In both our agitation and our propaganda we have made the call for a general strike as concrete as possible. We have always been on our guard to give it a clear, adequate and definite objective. If the objective is not definite then the TUC leaders can and will slip out of it. For example, to merely call on them to "support the miners" would, as in 1926, enable the TUC rapidly to turn their "support" into negotiations, mediation or a sell-out. Should the miners refuse to give in it would lead to a desertion. On the other hand it would be inadequate to pose the general strike around the release of an imprisoned trade union leader or over sequestered union funds. A concession on this point alone by the Tories would leave them free to attack on another front having demobilised the strike movement.

In short, a general strike is necessary in the present situation to guarantee the total victory of the miners, and to stop the Tories' attacks on other workers. It serves the interests of the section currently in struggle. Far from being abstractly counterposed to the existing miners' struggle, it is a burning need in that struggle. Linked to demands around the anti-union laws, cuts in the public sector, pay and closures, it will serve the needs of other workers as well. The twofold result of this will be to weaken the ability of the trade union leaders to sell the miners (and others) short *and* prevent Thatcher from putting the labour movement into retreat as she did after her victory over the steelworkers. A crushing defeat for the miners would immensely strengthen the right wing in the unions who would move forward in their plans to turn the unions into departments of the state for disciplining workers.

Despite the claims of miserable defeatists like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the militancy does exist in the working class to make a general strike a realistic possibility. The miners' strike itself is a symbol of this renewed militancy. In its own turn it has served to encourage militancy. The basis for this recovery after the bleak years of retreat and defeat (1980-83) is the mild economic upturn. This was expressed in a rise in industrial production of 4.1% in the last quarter of 1983 (3.2% for gross national product, and a 10.1% hike in retail sales). Whilst this

recovery was weak compared with the 18.2% rise in industrial production in the USA, it marked a distinct upturn which Britain's bosses wanted to take advantage of. The latest Tory anti-union offensive launched in November of last year (NGA) which continued into January (GCHQ) and culminated in MacGregor's provocative closure list, was meant to divide, cow and crush the unions so that the bosses could reap the full fruits of their "boom".

The miners' resistance proved stronger and longer than Thatcher imagined. A rash of disputes has followed. Trade union officialdom - left as well as right - has done everything possible to stop other workers coming into struggle over their own claims while the miners have been on strike. The "lefts" Knapp and Buckton settled their claims to get out of the firing line. Yet workers have sensed the distinct advantage of taking on the Tories and the bosses while their hands are full. At British Leyland's Longbridge plant, workers gave the management a bloody nose - the first victory for several years. From the Barking Hospital strike to the Bathgate occupation, workers have shown a renewed willingness to take on the bosses.

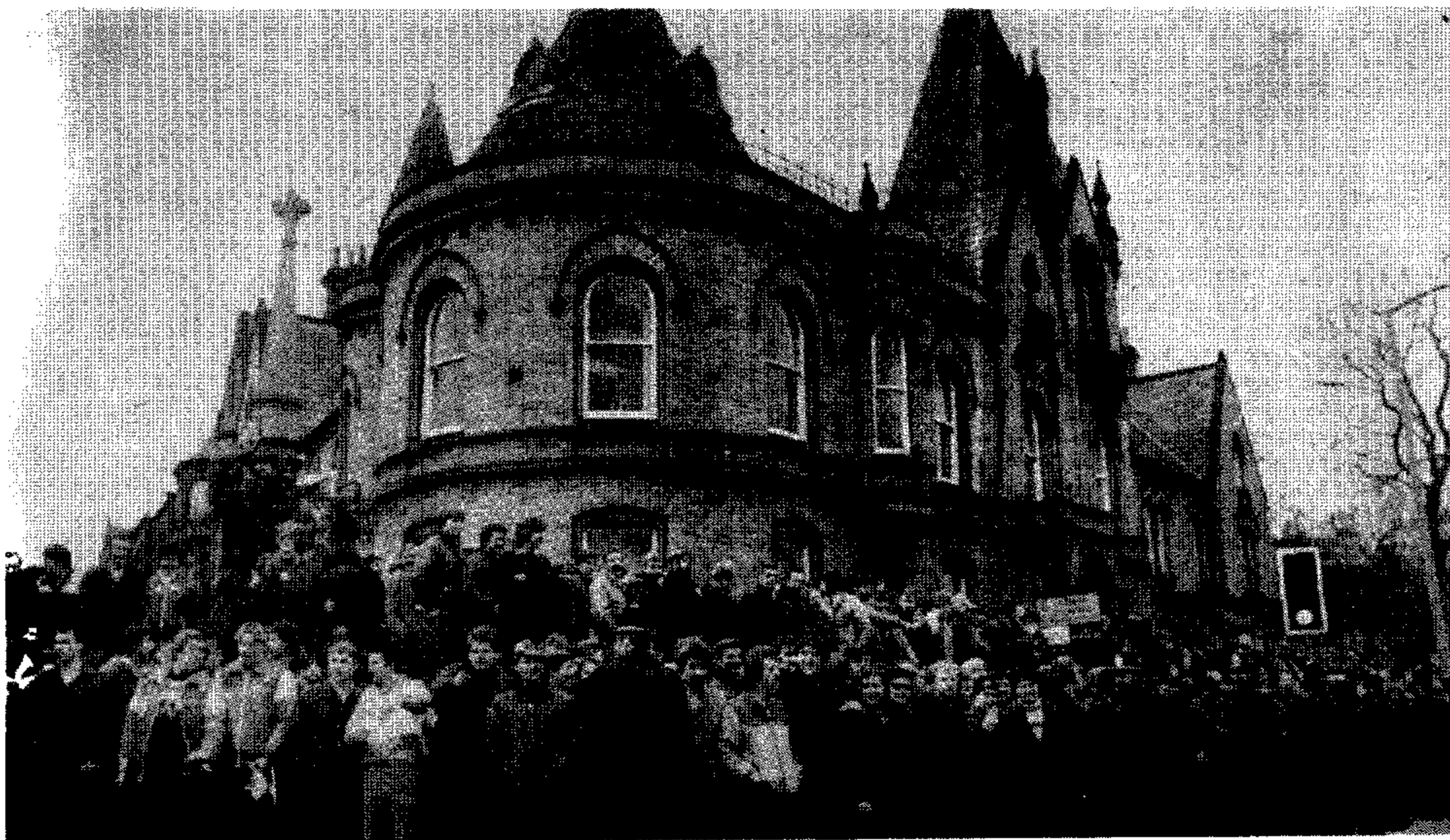
The Tories don't like this a bit. They are failing to hold their target of 3% wage increases. They rightly fear the danger of other disputes linking up with the miners and escalating into a massive confrontation in which they would be forced to make humiliating and damaging concessions. Only the major union leaders and the TUC, led by arch-scab Murray have kept the Tories afloat. A general strike, emerging out of the miners' struggles, could sink Thatcher. However a mobilisation of the whole working class poses an even more important question than humiliating Thatcher and driving her from office.

As revolutionary Marxists we recognise that, by its very nature, a general strike raises issues beyond the immediate demands which occasion the strike. These demands are necessary as a starting point for struggle. As united front demands they bring into struggle millions of non-revolutionary workers. The more precise and concrete the demands, the more workers are clear about what they want. If millions know this, it leaves the bureaucracy with far less room to manoeuvre. The chances of a sell-out are strengthened by vague demands. Thus a strike to get rid of the anti-union laws and force the withdrawal of the NCB's closure programme is more difficult to sell-out or sell short.

## GENERAL STRIKE CHALLENGES THE STATE

However, while we use limited demands to tie down the bureaucrats and rouse the masses, we recognise that a general strike can go further than its initial demands. Concrete and limited demands are a base-line for initiating struggle and avoiding outright betrayal. They must not become a limit on the forward movement of a general strike. A general strike is necessarily a clash between the whole working class and the bosses, as a class, represented by their state. A general strike challenges the state power over an issue on which the bourgeoisie has decided to impose its will on the working class. Though the origins of many general strikes have been over "economic" issues - the British strike of 1926 in defence of the miners, for example - they have all, inevitably, raised questions about the role of the state, parliament and so on. In paralysing the entire economy and the normal administrative functions of the state, a general strike will be met with attempted repression from the police and the army. The strikers will be confronted with tasks on a society-wide level, that the miners' strike faces on a community and sectional level - the organisation of food supplies and services and the defence of picket lines.

In that situation, revolutionaries do everything in their power to bring down the crippling divisions between "economic" and "political" goals that exist. They do so in a fight to counter reformism's attempts to limit and contain a general strike. The great Polish Marxist Rosa Luxemburg explained this aspect of the general strike: "In any great mass movement of the proletariat, a great number of political and economic factors coincide. To attempt to peel these away from each other in an artificial



John Harris (JFI)

Yorkshire miners defend Barnsley NUM Headquarters

manner, to attempt to keep them separate from one another in a pedantic fashion, would be a vain and detrimental start".<sup>2</sup>

It is not merely abstract "politics" or even particular political slogans that are inevitably raised in the general strike. The revolutionary potential of the general strike lies in the fact that by pitting the classes against each other, it raises the question - *who rules?* Marxists have long been aware of this aspect of the general strike slogan. It explains the importance we attach to it as a potential corridor through which the working class can pass towards revolution - the actual overthrow of the bosses' state power. Of course, whether or not this happens depends on a whole series of circumstances. It is by no means the only possible outcome of a general strike. If the influence of revolutionaries remains weak, if the rank and file do not establish democratic control over the strike, it is entirely possible that a strike could be demobilised in a blatant betrayal (e.g. Britain 1926), a bourgeois election (France 1968) or through some concessions from the ruling class, mediated by the reformist bureaucracy (as in France, 1936).

However, these possibilities cannot be predicted in advance - struggle decides. The very fact of a general strike provides the possibility of strengthening the working class by bringing millions into base organisations - councils of action, picket defence organisations, supplies committees and strike committees. Such organisations can check and defeat the traitors in the labour movement. They provide the best possible forums for revolutionary ideas. They bring to the masses an awareness of their own power. Revolutionaries seek to make this organised and conscious. In this way we can openly and honestly fight within the general strike for a revolutionary conclusion and hope to win. This is not foolish optimism. It is lodged within the dynamic of the general strike, so brilliantly described by Trotsky in the 1930s: "The fundamental importance of the general strike, independent of the partial successes which it may and then again may not provide, lies in the fact that it poses the question of power in a revolutionary manner. By shutting down the factories, transport, generally all the means of communication, power stations etc., the proletariat by this very act paralyzes not only production but also the government. The state power remains suspended in mid-air. It must either subjugate the proletariat by famine and force and constrain it to set the apparatus

of the bourgeois state once again in motion, or retreat before the proletariat.

Whatever may be the slogans and motive for which the general strike is initiated, if it includes the genuine masses, and if these masses are quite resolved to struggle, the general strike inevitably poses before all the classes in the nation: *Who will be the master of the house?*"<sup>3</sup>

We base our call for the general strike on the needs of the objective situation and the tremendous possibilities lodged within it. A victory merely for its immediate demands would signal a dramatic shift in the balance of class forces in Britain. A partial victory would enhance the confidence and consciousness of the miners and other sections by leaps and bounds. Even a defeat would come after a struggle in which many militants would be won to a clearer understanding of the role of the union and Labour Party leaders. It would provide fresh recruits to an opposition movement against the time-servers, traitors and cowards in the workers' movement. Most important, though, is that a general strike - even with today's leaders, and even beginning around limited demands - offers the possibility of clearing out Thatcher and her class, not merely from office, but from power. It offers the possibility of installing not a pathetic re-run of the last Labour government, but a government based on and answerable to mobilised fighting organisations of the working class - the councils of action and defence organisations - pledged to make the transition to full working class power.

From an outright rejection of the general strike, through to the general strike as an ultimatum, the bulk of the British left have adopted slogans during the current miners' dispute that reveal a profound confusion over the nature and use of the general strike.

The SWP has found it difficult to even mention the general strike. They seem to hate the slogan like the bubonic plague. At meetings up and down the country they counterposed *collections* to calls for strike action by other workers. Their publications simply add the call for ever-bigger pickets as their sum strategy for the strike. Indeed, any call for spreading or generalising the miners' struggle seems impossible for them. It was only the week after Arthur Scargill himself called on rail workers to strike that *Socialist Worker* finally dared call for these workers to bring forward their claims and strike!

# General Strike

Underlying the SWP's hesitancy in calling for strikes by other workers and their rejection of the general strike is their habitual spontaneism. This always leaves them tailing behind the militants and often behind the left union leaders. They will not, despite their claims to be mounting a distinctive political intervention, raise any slogans that are not already being raised by workers themselves.

In this strike the SWP are taking their cue from the militants and pin everything on the need for bigger and bigger pickets. When the miners are calling for mass pickets, the SWP calls for even bigger mass pickets. They call for Saltley Gate-style pickets. Yet they fail to recognise that it was precisely *strike action* by Birmingham engineers in 1972 that enabled the Saltley mass picket to win. The fact that it is proving more and more difficult to sustain mass picketing leads the SWP to wring their hands, explain that it is because of the "downturn" and pose as their answer to militants a bald plea to join the SWP to make ready for future struggles. They sometimes appear to have written off the miners' strike: **"We can build the reputation of our party, we can build up the networks of militants around us, so that if there is a docks strike in November or a civil service strike next year, or whatever the next struggle is, we will be that much stronger"**.<sup>4</sup> This demonstrates that the obverse side of the coin of the worship of spontaneity and trade union militancy is sectarianism. The party is built out of strikes rather than contributing a strategy to win them!

The other refrain of the SWP is that because the masses are not spontaneously ready for a general strike, it is wrong to demand that the TUC should call one. Here they express a syndicalist *fear* of the trade union leaders. They believe that by not demanding action from the TUC they can prevent the bureaucrats (outside the NUM) getting control over the strike. They follow Scargill's line of calling only on particular unions to act, hoping to steer round the TUC. This does nothing to prevent any bureaucrat from selling out. Jimmy Knapp was able to wriggle out of action over the NUR's pay claim and thereby deliver a major blow to the chances of generalising the miners' conflict.

Any leader can settle a sectional dispute on its own terms and the members will have little to complain about and organise against unless the dispute was explicitly linked with the miners. Whilst the miners remain on their own, with only the blacking and collections of the militant minority to support them, it is small consolation that they cannot be "sold out" by the other union leaders and the TUC. *They are being sold out* by the leaders of the labour movement who are leaving them to fight alone against the whole, united boss class and its state forces. This is an unequal fight that we must do everything possible to equalise by getting the TUC's dead hand off our fighting organisations and off our pursestrings.

In fact the SWP's "realism" ('the miners' can win but with a bit more picketing plus factory collections') is a tailor-made alibi for the TUC. It is this alibi that Scargill has given the TUC. Thus Ray Buckton can emerge from the General Council and say "of course we support the NUM - but they haven't called on us to do anything". The SWP's syndicalist passivity when faced with bosses' men and Judases like Murray is criminal. By demanding action and money from these gentlemen we do not sow illusions in them, we put dynamite under them! We can and should combine these demands with the sharpest warnings as to their likely betrayals. Arthur Scargill may hesitate to do this to his fellow bureaucrats but Tony Cliff of the SWP should have no (material) restrictions upon him in this regard. Yet in fact he is crippled once again by his worship of spontaneism.

None of this is new. Back in 1972 the International Socialists (forerunners of the SWP) did not dare mention a general strike until *after* the TUC had issued its threat of one, faced with the imprisonment of the Pentonville Five dockers. Even then, the IS slogan "General strike can free the Five" was about as cautious as it was possible to be. In fact, the SWP offer the working class no alternative political *leadership* in its present struggles - just constant nagging to picket harder. Such a party the miners can do without - and they will.

There is another contender for the role of revolutionary party who are not at all reticent about raising the call for the general strike or offering political leadership: the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) and its daily paper *Newsline*. The WRP has previously been a proponent of the slogan "General strike to kick out the Tories". This slogan obviously gains a sympathetic response from workers already in struggle against the hated Tories. The problem is that it is a negative slogan about the question of government. Whilst it embodies militant hatred of Thatcher, it also contains a vacuum - *who or what should replace her?* Politics like nature abhors a vacuum. Whilst the "Trotskyist" framer of the slogan *may* have in mind the proletarian dictatorship, the masses of still-reformist workers have in mind "forcing a general election". Scargill himself raises this perspective for the miners' strike. As a disguised revolutionary slogan it is totally inadequate. To gain power for the working class needs more than the mightiest negative act (the general strike). It needs a positive act: the armed overthrow of the bourgeois state. Thus as a "revolutionary slogan" it is misleading and inadequate.

As a reformist slogan it is a complete disaster, even if it were capable of jumping over the objections of workers imbued with illusions in parliamentary democracy. The general strike is indeed the highest form of struggle short of the direct armed struggle for power (the armed insurrection). To suggest in advance that it should be tied to the objective of a general election is to foreclose on its further development. Instead of clarifying the "question of who rules" in a revolutionary manner, it assists the reformists in translating this into a purely parliamentary question - one which will only resolve which bourgeois party will hold office, not which class shall hold *state power*.

In this sense an election would be a massive step backwards away from mass direct action and back onto the terrain of bourgeois democracy. It allows the atomised electorate - bombarded by the media - to decide the issue of a class battle. It exchanges the massive capital of class-wide action - holding as it does the potential for revolution - for the small change of electoral politics. It risks leaving the reformist traitors at the top of the labour movement firmly in the saddle.

## THE REFORMIST INTERPRETATION

This then is an ambiguous slogan. The inadequate "revolutionary" interpretation has been kept and "improved" by the WRP - as we shall see. The reformist interpretation has been unblushingly embraced by the Socialist League. Only they have trimmed the rather-too-revolutionary all out general strike to... a day of action! Indeed, they seem to have had a bad attack of calling on the TUC to "Name the Day!". Like partners to an overlong engagement, their paper *Socialist Action* has been tiresomely pleading with the TUC for three months. On 23rd March they asked the TUC to "Name the day for solidarity action with the NUM". They did the same on April 30th and several times thereafter. By May 18th they threw caution to the wind and asked the TUC to "name the day for a general strike - with the promise of further action". Let us hope the miners can hang on! *Socialist Action* may get there in the end! Yet even if it does, the goals it sets for this struggle are utterly reformist: **"The labour movement must force a general election! No pact and no coalition with the SDP/Liberal alliance! For a Labour government pledged to socialist policies!"**<sup>5</sup>

This is the reality behind the radicalism of the "General Strike to kick out the Tories" slogan. It poses the election of a Labour government as the objective of the strike. We reject this entirely. A Labour government is not a higher good than the immediate goals and demands of the working class. Labour governments - even those pledged to vacuous "socialist policies" - that are not accountable to councils of action and workers' defence organisations remain *bourgeois* governments. There is no guarantee that the election of such a bourgeois government will lead to the fulfilment of the demands of the working class. The 1974-9 Labour government was a classic example. With the help of the

trade union bureaucracy it flouted its "socialist" pledges, demobilised the working class and proceeded to attack its jobs and services. Struggle will decide what sort of government emerges from a general strike. We struggle for a revolutionary outcome.

As we explained earlier, the demands of the general strike need to be, at this stage, clear and specific united front demands. The WRP eschew the opportunism of the SL and pose as the goal of the general strike *now* the kicking out of the Tories and the establishment of a "workers' revolutionary government". As early as 1983 over the NGA fine they called on the TUC to "organise a political general strike whose purpose will be the struggle for power and the establishment of socialism".<sup>6</sup>

This remarkable demand on the TUC - perhaps it is meant to expose them when they fail to carry it out! - has become even more ludicrous in the light of a WRP statement of three months later. Here we are told that "by their nature, trade unions are organs of defence of the working class and its living standards and cannot rise to the conscious revolutionary task of overthrowing the ruling class, smashing the capitalist state machine and establishing socialism".<sup>7</sup> By May 1984 the objective of the general strike had become "to bring down the hated Tory dictatorship"<sup>8</sup> which is defined as "Bonapartist".

We had always thought, along with Marx, Lenin and Trotsky that a Bonapartist regime was called into being when the bourgeois parties could no longer rule via a parliamentary majority and were obliged to rest directly on the military and the state bureaucracy, pretending to be a regime "above politics". Such a regime, whilst pretending to arbitrate between the classes in fact uses the state forces, unhindered by "normal" legality, against the working class. There can be relatively weak Bonapartistisms, which cannot totally suppress the workers' organisations, and which balance uneasily between the bosses and the workers. There can be very strong ones that crush the unions and the parties of the proletariat completely. But Thatcher's government is neither of these. It rules by right of its huge and very stable parliamentary majority. It uses this to *legally* repress the miners. It is a *democratic* (i.e. a *bourgeois* democratic government).

The WRP's phoney "dialectics" attempt to deny this in vain: "All the weight of Tory class laws and the actions of Thatcher at GCHQ have abolished independence (of the trade unions from the state - WP) and have made the state apparatus independent of any control of parliament - every action of the trade unions is now illegal".<sup>9</sup> This is a self-contradictory tissue of confusion. Tory laws passed by parliament have apparently made the state apparatus independent of any control from parliament. When did parliament pass this emergency decree gutting itself, and above all *why*, since the Tories have a "rubber stamp" majority in parliament?

In fact, this politically illiterate characterisation is necessary for the fake-dialecticians of the WRP to hide from themselves a very unpalatable truth - millions of workers have illusions in Thatcher's "democratic mandate" for her anti-working class policies. It is a childish attempt to alter reality in order to fit the currently unrealisable slogan of "a general strike to install a workers' revolutionary government".

Another group to raise the question of the general strike in a confused and opportunist fashion is the Labour-oriented fragmenting "alliance" around *Socialist Organiser*. They demand an immediate "one day general strike" but argue that things are not hot enough yet for an all-out general strike. All that can be done now is to call on the TUC to "prepare for" and "organise for" a general strike. Thus on March 28th we were told "A one day all out stoppage should be called immediately. If this strategy were adopted victory would be in sight."<sup>10</sup> This could lead to bigger things: "a campaign on these lines could start developing the perspective of an all out general strike. But right now what's essential is to push the dispute another few miles ahead".<sup>11</sup>

A few miles further on (two months to be precise) and *Socialist Organiser* was still stuck in the same old rut: "What's needed is to develop the struggle towards a general strike"<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, but the question is how to develop it? How to get "towards" a general strike? Well, calling for one - in every union, in every workplace - agitating and propagandising - shouting for

it outside the TUC General Council, on the mass demonstrations, might help! On the other hand, to call on bureaucrats to "prepare" a strike lets them off the hook. Every left faker on the TUC will tell you he's "organising for" a general strike or that he has a "perspective" for a strike. Indeed, many will say that it is impossible to do anything (like call out their own members) until sufficient "preparation" for a general strike has been carried out. The demand is totally unspecific. It ties the bureaucrats, and particularly the lefts, to no concrete actions whatsoever. The call to "prepare for a general strike" is a hollow one, a sign of cowardice, a refusal to fight now for what is desperately needed. It is a slogan that reflects the outlook of the union and Labour bureaucracy, not that of revolutionary communists.

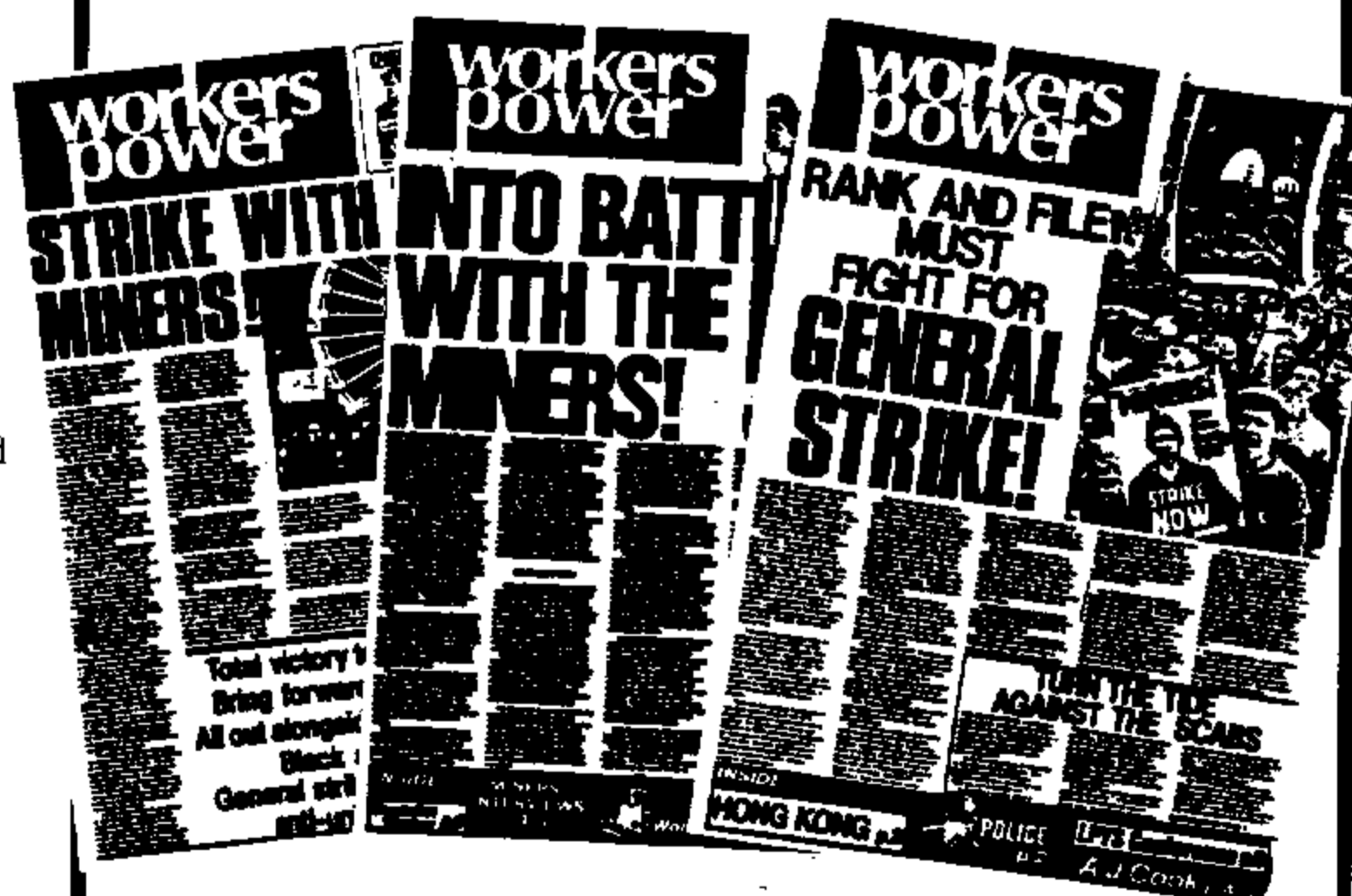
Let us repeat: the call for a general strike does not contradict the everyday and immediate tasks of militant support for the miners on the picket lines, or solidarity action such as blacking and shopfloor collections. It does not replace the attempt to stimulate a mass strike wave by bringing forward each and every claim and struggle. But given the Tory laws and the greatly strengthened police picket-buster, we need the weapon of the general strike.

That weapon lies locked up and rusting, in an armoury whose key is in the keeping of the TUC. Therefore we have a duty to mobilise the mass forces of those struggling now in this dispute, in all disputes, to force the do-nothing "new realists" to let us use *our unions and funds*, to decisively help the miners to victory and to smash the Tory laws. The general strike - as an intrinsically political class-wide weapon - will enormously raise and accelerate the political consciousness of the working class. Even if it gets no further than a widespread call, this itself will have a spin-off effect in terms of solidarity and the prosecution of other sectional struggles. If it does take place it will work a sea-change on the reformist consciousness of the British working class. And when that happens, to paraphrase Engels: "There will be communism again in Britain".

#### Footnotes

1. *Workers Power* No 8 September 1979
2. Rosa Luxemburg *Selected Political Writings* London 1972 p.155
3. Leon Trotsky *On France* New York, 1979 p.100
4. *Socialist Review* May 1984
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## The nature of the EEC and the elections to the European Parliament

The actions of British imperialism within the EEC have precipitated a crisis within European imperialism. Since the Dublin summit of the heads of state in 1979, the visible signs of disunity have multiplied each year. The constant wrangling over the UK's budget rebates, French intransigence over reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and growing protectionist measures within the EEC backed by the reactionary demonstrations and demands from trade union leaders and small farmers, are but the most visible signs of inter-imperialist tension.

### THE NATURE OF THE EEC

The EEC is made up of four major imperialist powers and their subordinate minor imperialist and semi-colonial satellites. Its character is therefore that of an imperialist economic alliance closely interwoven with the European wing of the NATO military pact. The EEC was formed in 1958 after West Germany, Italy, France and Benelux signed the Treaty of Rome. The main aim of the Treaty was to further economic integration of the member states which had already begun under the aegis of US imperialism with the Marshall Plan and the establishment of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation in 1948.

The formation of the EEC has to be seen in the context of the Cold War. American imperialism had, since the formation of NATO in 1949 taken the lead in encouraging the European bourgeoisie to form a powerful capitalist European bloc as a frontline fortress opposed to the USSR and E. Europe. The aim of the various bourgeoisies was to create a customs union (i.e. free trade within, common tariffs without), to establish the free movement of labour and capital and move towards the elaboration of a common plan for transport, scientific research, energy, currency, industry and agriculture. The period of success along this road begins with the introduction of the CAP in 1962, matures with the final abolition of internal tariffs in 1968 and comes to an end with the formation of the European Monetary System in 1978.

The Treaty of Rome represented a deal between on the one hand W. Germany and its satellites (Benelux) and on the other, France and Italy. In return for a rationalisation and subsidisation of French and Italian agriculture, W. Germany would get access to the huge markets of France and Italy. British imperialism refused to sign the Treaty of Rome for two reasons. For the original Six the formation of the EEC was but a logical step given that between a quarter and a half of each country's trade was with each other. But

in the UK only 15% of its trade was with the original Six. Most of its trade continued to be with the old Empire and Commonwealth. Hence, the fraction of the bourgeoisie most tied to the continuation of this pattern of trade successfully resisted the moves towards closer integration with Europe. Secondly, the British bourgeoisie was reluctant to subsidise a large and inefficient European agriculture when the UK agri-capitalist class was small but highly productive. The Southern Irish bourgeoisie in the mid to late 1950s had no independent line separate from the UK view, given that at the time the trade of the 26 Counties was still locked into the British market.

### IMPERIALIST CARTEL

The EEC was a creation of the imperialist epoch. As a result its formation cannot be considered in the same light as the tendencies within the pre-imperialist epoch towards bourgeois unification. In fact, the EEC is, in the main, a stunted and partial reversal of the general tendencies of imperialist stagnation and decay. For example, the European bourgeoisie did not unite Europe in 1958 but merely the rich club of imperialist powers. The member states reduced the weaker states (e.g. Spain, Ireland, Turkey) to the status of cheap providers of labour power. Also, although the EEC was a customs union it erected high tariff walls to the rest of the world, thus intensifying the problems of industrialisation experienced by the semi-colonial world. Finally, despite the fact that the EEC implied a degree of economic co-operation, this did not extend so far that each of the major imperialist powers was prepared to give up its special 'spheres of influence' in the semi-colonies.

The EEC did not create the post-war boom in Europe, rather it arose out of the deepening of that boom. On the other hand, the EEC did inject further life into the boom. Trade massively expanded. Output increased as well although not by the same amount. The major facet of the development of the EEC was to extend co-operation between the European imperialist powers at the economic level, and to increase the weight of European imperialism within world capitalism. The EEC accounts for 34% of all world trade, by far the single biggest bloc in world trade. On the eve of the formation of the EEC the three largest EEC countries had some 20% of their trade with EEC partners. By the 1970s this figure was over 50%. Today, the total output of the EEC is larger than the US and twice the size of that of Japan.

### BRITAIN AND IRELAND JOIN

Between 1958 and 1973 British imperialism attempted to join the EEC twice (1962 and 1967) but their entry was blocked by France, suspicious that the UK was but a Trojan horse for American imperialism. The development of the EEC and its predecessor, the Coal and Steel Commission, was seen, especially by the French bourgeoisie, as an opportunity to construct a cross-European alliance to act as a counterweight to the predominant influence of the USA in the world economy. In 1959 the USA only had 16% of its stock of foreign investment in Europe. By 1968 it had risen to 30%. The US wanted a political advocate within the EEC to defend its growing interests. Britain's entry would also allow its UK operations to function without trade barriers.

By 1973 the pattern of the UK's trade had changed dramatically. Over 30% of its trade was now with the EEC. Joining was to give recognition to the fact that future developments lay in that direction.

In the 26 Counties, from the late 1950s two developments took place which pushed the Irish bourgeoisie into seeking membership. The market for Eire's agricultural commodities was increasingly to be found in Europe. Secondly, Ireland had been opened up to foreign capital investment after 1958. US imperialism's interests would best be served by Ireland being in the EEC and substantial West German and other EEC capital investment in the country made it logical for Ireland to be integrated within the whole trading bloc. On Ireland's part, the relatively large and powerful agrarian bourgeoisie anticipated many benefits from CAP should the 26 Counties be added to the European bloc as a subordinate partner. In the end by 1973 W. Germany, France and Italy agreed to allow the UK, Ireland and Denmark to join. The former anticipated, correctly, that they had little to fear from British industry, but that on the other hand the three new additions would provide a further market for their goods and the UK's contributions would help offset the growing cost of CAP. In the last analysis, the EEC has been in the economic sense, at least, hegemonised by West Germany which - with Benelux in tow - has grown rich and powerful at the expense of the other European imperialist powers.

### THE 'MULTINATIONALS'

Underlying the post-war tendency within Europe towards greater trade was the decisive factor of the centralisation of ownership and control of capital and the

internationalisation of the division of labour. At the time of the Treaty of Rome there were only a few multinationals (or in reality transnationals tied in the last analysis to one or other state). The main ones, in the UK and Holland, were resistant to the Common Market idea in that they were mainly concentrated in one state and hence benefited from the existence of protective barriers. After 1958 it was the USA and W.Germany which sponsored the growth of multinational capital in Europe. France under De Gaulle resisted this tendency in the vain hope that French national capital would prove strong enough to hegemonise Europe under its own sign. By 1969 the French bourgeoisie had paid enough for this vanity and got rid of him.

One of the overwhelming reasons pushing the British bourgeoisie in the direction of the EEC in the 1960s was the recognition that it was a declining imperialist power, that the old Empire markets were insufficient to sustain growth of exports, and that British multinationals would be squeezed between American and European imperialism if it did not decide to cast its lot with the latter.

On balance the EEC has proved a greater success for the growth and extension of US imperialist capital than it has for the growth and extension of a unified European capital. Most of the attempts at cross-state mergers (e.g. DunlopPirelli) have failed. Nor have inter-government state-capitalist ventures (Concorde, Airbus) been much better.

## THE FAILURE OF INTEGRATION

This limited success or outright failure to develop a specifically European cross-state capitalism has determined the outcome of various attempts to forge a political unity within the EEC. In the 1960s and early 1970s it was the fervent hope of sections of the European bourgeoisie that closer economic integration would lead to the creation of a supra-national European state. This state, based upon a European integrated capitalism, would have sovereign political powers, thus capable of subordinating the narrower interests of each national state to the wider collective interest. Even centrists such as Mandel thought this probable.

However, the impressive tempo of economic integration in the 1960s was not sustained. The renewed period of world imperialist crisis engulfed Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s before this integration had gone far enough. This has meant that in the 1970s European imperialism has not been able to develop a cohesive political outlook to rival US imperialism in world politics. The lack of a common approach to the Middle East war and the oil crisis in 1973 was indicative in this respect. One could multiply examples since, where the US has split the EEC camp.

Since the late 1970s the new period of crisis has tended to undermine and fracture the economic gains of the EEC. For example, trade barriers between member states are increasingly being re-introduced. The lack of any fundamental union between the member states has meant that they have adopted unsynchronised and often disparate policies to deal with the recessions of 1973-5 and 1980-2. The reflationary policies of Mitterand in 1981-2 and the deflationary policies of Thatcher in the same period are symptomatic in this regard.

## CAP - CORNERSTONE OF THE EEC

Just as the EEC accentuated the tendencies within the post-war boom, so it has typified and even exaggerated the features of the new period of imperialist crisis. All the characteristic features of the imperialist epoch - parasitism and decay - are now pronounced in the EEC. Top of the list in this

regard is the CAP. CAP was and remains the cornerstone of the European Community. One of its aims was to make the EEC self-sufficient in major foodstuffs. Given the boom, this was achieved by the early 1970s. But in the new period of stagnation, what was the EEC's chief success has now become its heaviest millstone. CAP illustrates perfectly the contradictions inherent within capitalism whereby the forces of production collide so grotesquely with the social relations of production.

CAP guarantees big and small farmers that anything they produce will be bought up at 'target prices' which range from 200% to 600% higher than prevailing world prices. The major beneficiaries of CAP are the largest capitalist farms which have a high productivity of labour due to the application of massive capital equipment. Since the CAP encourages the massive overproduction of commodities it is the large West German, UK and French agribusinesses that benefit through the extraction of super-profits. At the same time, the small-scale family farms, typical of parts of France, Ireland and Italy, while incapable of super-profits due to the low level of productivity, have been saved from extinction by the CAP.

Unanchored by demand, supply has accelerated with the chance of these huge profits. This has created massive 'overproduction' in beef, milk, butter, grains, vegetables. This subsidy to the agrarian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie (in the latter case mainly in France and Italy) is paid for by the European workers through high prices. Over 70% of the Community's total budget is spent on CAP. Over half of this (about six billion pounds a year) is spent on storing and destroying this surplus or discounting it to Eastern Europe. And this in a world where some 450 million are estimated by the UN to be undernourished.

Developments within US agribusiness in the last 18 months threaten to set a future pattern for the EEC and demonstrate the truly reactionary character of the present social relations of production of capitalism. To eliminate overproduction in US agriculture in 1983 over 13.5 million acres of agricultural land was destroyed thus eliminating potential production, a land area equivalent to the whole of Ireland. If the European bourgeoisie as a whole forces its agrarian sector to cut back then this must occur in the EEC soon. Meanwhile, the refusal to take this step and the undercutting of traditional US markets threatens to release a massive trade war, the first skirmishes of which occurred at the start of 1983.

## CRISIS IN THE EEC

CAP is not the only manifestation of the decay of the 'European ideal'. Attempts to develop cross-state policies on industry, transport and energy have effectively run aground. Worse, the threat of protectionism haunts the major EEC industries including steel.

The present crisis originates in 1979. At this moment British imperialism felt the contradictions of the EEC more sharply than any other of the Nine. It decided to act. When the UK joined it was taking a risk but it had little alternative and the prospects seemed promising. In 1970 the UK ran a balance of trade surplus with the rest of the EEC despite the tariffs. It believed its ailing industry could revive and compete with West Germany and France. A five year transitional period, accompanied by a series of concessions alleviated the pains of the first few years. But UK industry went into a spiral of decline faced with European competition. By 1975 the country was already trying to cope with a 2 billion deficit on trade in manufactures with the rest of the EEC. But worse was to follow. Meanwhile, the UK's budget payments mounted each year until by 1980 they were over 1

billion. At this time declining British imperialism was making the second largest net contributions (after W.Germany) and yet it was proportionately the third poorest (after Italy and Ireland). Two years of rebates have delayed the present breakdown. Thatcher has insisted on a long-term revision of Britain's contributions (to about 500 million) and reform of the CAP.

West Germany is the only other net contributor to the EEC budget. But its position is fundamentally different to Britain's. While the W.German big agrarian bourgeoisie benefits greatly from the CAP, the WG state, on behalf of the whole ruling class, is prepared to underwrite the net EEC revenue contributions as a price it must pay for the total dominance it enjoys in the EEC market for manufactured goods. It is even willing, within limits, to bear the extra burden of the EEC budget that must necessarily fall on it if the UK contribution is cut.

France and Italy are the most deperate to preserve CAP not only because of the interests of the big agricultural bourgeoisie but also the electoral weight of the class of small farmers and peasants who would be plunged into ruin if subsidies were reduced or eliminated.

## CAP AND IRELAND

The EEC succeeded in imposing limits under CAP on the production of milk in March 1984. Only by the exercise of a formal veto on the whole package of budgetary measures under discussion was the Irish government able to beg an exemption to allow up to 4.7% increase in milk production and only in the teeth of year-long opposition from the other states.

The antagonism of the dominant member states to the Irish exemption ignored the dependence of this, the most backward member state, on its dairy sector (9% of its GNP), and demonstrated the tendency of the main imperialist powers to attempt to settle their differences, in the first instance, on the backs of the imperialised semi-colonies, even such as Ireland within the EEC.

In Ireland it was the dairy and beef bourgeoisie which pushed the country into the EEC, drooling at the thought of huge profits under CAP. Irish agricultural capital made major profits and large sections of the small-holders were raised marginally above their subsistence level of farming. However, membership of the EEC accelerated the decimation of 40% of native Irish industry, its replacement by mobile transnational capital using Ireland as a source of superprofits and as an Irish-subsidised production base for EEC markets for US and Japanese capital. Significantly, native Irish food processing industry was also retarded in its development by the growing dominance of rival transnational agribusiness, leaving the mass of Irish agricultural commodities to be exported with relatively little added value from a state suffering the worst structural mass unemployment in the EEC.

Although we do not support the Irish state in its fight on behalf of its agricultural bourgeoisie against their imperialist overlords in their quarrels over the distribution of market shares, we point to such conflicts as demonstrating the character of the EEC as an alliance dominated by a cartel of imperialist nation states. In Ireland we argue that the organisations of the working class should be won to champion the exemption of non-exploiting small farmers from limits on their production which would undermine their means of subsistence, as a step in allying them on the side of the working class.

## REACTIONARY EUROPEAN UTOPIA

In the face of all this, the notion implicit at least in the Treaty of Rome, of a

political union of the European bourgeoisie, is further away than ever. What is on the cards is a further disintegration of the EEC into rival blocs, and through this into single antagonistic nation states, and even the destruction of the EEC itself. It is important to understand, however, that no bourgeoisie in the EEC desires or aims for this. Not even, or least of all, the British. With a weak, uncompetitive industrial base, life outside the EEC would be much worse than life within it. No serious section of the British bourgeoisie today contemplates withdrawal.

On the other hand, in the present period, the demand for a supra-national state in Europe on the terrain of bourgeois democracy is a reactionary utopia. As part of the programme of the liberal bourgeoisie or of social democracy, it is a utopian concept when the economic foundations of that democratic ideal are crumbling. If it were ever to be implemented it would be under the crushing blows of an aggressive and expansionist European imperialist power and would see bourgeois democracy swept aside in the process.

At present, the European bourgeoisie has not been forced to choose this road as the price of facing up to US imperialism. Such a time may come. For the moment, Europe chooses to compensate itself for the lack of real integration and union by simply adding more units to the EEC: Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in the next few years. In the absence of the material basis for real and lasting union, however, these additions of decayed powers merely build more contradictions into the European Community; more grasping hands for CAP, more markets for the consolidation of W.German, French and British industry.

Meanwhile, the bourgeoisies of the EEC will have to content themselves with the faint shadow of democracy that they have invented. First, there is the European Commission which, unelected though it is, is charged with the formulation of policy. Real power is invested in the imperialist clique called the Council of Ministers who make decisions and insist on unanimity thus guaranteeing stalemate and political stagnation and inertia as the norm. Finally, there is the European Parliament, elected for the first time in 1979 and due for re-election in June 1984. A toothless body which can, in extremis, demonstrate its impotence by blocking the EEC budget in toto and sacking the Commission. It has no sovereignty over Europe or its member states.

Throughout its history each member state has been unwilling and incapable of surrendering political power to a supra-national body. Even the principle of majority voting in the Council of Ministers was abandoned at De Gaulle's insistence in 1965 when the first major dispute over the 'national interest' exploded.

## EUROPEAN UNION OF DECAY

The fate of Europe cannot be entrusted to the EEC bourgeoisie. At present they rule over some 272 million people, a majority of them workers and small farmers. Of these, capitalism has consigned over 11 million to the misery of unemployment. The number out of work in the Community has doubled since 1979. The junior semi-colonial partner - Ireland - suffers the worst with 17% in the South and 20% in the North. The stagnation in the EEC is evident even though 1983 was hailed as the year of recovery in the world economy. In fact only in Britain and Denmark was there something of an upturn in 1983. Germany, France, Italy and Belgium and Luxembourg all experienced negative growth rates. Production and capacity have been slashed across Europe in the major industries of coal and steel. The CAP continues to guarantee massive profits for the rich farmers yet has done little to overcome the plight of the smaller farmers in France and the chronic condition of the peasants of southern Italy with their small-scale and inefficient methods. Only an alliance of workers and small farmers can put an end to this European union of capitalist decay.

## INTERNATIONAL WORKERS UNITY

An independent working class programme is necessary if this is to be achieved. As the system plunges further into stagnation, false solutions by the score are being and will be offered up by friends of the bourgeoisie. The chauvinism, not to say xenophobia of the French farmers illustrates the nationalist poison that can infect also the body of the proletariat. Against the calls for import controls, beloved of the trade union bureaucracy throughout Europe, which transfer unemployment from one nation to another, we demand trade union unity in action to defend jobs from attack. From the French miners' strike of 1963 to the British steel strike of 1980, the lack of united trade union action on a European scale was a key fact that helped undermine the effectiveness of workers' action. It will be important in the current

British miners' strike. Capital is international and its operations depend upon the weakness of the European labour movement. The Ford Motor Co. plays off one national workforce against another. They pull out of production in Ireland altogether; they plan to close engine-making in the UK and concentrate in Cologne. The trade union bureaucracy is impotent in the face of this and allows the Irish, British and German workers to blame each other for their plight. Against this we must pose the need for class answers: occupations to prevent closures; European-wide strikes to prevent job losses seeking to impose instead a sliding-scale of hours with no pay cuts; the nationalisation under workers' control of any threatened plants or whole industries.

In order to achieve these things against the inertia and obstruction of the trade union bureaucracies, Europe-wide rank and file organisation needs to be built up that can respond to co-ordinated attacks of multinationals like Ford.

## AGRICULTURE FOR NEED NOT PROFIT!

On the land the oppression of non-exploiting small farmers, and the super-exploitation of labourers by farming capitalists and by agribusiness (which more deeply subjects the rural toilers and workers to its profit lust by the fusion of farming and industrial capital), can be resisted only by their mobilisation under the lead of the organised working class.

Among farm labourers this includes mobilisation to resist redundancies by the shorter working week without loss of pay, and the fight to expropriate and nationalise capitalist farms under workers' control.

In the case of the smaller farmers and peasants, the proletariat cannot take responsibility for their eternal preservation under capitalism whose unimpeded inner laws doom them to extinction. Nevertheless, the working class does possess enemies in common with the small farmers: the banks, and industrial and agrarian big capital. The working class demands the cancellation of the debts of the small farmers, the nationalisation of the banks, the extension of free credits, of cheap agricultural equipment and fertilisers etc. to these farmers whether individually or in co-operatives. The working class further fights for the expropriation of the exploiting middle-men and the Agribusinesses and the provision of alternative facilities by the state. We also demand the extension of full health, education, pension rights and welfare conditions enjoyed by the urban masses, together with cheap public transport and communications, to the countryside.

Only the proletarian revolution can save the small farmers from their oppression and, via co-operative organisation within a workers' state, lead to the full socialisation and planning of agriculture for need and not for profit in a socialist Europe.

## EUROPEAN UNITY THROUGH REVOLUTION

Class unity against the bourgeoisie in the EEC must have as its goal the creation of Workers and Small Farmers Governments that lead the way, based on the organisation of independent struggle, in breaking the spine of the ruling class. A successful revolution in one member state is not envisaged let alone sanctioned by the Treaty of Rome. A Workers and Small Farmers Government would not let itself be tied by any of its stipulations but would use any and every forum available to rally the rest of the European proletariat to its side.

The division of Europe after the Second World War must be overcome by social



French farmers protest



revolution in the West and political revolution in the East if the goal of a United Socialist States of Europe is to be reached.

### IN OR OUT THE FIGHT GOES ON!

In the coming June Elections to the European Parliament, it is around this analysis and with this perspective and programme that we will make propaganda. The bourgeois workers' parties of France, West Germany and Britain serve up a different dish. In their majority (i.e. the right wing and centre) they aim to use the pallid democracy the bourgeoisie has allowed them in the EEC to debate the small print of the Commission's proposals and make speeches about a far off 'Socialist Europe'. They hope the addition of Greece, Spain and Portugal will allow them one day the prospect of a parliamentary majority.

Only in Britain and Denmark does popular opinion persistently reveal a desire to withdraw from the EEC. In these countries, which entered at the dawn of a new period of stagnation in imperialism (1973), it is easy to understand why this decline is associated with entry into the EEC. For many years the British Labour Party pandered to this consciousness and to the small section of the bourgeoisie opposed to entry and in favour of withdrawal in the referendum of 1975. The bourgeoisie told the Labour party to change its views when it came to office in 1974 and the Wilson leadership obliged, recommending staying in, in 1975. Only the 'left' of the Labour Party around Benn advocates withdrawal, believing the Treaty of Rome is a fundamental obstruction to socialist advance.

The truth of the matter is that decay and stagnation within imperialism had long set in for British imperialism before entry. Outside of the EEC this would have continued. Entry merely altered the terms of that stagnation and decline. For that reason Workers Power in Britain called for an abstention in the 1975 referendum and will not add its voice, nor will the Gruppe Arbeitermacht nor the Irish Workers Group, to the campaigns for withdrawal, which are chauvinist in their inspiration and utopian and narrowly nationalist in the solutions they offer for ailing European capitalism. For the same reason we would have been unable and unwilling to advocate either a yes or a no vote in the Norwegian referendum on entry or any future ones in Spain or Portugal or even in a referendum on withdrawal in Greece. On each occasion the proletariat is asked to decide on the merits of two purely bourgeois programmes which contest the form of the relationship each of the European powers has with the others.

Especially, we will not advocate a NO vote, or a withdrawal vote as the stalinists

and centrists have done and will do again. As marxists, we do not oppose in a STERILE fashion the inevitable tendencies towards centralisation and concentration of capitalism in Europe and its inevitable political consequences. We oppose capitalism from within its own development, counterposing to the bourgeoisie not a utopian backward-looking programme of nationalist development but an international revolutionary communist programme.

The creation of a "European parliament" in 1979 was a partial success for the bourgeoisie in their attempts to overcome their divisions. As the crisis deepens within the EEC there will be a greater tendency for more secret diplomacy, more hidden corruption.

We demand that the parliamentary representatives seek to impose their democratic powers over each and every supra-national bureaucratic body in the EEC; that they obstruct, scrutinise and debate every plan or proposal which presently comes only before the Commission or Council of Ministers. On the other hand, we do not advocate the demand that the European Parliament be given supra-national sovereign political powers over the member states. This would promote an illusion, rather than put an existing one to the test on the basis of institutions that already exist.

While this parliament cannot be an instrument of working class power, it can and must be used by MEPs from the Socialist, Labour and Stalinist parties to expose the secrets of the European bourgeoisie to the workers, and it must be used as a tribune to rally the workers' struggles outside parliament. We even demand of them that they use what limited powers they have to the full to delay and derail each and every anti-working class proposal.

### TACTICS IN THE EEC ELECTIONS

Lacking the resources at present to put our own candidates before the working class in the elections in June, we call for a critical-support vote for the bourgeois workers' parties in the imperialist democracies.

In Ireland we give critical electoral support in the North to Sinn Fein and in the South to the trade-union based Labour Party.

We call for votes for Sinn Fein from all workers in the North, centrally the nationalist sections of the working class who are in open revolt against British imperialism and against the Northern State overwhelmingly under the political lead of Sinn Fein, a petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalist

party. By solidarising in this way with the central progressive elements of their struggle, Trotskyists can most effectively argue their transitional action programme and the strategy of Permanent Revolution against the programme of Sinn Fein, particularly against their utopian perspective of withdrawal from the EEC which, from the standpoint of the Irish working class, is wholly reactionary. United front tactics, applied in this way to Sinn Fein, are vital if the nationalist section of the working class is to be won to take up action goals that enable the vanguard to put Sinn Fein to the test, to expose their petty-bourgeois character and begin to forge an independent proletarian leadership for the strategy of Permanent Revolution.

In the South where a stunted reformist Labour Party based on the trade unions poses a major obstacle to the political development of the class, where Sinn Fein does not preside over any significant sections of the class in struggle, where the majority of the workers have habitually fallen in behind the major capitalist nationalist parties in elections, the electoral united front tactic must be applied to the Labour Party, calling on the mass of workers to stand with this party of the trade unions as against the openly bourgeois parties in the election, but making this call only as part of a programme of independent rank and file action to break Labour from its collaboration with the bourgeoisie and British imperialism, to open up the road of struggle for a Workers Government, a road in which the building of an all-Ireland mass revolutionary workers' party is advanced as the strategic goal at all times both North and South of the Border.

Our aim in each country is to put the workers' parties and the revolutionary nationalists to the test; to expose the hollowness of their claims to represent the interests of the workers and small farmers in front of those classes. In each case we agitate and propagandise around the elements of our programme.

### FOR EUROPE-WIDE WORKING CLASS UNITY!

- Against economic nationalism. No to import controls!
- For occupations against closures.
- For worksharing with no loss of pay.
- For the 35-hour week without loss of pay throughout the EEC!
- For the nationalisation of threatened industries without compensation and under workers' control.
- No to immigration controls. No to the expulsion of immigrant workers and their families. For full political and social rights for immigrant workers, including the right of residence for their families
- Against the guaranteed profits which artificially raise food prices for workers and their families we demand the sliding scale of wages!
- For workers' solidarity in struggle and international blacking action.
- Force the reformist and revolutionary nationalist MEPs to delay and block every anti-working class measure, to scrutinise and open up all dealings of the Commission and Council, to use the EEC Parliament to call workers into struggle on a Europe-wide basis.

### AGAINST EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM!

- Break up NATO!
- Cruise and Pershing out!
- Defend the USSR and the other degenerate Workers States against Cold War measures!
- Not a penny, not a man or woman for defence!
- For solidarity with the semi-colonial regimes in their resistance to European imperialism. Cancel the debts owed to the EEC.

### FOR A SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE!

# TROTSKY'S PEACE PROGRAMME

## INTRODUCTION:

## TROTSKY, LENIN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE COMMUNIST PROGRAMME ON WAR

We publish here an English translation of Leon Trotsky's article "The Programme for Peace", written during 1915-16. This is the first time that the article has been published in English for forty years.

There are a number of reasons why Trotsky's Peace Programme should be reprinted and why it deserves to be studied by militants today. The programme is a landmark in the development of Trotsky's political method. The First World War demonstrated starkly that capitalism had outplayed its historically progressive role. "Permanent war or permanent revolution" were the choices that Trotsky saw as facing humanity.

The major tasks that had been inscribed on the banner of the bourgeois revolutions - national independence, the breaking up of the big estates, equality under the law - remained unfulfilled for the great majority of mankind and *unfulfillable* on the basis of capitalist property relations in the new imperialist epoch.

In their turn, capitalist property relations and the political forms of bourgeois rule were themselves becoming ever-greater impediments to the development of the productive forces. The national state, for example, served as a fetter on the rational *international* organisation of production required by the level of development of the productive forces.

It was Trotsky, more than any other Marxist, who most sharply understood the major programmatic consequences of imperialism's crisis and decay. For him it necessarily fell to the proletariat to take up as its own the unfulfilled democratic struggles of the oppressed and exploited, as part of its permanent revolution against capitalism. Only the proletariat was capable of giving effective leadership in those struggles: their realisation could only take the form of a proletarian revolution, no longer of partial struggles for a minimum democratic programme within capitalism.

Only the international proletariat

could sweep aside the nation states and mechanisms of exploitation that threatened mankind's productive forces with stagnation and decay. The only answer to imperialism's war and crisis, the only answer to the exploitation, oppression and misery of the masses, lay in the international proletarian revolution.

In this way, as we shall further see the Peace Programme projects onto an international scale the programme of permanent revolution that Trotsky had first systematically elaborated for Russia in his book *Results and Prospects* in 1906.

Although cramped in style because of its publication under the stern eye of the censor, Trotsky's Peace Programme is the most codified and developed version of his attempts to develop a programme of proletarian struggle against the First World War. As such it must be discussed in comparison with the abject surrender in 1914 of the majority of the leaders of European socialism to their "own" national bourgeoisies, and also with the programme advanced by Lenin, Zinoviev and the Bolsheviks. In this respect, the article shows the development of Trotsky's political method and the difficulties associated with some of his positions - and those of the Bolsheviks - in the years leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

### SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

At the time that the Peace Programme was written, Trotsky was not a member of Lenin's Bolshevik Party. He did not finally join until July 1917. During the early years of the war, his writings were the subject of much hostile debate with the Bolsheviks. Their disputes, and the problems specifically associated with this article - most notably those around the slogans of "The United States of Europe" and "Defeatism" - can make clear to us the struggle waged by both revolutionary tendencies to elaborate a new

programme for the new epoch, and to build a new International. The disputes also show the kind of rigorous and scientific approach that we need to employ today in the struggle to re-elaborate the communist programme and to build a new revolutionary international.

### THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

The major parties of the Second (Socialist) International backed their respective bourgeoisies at the declaration of hostilities in August 1914. In the name of "national defence", the massive French and German socialist parties became recruiting sergeants for the carnage created by their "own" bosses. The International was in tatters. Its leading sections were calling on their members to slaughter fellow workers in the name of the "national interest".

Only a minority of European socialists stood against this stream of chauvinism and capitulation. A small left wing in the German party around Liebknecht and Luxemburg stood out against the war, as did others in Bulgaria and Russia.

Russian social democracy had experienced its division into revolutionary (Bolshevik) and opportunist (Menshevik) parties prior to the war. Trotsky adopted an ambiguous centrist stance with regard to that division. He sought to unify the two parties through the intervention of the Second International. Trotsky's initial response to the war was to reflect his stance towards the divisions in Russian social democracy.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks responded to the war in the theses "The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War" (September 1914). After denouncing the imperialist war and the social democratic traitors, the theses called for "all-embracing propaganda,

involving the army and the theatre of hostilities as well, for the socialist revolution and the need to use weapons, not against their brothers, the wage slaves in other countries, but against the reactionary and bourgeois governments and parties of all countries"<sup>1</sup>

They raised "as an immediate slogan" the call for republics in Germany, Poland and Russia, and "the transforming of all the separate states of Europe into a republican United States of Europe".<sup>2</sup>

## DEFEATISM

By early 1915, Lenin had elaborated the consequences of this call for soldiers to turn their arms on the bourgeoisie, to turn the imperialist war into a civil war. In theses prepared for a conference of Russian social democratic groups abroad, Lenin advanced the following position: "In each country, the struggle against a government that is waging an imperialist war should not falter at the possibility of that country's defeat as a result of revolutionary propaganda. The defeat of the government's army weakens the government, promotes the liberation of the nationalities it oppresses, and facilitates the civil war against the ruling class. This holds particularly true in respect of Russia. A victory for Russia will bring in its train a strengthening of reaction, both throughout the world and within the country, and will be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the peoples living in areas already seized. In view of this, we consider the defeat of Russia the lesser evil in all conditions"<sup>3</sup>

For Lenin, the call for civil war against the ruling class necessarily meant that a defeat for the government and its army due to proletarian struggle was a "lesser evil" than an abstention from that struggle in the name of "defence" of the "nation".

Bolshevism also stood unequivocally for the need for a definitive break, not only with the Second International, not only with the outright traitors in its ranks, but also with the opportunism which had marked its life prior to the great betrayal of 1914. "The Second International is dead, overcome by opportunism. Down with opportunism and long live the Third International purged not only of 'turncoats'...but of opportunism as well".<sup>4</sup>

If Bolshevism stood firm on a programme of international civil war, Menshevism splintered and divided under the impact of the war. Plekhanov, "the father of Russian Marxism", enthusiastically embraced the Romanov war effort. Inside Russia, the Mensheviks advocated and organised workers' participation in industrial war committees set up to increase productivity in war industries.

In exile in Paris, however, Menshevism's historic leader - Martov - edited the anti-war newspaper *Golos* ("Voice").

It was in *Golos* that Trotsky first published his articles against the war.

## WAR AND THE INTERNATIONAL

At the outbreak of war, Trotsky fled from exile in Vienna, where he was under immediate threat of internment, to neutral Switzerland - at that time also the home of Lenin, Zinoviev and their closest co-thinkers. In September and October 1914, during his stay in Zurich, Trotsky wrote a series of articles which were first published in *Golos* and shortly thereafter collected into a pamphlet - *War and the International*.

The articles contain the analysis of the roots of the war which was later to inform the Peace Programme:

"The forces of production which capitalism has evolved have outgrown the limits of nation and state. The national state, the present political form, is too narrow for the exploitation of these productive forces...The present war is at bottom a revolt of the forces of production against the political form of nation and state. It means the collapse of the national state as an independent economic unit".<sup>5</sup>

This understanding, whilst inferior to the theory of Imperialism which Lenin was to develop over the next years, was nevertheless clearly that of a revolutionary struggling to come to terms with the new epoch of wars and revolutions, to provide a scientific analysis which could guide the world working class to victory.

It was this view of the contradiction between the internationalisation of the capitalist economy and the maintenance and reinforcement of national state structures - a global application of the perspective of permanent revolution which he and Parvus had developed during and after the 1905 revolution - which was to eventually lead Trotsky to heavily emphasise the slogan of "The United States of Europe".

## TROTSKY'S PROGRAMME

Both the analysis and the programme of *War and the International* contrasted sharply with that advanced by Lenin. Trotsky argued:

"Immediate cessation of the war' is the watchword under which the social democracy can reassemble its scattered ranks, both within the national parties, and the whole International".<sup>6</sup>

The struggle for peace was not, at this time, posed as an explicit call to struggle for proletarian revolution and class war against the imperialist bourgeoisie. It is posed as a means of re-assembling the International's "scattered ranks" and "a fight to preserve the revolutionary energy of the proletariat"<sup>7</sup> around the slogans:

"No reparations

The right to every nation to self-determination.

The united states of Europe - without monarchies, without standing armies, without feudal ruling castes, without secret diplomacy".<sup>8</sup>

Despite Trotsky's denunciation of imperialism and the social democratic traitors, this programme lacks the explicitly proletarian revolutionary character of the call issued by the Bolsheviks, and also did not raise the call for the building of a new international. (It should be noted, however, that by the 100th issue of *Golos* - 8th January 1915 - Trotsky was raising the call to "gather the forces of the Third International"<sup>9</sup>).

As the war proceeded, Martov and the "Menshevik-Internationalists" - as they called themselves - were increasingly cramped and restrained by their co-existence with the opportunist majority of Menshevism's leaders, and their consequent inability to fight opportunism. The hopes expressed by many, including Lenin, that the old divisions within Russian social democracy had been overcome and that the possibility existed for a re-alignment of the Russian internationalist left were repeatedly dashed by Martov's refusal to break with the opportunists.

However, in February 1915, Trotsky for the first time publicly broke with the Mensheviks. But he still refused to apply the logic of his position, and sought to occupy a point midway between the two camps. His developing position on the war needs to be understood in this context.

## NASHE SLOVO

The articles that make up the Peace Programme were published in the Paris-based Russian paper *Nashe Slovo* ("Our Word"), which began publication after *Golos* closed down under the harassment of the censor, in January 1915.

*Nashe Slovo* was published in editions of between 2 and 4 pages, and was heavily subject to the censors' pencil, with white spaces where an article was disapproved of. Amongst its contributors were many who, like Trotsky, were not yet Bolsheviks, but who in the years to come were to play major roles in the Russian Revolution as members of that party. There were Menshevik-Internationalists such as Antonov-Ovseenko and pro-Bolsheviks like Lunacharsky and Manuilsky. Other contributors included Riazanov, to be a leading historian of the Bolshevik Party, Sokolnikov, future Commissar of Finance, and Karl Radek, Angelica Balabanov and Christian Rakovsky who were all leading members of the Communist International in the early 1920s.

Despite this wealth of talent, *Nashe Slovo* could not adopt a consistent and principled attitude towards the programme being advanced by the Bolsheviks. Enormous strains developed within this group as Martov continued

to refuse to break with Menshevik opportunism, and as Bolshevism exerted ever-stronger pressure by virtue of the clarity and intransigence of its stance. Throughout 1915 - within international left circles and within the Russian emigres - Trotsky continued to attempt to act as broker between the two camps.

## ZIMMERWALD

This was made amply evident during the Zimmerwald conference. On September 5th 1915, 38 delegates met in the Swiss mountain village of Zimmerwald in an attempt to organise the international forces of anti-war socialism. On the right were the German delegates such as Haase who refused to countenance issuing a declaration that denounced the social chauvinists as traitors. They refused to even issue an unequivocal call for voting against war credits. The Bolsheviks constituted a left minority at the conference, and presented their anti-war policy in the form of a call for no restriction of the fight against the war "from considerations of the defeat of their own country", for turning "the imperialist war between the peoples into a civil war of the oppressed classes against their oppressors, a war for the expropriation of the class of capitalists, for the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the realisation of socialism".<sup>10</sup> They also argued for a remorseless struggle against social chauvinism and the "centre" that would not fight it.

At Zimmerwald, Trotsky demonstrated that he had still not broken with his centrist waverings between Bolshevism and opportunism. His draft manifesto - which was eventually accepted - attacked the social democratic leaders but did not call for a break with them. It denounced the war in strident tones but in the name of "socialism", advanced the "fight for peace - for a peace without annexations or war indemnities". Against Lenin's call for civil war and defeat as a "lesser evil", Trotsky remained an advocate of a peace "without victors or vanquished".<sup>11</sup>

## PEACE WITHOUT ANNEXATIONS

Trotsky's calls were far more evasive and ambiguous than those of the Bolsheviks at this time. "Peace without annexations" is, in essence, not a position that is clearly counterposed to those those social democrats who, like Kautsky, supported "national defence" and the war waged by their own bourgeoisie, as long as it was a defensive war with no annexations.

Much of the dispute between Trotsky and the Bolsheviks at this time centred on the question of "defeatism". We have already seen the early application by Lenin of the "defeat is a lesser evil"



Rosa Luxemburg

slogan. Throughout 1915-16, Trotsky stood firmly opposed to the slogan. Yet his arguments against it suggest that he did not really grasp the nature of Lenin's position.

## CONTRADICTIONS

In 1915, Trotsky argued against Lenin in the following manner in the pages of *Nashe Slovo*:

"To the same extent that defeat, all other things being equal, shatters a given state structure, so does the victory of the other side which is implied by this defeat strengthen the state organisation of that other side. And we do not know of any European social and state organism which it is in the interest of the European proletariat to strengthen, nor do we assign to Russia the role of the state chosen to have its interests subordinated to those of the development of other European peoples..."

But war is too contradictory, too double-edged a factor of historical development for a revolutionary party which feels firm class ground beneath its feet, and is sure of its future, to see in the road of defeat the road of political success. Defeat disorganises and demoralises the ruling reaction, but at the same time war disorganises the whole of social life, and above all, the working class...

Finally, a revolution which grows out of a defeat inherits an economy disordered to the utmost by war, exhausted state finances, and extremely strained international relations".<sup>12</sup>

Trotsky plainly fails to grasp that Lenin was not advocating Russia's defeat at the hands of the German army, but rather at the hands of the Russian proletariat. Further, to hold back working-class struggle for fear of the possible consequences of defeat, in the way that Trotsky outlines here, would be to necessarily encourage a "greater evil" - the consolidation of the power of the imperialists against the world working

class, and the respective national bourgeoisies against their national working classes. The question of "defeatism" remained a central point of difference between Lenin and Trotsky at this time, and Trotsky was not able to resolve this problem in the Peace Programme.

The basic analysis of the war put forward in the Peace Programme represents that developed in *War and the International*. Just as small and medium sized enterprises are systematically annihilated in capitalism's domestic markets, so too the independence of the small and medium size states was undermined by the workings of international capitalism:

"The fact remains that there can no longer be a return to independence for the small states. Whether Germany or England wins - in either case the question to be determined is *who will be the direct master over the small nations*".

The development of capitalism itself rendered the re-creation of the pre-war world (*status quo ante bellum*) impossible. In this way Trotsky continues to show a profound grasp of the international nature of the imperialist economy, and the internationalist programme needed to combat it.

## A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

For Trotsky it follows that the "peace without annexations" which he, and others, had advocated, could only be secured at the hands of the proletariat. Here, in the second section of the Peace Programme, he openly addresses the fact that only a proletarian offensive - a revolutionary force - can achieve that objective:

"In order to wrest annexations from the hands of the victorious party, which is armed to the teeth, the proletariat would naturally, regardless of its desires, be in need of a revolutionary force, which it will have to be ready to use openly".

This marks a definite step in the direction of Bolshevism's call for civil war and one which becomes clearer as the article proceeds.

Two burning tasks immediately confronted humanity in the midst of the war, according to Trotsky. On the one hand, the old nation states and tariff barriers had to be destroyed if the productive forces were to be freed from their fetters. On the other hand, there remained the task of safeguarding "to the national community its freedom of development (or dissolution) in the interests of material and spiritual culture." Imperialism is capable of achieving neither. Peace, the international organisation of production and the defence of the rights of national communities are only achievable as a result of proletarian revolution. **"It is possible to overcome this regime only by means of a proletarian revolution. Thus, the centre of gravity lies in the union of the peace programme of the proletariat with that of the social revolution".**

By this point, Trotsky was posing the struggle against imperialist war - its roots and its consequences - within the perspective of permanent revolution. He is explicitly combining the struggle against war and for key democratic slogans with the programme of social revolution in a manner which had not been apparent in *War and the International* or in the Zimmerwald draft.

Presuming that the international proletarian revolution must have as its object the international reorganisation of production so as to revolutionise the productive forces, it followed for Trotsky that the programme of social revolution must itself advance the necessary slogans to achieve that goal.

It is because of this desire that in the Peace Programme, pride of place is given to the slogan of The United States of Europe, as "the most integral part of the proletarian peace programme".

### KAUTSKY AND LEDEBOUR'S USE OF THE SLOGAN

The slogan first seems to have been raised within German social democracy in the face of the mounting war threat. Ledebour for example had argued: **"We put ...to capitalist society...the demand...that they (the statesmen) prepare to unite Europe in a United States of Europe in the interests of Europe's capitalist development, in order that later on Europe shall not be completely ruined in world competition"**<sup>13</sup>

Kautsky had also advanced the slogan, in 1911 in his own particular way: **"Nevertheless the effort to peacefully unite the European states in a federative community is by no means hopeless. Its prospects are bound up with those of the revolution"**.<sup>14</sup>

Kautsky, with his theory of "ultra-imperialism", was later to argue that this form of rationalisation of European cap-

ital was perfectly possible in the "post-imperialist" phase of capitalist development. He thus advocated it as a pacifist slogan for a non-imperialist capitalism.

As we have seen, at the outbreak of war, both Lenin and Trotsky raised the slogan, despite this murky pre-history. In "War and Russian Social Democracy" (October 1914), Lenin was to repeat the call: **"The formation of a republican United States of Europe should be the immediate slogan of Europe's Social Democrats"**.<sup>15</sup> Lenin wanted to raise the slogan as part of a democratic programme which would be false and meaningless "without the revolutionary overthrow of the German, the Austrian and the Russian monarchies".<sup>16</sup>

### UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

But Lenin soon dropped the slogan and polemicised against it at the time that Trotsky was placing increasing emphasis on it in his *Nashe Slovo* articles. Trotsky however stuck to his position. In December 1917, for example, in the first English language preface to The Peace Programme, Trotsky explained: **"Into the peace-programme we include also the 'United States of Europe'. This motto does not belong to the official programme of the government of workmens' and soldiers' councils, nor has it as yet received recognition from our party. Nevertheless we believe that the programme of democratic peace leads to a republican World Federation beyond a European one (and a considerable part of the pamphlet is devoted to the statement of this opinion). This question is practically put to the European proletariat by the further development of the revolution"**.<sup>17</sup>

Lenin's antagonism towards the slogan seems to have been prompted firstly by a fear of the economic consequences of the slogan, and also by a hostility to the political practice of those - including Trotsky - who placed such emphasis on the slogan. At heart, however, his dissatisfaction reflects the very real problems that Lenin himself was having in developing his own "stageist" view of watertight divisions between democratic demands and struggles and the proletarian socialist programme.

Until he had completed his work on imperialism, this view led Lenin to still see the coming Russian revolution as having an essentially national radical-democratic character. Only his realisation of the ripeness of the world imperialist system for overthrow at the hands of the world proletariat broke him finally from that conception, although in a manner that, at least initially, led him to misunderstand the potential dynamic of some key democratic demands in the programme of proletarian revolution.

In rejecting the slogan of The United States of Europe, Lenin made a number

of criticisms which, if they are aimed at Trotsky, do not stick. Lenin's quarrel is not with the politics of the slogan. In August 1915, Lenin wrote that it remained "quite invulnerable as a political slogan"<sup>18</sup> But Lenin presumed the demand was posed as a demand within capitalism, therefore while it was "invulnerable" as a democratic political demand, its weaknesses lay in its economic consequences. He feared that its only outcome could be to create a cartel of European imperialisms in order to more efficiently exploit the colonial and semi-colonial world, and protect themselves against other imperialisms:

**"Of course, temporary agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense, a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the European capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty against Japan and America"**.<sup>19</sup>

However, this argument does not offer us the basis for rejecting the slogan or Trotsky's argumentation. In the Peace Programme, Trotsky unambiguously posed the slogan as the slogan of international proletarian revolution, not as a democratic demand within capitalism, as Lenin thought. In his criticism of this slogan, Lenin showed that he had not yet fully grasped the fact that in the imperialist epoch, residual and unfulfilled democratic slogans take their place in the arsenal of the proletarian programme, possessing their own revolutionary dynamic, to the extent that they are fought for in a struggle led by a vanguard workers' party.

That is the sense in which Trotsky raised the slogan, that is the sense in which we can say that it represented an internationalist development, a deepening of the programmatic method of permanent revolution which was to bring Lenin and Trotsky together in 1917.

### STALINIST CRITIQUE

Lenin's last argument against the slogan has been grist to the mill of every Stalinist critique of Trotskyism to this day. Even conceding that the United States of Europe could be advanced as a programme of proletarian revolution Lenin remained alarmed that it could consequently be interpreted as a demand for a simultaneous proletarian revolution throughout Europe...or none at all. As Lenin put it **"it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others"**.<sup>20</sup>

Is this an argument for "socialism in one country", as the Stalinists would have us believe? Firstly, Lenin doubtless meant by "victory of socialism" a

successful proletarian seizure of power, and not the final consolidation of socialism as the Stalinists have always claimed. No other reading would be consistent with Lenin's politics. More importantly, there is no evidence from a reading of the Peace Programme that Trotsky used the slogan in that sense - witness Trotsky's own words: "It is profitable and necessary to reiterate the elementary thought that no single country in its struggle has to 'wait' for the others, lest the idea of parallel international action be supplanted by the idea of procrastinating international action".

Lenin does not give adequate grounds for dismissing Trotsky's use of the slogan "For a United States of Europe". In the way it is used here, it is a form "of the dictatorship of the European proletariat", not a part of a programme of rationalised ultra-imperialism.

## COMINTERN ADOPTS THE SLOGAN

It is in this manner which Trotsky successfully argued for the slogan to be adopted by the Communist International in June 1923: "The slogan of 'the united states of Europe' has its place on the same historical plane with the slogan 'A workers' and peasants' government'; it is a transitional slogan, indicating a way out, a prospect of salvation, and furnishing at the same time a revolutionary impulse for the toiling masses...

Is the realisation of a 'workers' government' possible without the dictatorship of the proletariat? Only a conditional reply can be given to this question. In any case, we regard the "workers' government" as a *stage* toward the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therein lies the great value of the slogan for us. But the slogan 'the united states of Europe' has an exactly similar and parallel significance. Without this supplementary slogan the fundamental problems of Europe must remain suspended in mid-air".<sup>21</sup>

In order to make the slogan more precise, the revolutionary aspect of the slogan was made explicit (in the manner put forward by Trotsky in his 1922 post-script) and the "Soviet United States of Europe" became part of the Comintern's programmatic armoury.

Trotsky himself was later to dramatically relegate the importance of the demand. After 1928 it was never raised by Trotsky in any of his major programmatic documents. He used the "Soviet United States" slogan again in a discussion on Greece in 1932<sup>22</sup>. In the only other recorded use of the slogan, in a discussion on Czechoslovakia in June 1938, he used the formulation "the United Socialist States of Europe".<sup>22</sup>

We have examined some of the strengths of Trotsky's position. However, the truth is that Trotsky's view that the

United States of Europe demand was the most important component of the programme and the key slogan of the hour was profoundly mistaken. While the slogan had excellent propaganda value in the midst of the imperialist war, it did not have the organising role, mobilising power or tactical leverage that Trotsky seemed to invest it with.

In all these spheres it was Lenin's slogans and tactics - and the party he built to fight for them - that proved indisputably more effective in developing organised proletarian struggle against the imperialist war.

On the question of defeatism, Trotsky was definitely wrong. Much has been made by socialist writers of this division between the two men, generally in an attempt to suggest that there was merely a difference "of propagandist emphasis".<sup>24</sup> However, Trotsky's later consistent use of Lenin's formulation makes it clear that he felt that there was a significant difference between the two positions. In his major theses on the coming war, "War and the Fourth International" (June 1934), Trotsky explicitly embraces Lenin's formulation, and in his famous "Transitional Programme" (April 1938), he quotes it verbatim: "the defeat of your own (imperialist) government is the lesser evil".<sup>25</sup>

There are other important differences between Lenin and Trotsky in this period, expressed in the Peace Programme, which deserve our attention, for they point to the rapid curve of development which Trotsky's thought was undergoing during these years.

Trotsky's desire to act as a "middle man" between Bolshevism and Menshevism stemmed from his failure to understand the kind of party the working class needs, and the kind of programme that party needs to be armed with.

## PROGRAMME AND TACTICS

Lenin and the Bolsheviks put forward a programme and a *series of tactics* that enabled them both to construct a disciplined vanguard party in Tsarist Russia, and to intervene consistently in the struggles of the working class.

With that programme, tactics and experience, they waged an international struggle that laid the basis for the creation of the Communist International.

The approach was alien (although increasingly less so) to Trotsky during the war years. Not only did he reject much of the Bolsheviks' body of programmatic gains, he also barely applied himself to advancing key tactics that would enable a party to intervene in the class. Such tactics are notably absent from both *War and the International* and the Peace Programme.

Instead, Trotsky concentrates on the broad sweep of historical development, and addresses his programme to enunciating those tendencies, not to their

intimate interaction with the struggles of the workers and poor peasants.

Part of the reason for this lay in his understanding of the epoch and of the role of "history". As was pointed out earlier, Trotsky's understanding of the epoch contained great strengths. It enabled him, unlike Lenin's initial response, to see the coming period in Russia as one of socialist revolution, not a radical democratic stage. Lenin's views coalesced with Trotsky's in the rapids of revolution in 1917, when both appreciated the ability of the Russian workers and peasants to seize power, and the necessity of a party to lead them in that task.

## LACK OF PRECISION

However, his view of the epoch was also seriously flawed in a manner which led him to his errors over the split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and his attitude towards tactical questions at this time.

The pre-1917 Trotsky tended to see the permanent revolution as an objective process, driven onward by the motor of history separate from, and regardless of, the intervention of organised forces to shape and mould that process.

Hence his advancement of an analysis of the causes of the war as being primarily "a revolt of the forces of production against the political form of nation and state. It means the collapse of the national state as an independent economic unit".<sup>26</sup>

This view of a bursting asunder of national boundaries in the face of the needs of the productive forces is focused at a different level of analysis from that of Lenin's more precise and scientific explanation of the imperialist role of the major powers in exploiting and carving up the world.

Both are correct to imply that imperialism was not "a policy", but a new and decisive internal development of capitalism - its "highest stage" as Lenin had it. But Lenin's approach led to a whole series of programmatic positions which Trotsky's more abstract approach could only hint at. For example, in the early sections of the Peace Programme, Trotsky deals with Belgium - a minor imperialist power - in the same manner as Serbia, Persia, Rumania, Greece and other *imperialised* countries. Belgian imperialism was an early loser in the inter-imperialist clash of 1914-18. The imperialised countries were always the victims of imperialist domination, and as such a different set of tactics needed to be advanced towards them.

A similar lack of precision is shown in the section on the right of nations to self-determination. Because of his understanding of the epoch, he correctly understood that the national question and the permanent revolution were intimately inter-related, but he failed to

emphasise that the national question could be the beginning, the dynamic lead into the revolution, as had Lenin. Instead, the national question is completely bound up with the political union of Europe - the socialist revolution. No independent role for the national question is envisaged. It is one thing to recognise that a revolution will be necessary to achieve national liberation. It is quite another to always bind the two together.

At the root of these problems with Trotsky's approach at this time lies a certain "objectivism", a reliance upon the "laws" of permanent revolution and "history". For this reason, before 1917, he tended to eschew ideological struggle with opportunism and the fight for defeatism in the ranks of the working class, and instead based his programme on ineluctable laws that would spontaneously propel the working class towards the international revolution.

This reliance upon a "process" is a one-sided, under-developed element in Trotsky's evolving politics at this time which has tragically come to represent "Trotskyism" for thousands of militants all over the world. The "objectivism" of pre-1917 Trotsky has come to be characteristic of post-war "Trotskyism".

The search for the epicentre of "the world revolution" has led these epigones to trail their coats behind every radical movement that has developed - from students, through petit-bourgeois nationalism to Stalinism. Their approach is a caricature of Trotsky's early method. They see the overall development of the "revolutionary process" and cheer from the sidelines whatever struggle is

going on, dissolving themselves into the movement wherever possible.

At his worst, Trotsky was far superior to these characters: he was moving towards communist politics; they are moving away.<sup>27</sup>

## A HIGHER SYNTHESIS

The arguments between Lenin and Trotsky, and the development of their respective positions, were of profound importance in the construction of the party and programme that were to lead the Russian proletariat to power in 1917. Lenin was breaking with the radical stageist programme that informed Bolshevism before 1914. Trotsky was applying on the international terrain the programmatic method that he had developed out of the 1905 experience. The enormous strengths and continuing weaknesses of the traditions they represented are still in evidence in the period examined here. It was only in 1917 itself that Bolshevism was able to transcend the two traditions, creating a higher synthesis that broke Trotsky from "objectivism" and centrism, and won Lenin in practice to the programme of permanent revolution.

The Peace Programme is not a perfect, finished document. It is one frame from the film of Trotsky's political development at a key point in the struggle waged by Trotsky, Lenin and many other revolutionaries for a new communist programme and a new communist international. It is in that context that the article should be read and studied today.

The Peace Programme has had a chequered history, rarely being published in the same form over the past seventy years. Trotsky wrote the articles for *Nashe Slovo* in 1915-16, and then edited them into a pamphlet. In May 1917, Trotsky revised the articles, and wrote a new Introduction. This was published as a Bolshevik pamphlet in June of that year. In 1918 an English translation of the pamphlet was published in Petrograd.

The first English translation abroad was an abridged version edited by the veteran US socialist Louis C Fraina, which appeared in 1919 in the collection *The Proletarian Revolution in Russia, by Lenin and Trotsky*.

In 1942, the American SWP published a revised translation of Fraina's edition, taking the final Soviet edition of Trotsky's writings as their reference point. (It was for this edition of his collected works that the 1922 post-script was written).

In September 1944, the SWP published a new translation, taken direct from Trotsky's collected works, and including the sections which Fraina had omitted.

Having consulted the Russian version in the Collected Works, and the 1918 Petrograd translation, we decided that John G Wright's 1942 translation was in many respects better than that of 1944, especially in the early sections. We have therefore reproduced the 1942 translation directly from the SWP's *Fourth International* of May 1942 (hence the American spellings). To enable the reader to judge the differences between the 1942 and 1944 versions, we have included all the substantive differences between the two, in the form of footnotes, together with explanatory notes for today's reader. Abridged passages in the footnotes are denoted by square brackets.

We have been unable to check any of the post-1917 versions with the original articles from *Nashe Slovo*; it is not known how much Trotsky edited the articles prior to their publication as a pamphlet. The version we present here, however, is the best and most complete translation currently available.

## Footnotes

1. Lenin *Collected Works* Vol. 21 p.18
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.* p. 163
4. *ibid.* p. 40
5. Trotsky *War and the International* Colombo 1971 p. vii. This 1915 pamphlet has only been reprinted once in English since 1918. The 1971 Sri Lankan edition can still be found in some bookshops.
6. *ibid.* p. 74
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*
9. I. Deutscher *The Prophet Armed* Oxford 1970 p. 217
10. Lenin *Collected Works* Vol. 21 pp. 347-8
11. Trotsky *op. cit.* pp. 86-89
12. *Labour Review* (London) September 1980 p. 246
13. Quoted in Lenin *Collected Works* Vol. 39 p. 383
14. Original emphasis. *ibid.* p.385
15. Lenin *Collected Works* Vol. 21 p. 33
16. *ibid.*
17. Trotsky *What is a peace programme?* Petrograd 1918
18. Lenin *op. cit.* p. 340
19. *ibid.* p. 341
20. *ibid.* p. 342
21. Trotsky *The First Five Years of the Communist International* Vol. 2 p. 345 London 1953
22. Trotsky *Writings Supplement 1929-33* New York 1979 p. 130.
23. Trotsky *Writings 1937-8* New York 1976 p.357  
Trotsky never made clear his reason for this change of phrase, but it may reflect his coming to grips with the corruption of much of the experience and slogans of the Russian revolution under Stalin's rule. For millions of workers, the term "soviet" increasingly did not imply the mass activity of the working class organised into workers' councils, but the jackboots of Stalin's secret police crushing workers' democracy and instituting savage purges. As the chief revolutionary opponent to Stalin's regime of terror, Trotsky may have sought to reappropriate the legacy of the Russian revolution in its prime, whilst not identifying with its symbolic title of "soviet" when it had degenerated into political counter-revolution. This could therefore have led to him formulating the slogan as "the united socialist states".
24. Deutscher, *op. cit.* p. 236. See also, for example, *Workers Action* (London) No. 108 June 24th 1978 p. 6
25. Trotsky *The Transitional Programme for Socialist Revolution* New York 1977 p. 131
26. Trotsky *War and the International* p. vii
27. For a more detailed critique of the degeneration of the Fourth International, see our book, published jointly with the Irish Workers Group, *The Death Agony of the Fourth International* London and Dublin 1983

# THE PROGRAMME OF PEACE

by Leon Trotsky

## What Is a Peace Program?

What is a peace program? From the viewpoint of the ruling classes or of the parties subservient to them, it is the totality of the demands, the ultimate realization of which must be ensured by the power of militarism. Hence, for the realization of Miliukov's<sup>1</sup> "peace program" Constantinople must be conquered by force of arms. Vandervelde's "peace program" requires the expulsion of the Germans from Belgium as an antecedent condition.<sup>2</sup> Bethmann-Holweg's plans were founded on the geographical warmap.<sup>3</sup> From this standpoint the peace clauses reflect but the advantages achieved by force of arms. In other words, the *peace* program is the war program.

Such is the case prior to the intervention of the *third power*, the Socialist International. For the revolutionary proletariat, the peace program does not mean the demands which national militarism must fulfill, but those demands which the international proletariat intends to enforce by dint of its revolutionary fight against militarism in all countries. The more the international revolutionary movement expands, the less will the peace questions depend on the purely military position of the antagonists.<sup>4</sup>

This is rendered most clear to us by the question of the fate of small nations and weak states.

The war began with a devastating invasion of Belgium and Luxemburg by the German armies. In the echo created by the violation of the small country, beside the false and egotistic anger of the ruling classes of the enemy, there reverberated also the genuine indignation of the common masses whose sympathy was attracted by the fate of a small people, crushed only because they happened to lie between two warring giants.

At that first stage of the war the fate of Belgium attracted attention and sympathy, owing to its extraordinarily tragic nature. But thirty-four months of warfare have proved that the Belgian episode constituted only the first step towards the solution of the fundamental problem of the imperialist war, namely, *the suppression of the weak by the strong*.

Capitalism in its international relations pursues the same methods applied by it in "regulating" the internal economic life of the nations. Competition is the means of systematically annihilating the small and medium-sized enterprises and of achieving the supremacy of Big Capital. World competition of the capitalist forces means the systematic subjection of the small, medium-sized and backward nations by the great and the greatest capitalist powers. The more developed the technique of capitalism, the greater the role played by finance capital, and the higher the demands of militarism, all the more grows the dependency of the small states on the Great Powers. This process, forming as it does an integral element of imperialist mechanics, flourishes undisturbed also in times of peace by means of state loans, railway and other concessions, military-diplomatic agreements, etc. The war uncovered and accelerated this process by introducing the factor of open violence. The war destroys the last shreds of the "independence" of small states, quite apart from the military outcome of the conflict between the two basic enemy camps.

Belgium still groans under the yoke of German militarism. This, however, is but the visible and dramatic expression of the collapse of her independence. The "deliverance" of

Belgium does not at all constitute the fundamental aim of the Allied governments. Both in the further progress of the war and after its conclusion, Belgium will become but a pawn in the great game of the capitalist giants. Failing the intervention of the third power, *Revolution*, Belgium may as a result of the war either remain in German bondage, or fall under the yoke of Great Britain, or be divided between the powerful robbers of the two coalitions.

The same applies to *Serbia*, whose national energy served as a weight in the imperialist world scales whose fluctuations to one side or the other are least of all influenced by the independent interests of the Serbian people.

The Central Powers drew Turkey and Bulgaria into the whirlpool of the war. Whether both these countries will remain as the southeastern organ of the Austro-German imperialist bloc ("Central Europe") or will serve as small change when the balance sheet is drawn up, the fact remains that the war is writing a final chapter of the history of their independence.

Before the Russian revolution, the independence of *Persia* was most obviously liquidated as a direct result of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907.

*Rumania*<sup>5</sup> and *Greece*<sup>6</sup> furnish us with a sufficiently clear example of how limited a "freedom of choice" is given to small-state firms by the struggle of the imperialist trust companies. Rumania preferred the gesture of an apparently free choice, when she sacrificed her neutrality. Greece tried by means of passive opposition to "remain at home." Just as if to show most tangibly the futility of the whole "neutralist" struggle for self-preservation, the whole European war, represented by the armies of Bulgaria, Turkey, France, England, Russia and Italy, shifted on to Greek territory. Freedom of choice is at best reflected in the form of self-suppression. In the end, both Rumania and Greece will share the same fate: they will be the stakes in the hands of the great gamblers.

At the other end of Europe, little *Portugal* deemed it necessary to enter the war on the side of the Allies. Such a decision might remain inexplicable if, in the question of participation in the dog fight, Portugal, which is under English protection, had had greater freedom than the government of Tver or Ireland.

The capitalist captains of *Holland* and of the three *Scandinavian* countries are accumulating mountains of gold, thanks to the war. However, these four neutral states of northwestern Europe are the more aware of the illusory character of their "sovereignty," which, even if it survives the war,

1. Miliukov: Foreign Minister in the Russian Provisional Government who declared his commitment to the war aims of the Romanov dynasty including the seizure of Constantinople.

2. Vandervelde: Belgian President of the Second International. After the outbreak of war he refused to convene a meeting of the Executive "as long as German soldiers are billeted in the homes of Belgian workers."

3. Bethmann-Holweg: German Chancellor from 1909 to 1913.

4. [the less becomes the danger that peace conditions may be understood by the masses as war aims.]

5. Rumania proclaimed its neutrality in August 1914, yet concluded a treaty with the Entente powers (Russia, France and Britain) in 1916.

6. Greece joined up with the Entente powers in June, 1917.

will nevertheless be subject to the settlement of the bills advanced by the peace conditions of the Great Powers.

"Independent" Poland will be able, in the midst of imperialist Europe, to keep a semblance of independence only by submitting to a slavish financial and military dependence on one of the great groups of the ruling powers.<sup>7</sup>

The extent of the independence of Switzerland clearly appeared in the compulsory and restrictive measures adopted regulating her imports and exports. The representatives of this small federative republic who, cap in hand, go begging at the entrances of the two warring camps, can well understand the limited measure of independence and neutrality possible for a nation which cannot command some millions of bayonets.

If the war becomes an indeterminate equation in consequence of the ever increasing number of combatants and of fronts, thus rendering it impossible for the different governments to formulate the so-called "war aims," then the small states still have the doubtful advantage that their historical fate may be reckoned as predetermined. No matter which side proves victorious, and however far-reaching the influence of such a victory may be, the fact remains that there can no longer be a return to independence for the small states. Whether Germany or England wins—in either case the question to be determined is *who* will be the direct master over the small nations. Only charlatans or hopeless simpletons can believe that the freedom of the small nations can be secured by the victory of one side or the other.

A like result would follow the third solution of the war, viz., its ending in a draw. The absence of pronounced preponderance of one of the combatants over the other will only set off all the more clearly both the dominance of the strong over the weak within either one of the camps, and the preponderance of both over the "neutral" victims of imperialism. The issue of the war without conquerors or conquered is no guarantee for anybody: all small and weak states will none the less be *conquered*, and the same applies to those who bled to death on the battlefield as to those who tried to escape that fate by hiding in the shadows of neutrality.

The independence of the Belgians, Serbians, Poles, Armenians and others is regarded by us not as part of the Allied war program (as treated by Guesde, Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Henderson and others),<sup>8</sup> but belongs to the program of the fight of the international proletariat against imperialism.

But the question is: Can the proletariat under the present circumstances advance an independent "peace program," i.e., solutions of the problems which caused the war of today or which have in the course of this war been brought to light? It has been intimated that the proletariat does not now command sufficient forces to bring about the realization of such a program. Utopian is the hope that the proletariat could carry out its own peace program as to the issue of the present war. What alternative is there save the struggle for the cessation of the war and for a peace without annexations, i.e., a return to the *status quo ante bellum*, to the state of affairs prior to the war? This, we are told, is by far the more realistic program.<sup>9</sup> In what sense, however, may the term realistic be applied to the fight for the close of the war by means of a peace without annexation?<sup>10</sup> Under what circumstances, we ask, can the end of the war be brought about? Theoretically, three typical possibilities may here be considered: (1) a decisive victory of one of the parties; (2) a general exhaustion of the opponents without decisive sway of one over the other; (3) the intervention of the revolutionary proletariat, which interrupts the "normal" development of military events.

## Status Quo Ante Bellum

It is quite obvious that in the first case, if the war is

ended by a decisive victory of one side, it would be naive to dream of a peace without annexations. If the Scheidemanns and Landsbergs,<sup>11</sup> the staunch supporters of the work of their militarism, insist in parliament upon an "annexationless" peace, it is only with the firmest conviction that such protests can hinder no "useful" annexation. On the other hand, one of our former Czarist commanders-in-chief, General Alexeiev, who dubbed the annexationless peace as "a utopian phrase," thought quite correctly that the offensive is the chief thing, and that in case of successful war operations everything else would come of itself. In order to wrest annexations from the hands of the victorious party, which is armed to the teeth, the proletariat would naturally, regardless of its desires, be in need of a revolutionary force, which it will have to be ready to use openly. In any case, it possesses no other more "economical" means to compel the victorious party to renounce the advantage of the victory gained.

The second possible issue of the war, on which those who seek to promote the narrow program "annexationless peace and nothing more" principally depend, presupposes that the war, exhausting as it does all the resources of the warring nations will, without the revolutionary intervention of the third power, end in general exhaustion without conquerors or conquered. To this very situation, where militarism is too weak for effecting conquests, and the proletariat for making a revolution, the passive internationalists [of the Kautsky type] adopted their lame program of "annexationless peace," which they frequently denote as a return to the *status quo ante bellum*, i.e., the order of things prior to the war. Here, however, this pseudo-realism lays bare its Achilles heel, for actually an undecided issue of the war, as already shown, does not at all exclude annexations, but on the contrary *presupposes them*. That neither of the two powerful groups wins, does not mean that Serbia, Greece, Belgium, Poland, Persia, Syria, Armenia and others would be left intact. On the contrary, it is precisely at the expense of these third and weakest parties that annexations will in this case be carried out. In order to prevent these reciprocal "compensations" the international proletariat must needs set afoot a direct revolutionary uprising against the ruling classes. Newspaper articles, convention resolutions, parliamentary protests and even public demonstrations have never prevented the rulers from acquiring territories or from oppressing the weak peoples either by way of victory or by means of diplomatic agreements.

As regards the third possible issue of the war, it seems to be the clearest. It presupposes that while the war is still on, the international proletariat rises with a force sufficient to paralyze and finally to stop the war from below. Obviously, in this most favorable case, the proletariat, having been powerful enough to stop the war, would not be likely to limit

7. An "Autonomous Congress Poland" was established in 1916 which depended on the backing of the Central powers.

8. All pro-Entente Socialist International leaders.

9. [Such were, for example, the arguments of Martov, Martynov and the Menshevik-Internationalists generally, who hold on this question as on all others not a revolutionary but a conservative position (not a social revolution, but a restoration of the class struggle; not the Third International but the reestablishment of the Second International; not the revolutionary peace program, but a return to *status quo ante bellum*; not the conquest of power by the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, but proffering the power to bourgeois parties . . . ]

10. [That the war must end sooner or later is incontestable. In this anticipatory sense the slogan of ending the war is unquestionably very "realistic," for it banks on a certainty. But what is it in the revolutionary sense? It may be objected: isn't it utopian to hope that the European proletariat, with its present forces, will succeed in halting military operations *against* the will of the ruling classes? ]

11. German social-chauvinist leaders.

itself to that purely conservative program which goes no further than the renunciation of annexations.

A powerful movement of the proletariat is thus in each case a necessary prerequisite of the actual realization of an annexationless peace. But again, if we assume such a movement, the foregoing program remains quite inadequate in that it acquiesces in the restoration of the order which prevailed prior to the war and which gave birth to the war. The European *status quo ante bellum*, a resultant of wars, robbery, violation, red tape, diplomatic stupidity and weakness of peoples, remains as the only positive content of the slogan "without annexations."

In its fight against imperialism, the proletariat cannot set up as its political aim the return to the old European map; it must set up *its own program of state and national relations*, harmonizing with the fundamental tendency of economic development, with the revolutionary character of the epoch and with the socialist interests of the proletariat.

By itself the slogan "without annexations" gives no criterion for a political orientation in the several problems brought forth during the course of the war. Assuming that France later on occupies Alsace-Lorraine, is the German Social Democracy together with Scheidemann bound to demand the return of these provinces to Germany? Shall we demand the restitution of the kingdom of Poland to Russia? Shall we insist upon Japan's giving Chio-Chau back to Germany? Or that Italy yield back to its owners that part of Trentino now occupied by her? That would be nonsense. We should be fanatic of legitimacy, i.e., defenders of dynastic and "historic" rights in the spirit of the most reactionary diplomacy. Besides, this "program" also demands a revolution for its fulfillment. In all these enumerated and in other similar cases we, confronted with the concrete reality, shall naturally advance only one principle, viz., *consultation of the peoples interested*. This is certainly no absolute criterion. The French "Socialists" of the majority reduce the consultation of the population of Alsace-Lorraine to a shameful comedy: first occupying (that is, acquisition by force of arms) and then asking the population's consent to be annexed. It is quite clear that a real consultation presupposes a state of revolution whereby the population can give their reply without being threatened by a revolver, be it German or French.

The only acceptable content of the slogan "without annexations" is a protest against new *violent acquisitions*, which only amounts to the negation of *the rights of nations to self-determination*. But we have seen that this democratically unquestionable "right" is being and will necessarily be transformed into the right of strong nations to make acquisitions and impose oppression, whereas for the weak nations it will mean an impotent wish or a "scrap of paper." Such will be the case as long as the political map of Europe forces nations and their fractions within the framework of states separated by tariff barriers and continually impinging upon one another in their imperialist fights.

It is possible to overcome this regime only by means of a proletarian revolution. *Thus, the center of gravity lies in the union of the peace program of the proletariat with that of the social revolution.*

## The Right of Self-Determination

We saw above that socialism, in the solution of concrete questions in the field of national state groups, can make no step without the principle of national self-determination, which latter in its last instance appears as the recognition of the right of every national group to decide its national fate, hence as the right of peoples to sever themselves from a given state (as for instance from Russia or Austria). The only democratic way of getting to know the "will" of a nation is



Trotsky's French passport photograph, 1915

the referendum. This democratic obligatory reply will, however, in the manner described, remain purely formal. It does not enlighten us with regard to the real possibilities, ways and means of national self-determination under the present conditions of capitalist economy; and yet the crux of the matter lies in this.

For many, if not for the majority of the oppressed nations, national groups and factions, the meaning of self-determination is the cancellation of the existing borders and the dismemberment of present states. In particular, this democratic principle leads to the deliverance of the colonies. Yet the whole policy of imperialism aims at the *extension* of state borders regardless of the national principle, of the compulsory incorporation of weak states within the customs border, and the acquisition of new colonies. Imperialism is by its very nature both expansive and aggressive and it is this qualification that characterizes imperialism, and not the changeable maneuvers of diplomacy.

From which flows the perennial conflict between the principle of national self-determination, which in many cases leads to state and economic decentralization, and the powerful efforts at centralization on the part of imperialism which has at its disposal the state organization and the military power. True, the national-separatist movement very often finds support in the imperialist intrigue of *the neighboring state*. This support, however, becomes decisive only in the application of war might. As soon as there is an armed conflict between two imperialist organizations, the *new* state boundaries will not be decided on the ground of the national principle, but on the basis of the relative military forces. To compel a victorious state to refrain from annexing newly conquered

lands is as difficult as to force it to grant the freedom of self-determination to previously acquired provinces. Lastly, even if by a miracle Europe were divided by force of arms into fixed national states and small states, the national question would not thereby be in the least decided and, the very next day after the righteous national redistributions, capitalist expansion would resume its work. Conflicts would arise, wars and new acquisitions, in complete violation of the national principle in all cases where its preservation cannot be maintained by a sufficient number of bayonets. It would all give the impression of gamblers being forced to divide the gold justly among themselves in the middle of the game, in order to start the same game all over again with double rage.

From the might of the centralist tendency of imperialism, it does not at all follow that we are obliged passively to submit to it. National unity is a living hearth of culture, as the national language is its living organ, and these will still retain their meaning through indefinitely long historical periods. Socialism will and must safeguard to the national unity its freedom of development (or dissolution) in the interest of material and spiritual culture. It is in this sense that it took over from the revolutionary bourgeoisie the democratic principle of national self-determination as a political obligation.

The right of national self-determination cannot be excluded from the proletarian peace program; neither can it claim absolute importance. On the contrary, it is, in our view, limited by deep, progressive, criss-crossing tendencies of historical development. If this "right" is by means of revolutionary power, set over against the imperialist methods of centralization which place weak and backward peoples under the yoke and crush national culture, then on the other hand the proletariat cannot allow the "national principle" to get in the way of the inevitable and deeply progressive tendencies of the present industrial order towards a planned organization throughout our continent, and further, all over the globe.

Imperialism is the capitalist-thievish expression of this tendency of modern economy to tear itself completely away from the stupidity of national narrowness, as it did previously with regard to local and provincial confinement. While fighting against the imperialist form of economic centralization, socialism does not at all take a stand against the particular tendency as such but, on the contrary, makes the tendency its guiding principle.

From the standpoint of historical development as well as from the point of view of the problems of socialism, the centralist tendency of modern economy is *fundamental*, and it must be guaranteed the amplest possibility of executing its real historical deliverance mission, to construct the *united world economy*, independent of national frames, state and tariff barriers, subject only to the peculiarities of the soil and its interior, to climate and the requirements of division of labor. Poles, Alsations, Dalmatians, Belgians, Serbians and other small weak European nations may be reinstated or set up in the national borders towards which they strive, only in the case that they, remaining in these boundaries and able to freely develop their cultural existence as national groups, will cease to be economic groupings; will not be bound by state borders, will not be separated from or opposed to one another economically. In other words, in order that Poland, Serbia, Rumania and others be able actually to form national units, it is necessary that the state boundaries now splitting them up into parts be cancelled, that the frames of the *state be enlarged as an economic but not as a national organization*, until it envelops the whole of capitalist Europe, which is now divided by tariffs and borders and torn by war. *The state unification of Europe* is clearly a prerequisite of self-determination of great and small nations of Europe. A national

culture existence, free of national economic antagonism and based on real self-determination, is possible only under the roof of a democratically united Europe freed from state and tariff barriers.

This direct and immediate dependence of national self-determination of weak peoples upon the collective European regime excludes the possibility of the proletariat's placing questions like the independence of Poland or the uniting of all Serbs *outside the European revolution*. On the other hand, this signifies that the right of self-determination, as a part of the proletarian peace program, possesses not a "utopian" but rather a revolutionary character.<sup>12</sup>

## The United States of Europe

We tried to prove in the foregoing that the economic and political union of Europe is the necessary prerequisite for the very possibility of national self-determination. As the slogan of *national independence* of Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks and others remains an empty abstraction without the supplementary slogan "Federative Balkan Republic," which plays such an important role in the whole policy of the Balkan Social Democracy; so on the grand European scale the principle of the "right" to self-determination can be effectively realized only under the conditions of a European Federative Republic.

But if on the Balkan peninsula the slogan of a democratic federation has become purely proletarian, then this applies all the more to Europe with her incomparably deeper capitalist antagonisms.

To bourgeois politics the destruction of inner European customs houses appears to be an insurmountable difficulty; but without this the inter-state courts of arbitration and international law codes will have no firmer duration than, for instance, Belgian neutrality. The urge toward unifying the European market which, like the effort towards the acquisition of non-European backward lands, is caused by the development of capitalism, conflicts with the powerful opposition of the landed and capitalist gentry, in whose hands the tariff apparatus joined with that of militarism constitutes an indispensable weapon for exploitation and enrichment.

The Hungarian financial and industrial bourgeoisie is hostile to economic unification with capitalistically more developed Austria. The Austro-Hungarian bourgeoisie is hostile to the idea of a tariff union with more powerful Germany. On the other hand, the German landowners will never willingly consent to the cancellation of grain duties. Furthermore, the economic interests of the propertied classes of the Central Empires cannot be so easily made to coincide with the interests of the English, French, Russian capitalists and landed gentry. The present war speaks eloquently enough on this score. Lastly, the disharmony and irreconcilability of capitalist interests between the Allies themselves is still more visible

12. [This consideration is directed to two addresses: against the German Davids and Landsbergs who from the heights of their imperialist "realism" traduce the principle of national independence as reactionary romanticism; and against the simplifiers in our revolutionary camp who proclaim this principle to be realizable only under socialism and who thereby rid themselves of the necessity of giving a principled answer to the national questions which have been posed point-blank by the war.]

Between our present social condition and socialism there still lies an extended epoch of *social revolution*, that is, the epoch of the open proletarian struggle for power, the conquest and application of this power, with the aim of the complete democratization of social relations and the systematic transformation of capitalist society into the socialist society. This is the epoch not of pacification and tranquility but, on the contrary, of the highest intensification of the class struggle, the epoch of popular uprisings, wars, expanding experiments of proletarian regime, and socialist reforms. This epoch demands of the proletariat that it give a practical, that is, an immediately applicable answer to the question of the further existence of nationalities and their reciprocal relations with the state and the economy.]

than in the Central States. Under these circumstances, a half-way complete and consistent economic union of Europe *coming from the top* by means of an agreement of the capitalist governments is sheer utopia. Here the matter can go no further than partial compromises and half-measures. Hence it is that *the economic union of Europe*, which offers colossal advantages to producer and consumer alike, and in general to the whole cultural development, becomes the revolutionary task of the European proletariat in its fight against imperialist protectionism and its instrument—militarism.

*The United States of Europe—without monarchies, standing armies and secret diplomacy*—is therefore the most important integral part of the proletarian peace program.

The ideologists and politicians of German imperialism frequently came forward, especially at the beginning of the war, with *their program* of a European or at least a Central European United States (without France, England and Russia). The program of a violent unification of Europe is just as characteristic of the tendencies of German imperialism as is the tendency of French imperialism whose program is the forcible dismemberment of Germany.

If the German armies achieved the decisive victory reckoned upon in Germany at the outset of the war, then German imperialism would doubtless make the gigantic attempt of a compulsory war tariff union of European states, which would be constructed completely of preferences, compromises, etc., which would reduce to a minimum the progressive meaning of the unification of the European market. Needless to say, under such circumstances no talk would be possible of an autonomy of the nations, thus forcibly joined together as the caricature of the European United States.<sup>13</sup> Let us for a moment admit that German militarism succeeds in actually carrying out the compulsory half-union of Europe, just as Prussian militarism once achieved the half-union of Germany, what would then be the central slogan of the European proletariat? Would it be the dissolution of the forced European coalition and the return of all peoples under the roof of isolated national states? Or the restoration of tariffs, "national" coinage, "national" social legislation, and so forth? Certainly not. The program of the European revolutionary movement would then be: The destruction of the compulsory anti-democratic form of the coalition, with the preservation and furtherance of its foundations, in the form of complete annihilation of tariff barriers, the unification of legislation, above all of labor laws, etc. In other words, the slogan of the United States of Europe—*without monarchy and standing armies*—would under the foregoing circumstances become the unifying and guiding slogan of the European revolution.

Let us assume the second possibility, namely, an "undecided" issue of the war. At the very beginning of the war, the well-known professor Liszt, an advocate of "United Europe," proved that should the Germans fail to conquer their opponents, the European Union would nevertheless be accomplished, and in Liszt's opinion it would be even more complete than in the case of a German victory. By the ever growing want for expansion, the European states, hostile against one another but unable to cope with one another, would continue to hinder one another in the execution of their "mission" in the Near East, Africa and Asia, and they would everywhere be forced back by the United States of North America and by Japan. In the case of an "undecided" issue of the war, Liszt thinks the indispensability of an economic and military understanding of the European Great Powers would come to the fore against weak and backward peoples, but above all, of course, against their own working masses. We pointed out above the colossal hindrances that lie in the way of realizing this program. The even partial overcoming of these hindrances would mean the establishment of an imperialist Trust

of European States, a predatory share-holding association.<sup>14</sup> The proletariat will in this case have to fight not for the return to "autonomous" national states, but for the conversion of the imperialist state trust into a Republican European Federation.

However, the further the war progresses and reveals the absolute incapacity of militarism to cope with the question brought forward by the war, the less is spoken about these great plans for the uniting of Europe *at the top*. The question of the imperialist "United States of Europe" has given way to the plans, on the one side, of an economic union of Austria-Germany and on the other side of the quadruple alliance with its war tariffs and duties supplemented with militarism directed against one another. After the foregoing it is needless to enlarge on the great importance which, in the execution of these plans, the policy of the proletariat of both state trusts will assume in fighting against the established tariff and military-diplomatic fortifications and for the economic union of Europe.

Now after the so very promising beginning of the Russian revolution, we have every reason to hope that during the course of this present war a powerful revolutionary movement will be launched all over Europe. It is clear that such a movement can succeed and develop and gain victory only as a *general European one*. Isolated within national borders, it would be doomed to disaster. Our social-patriots point to the danger which threatens the Russian revolution from the side of German militarism. This danger is indubitable, but it is not the only one. English, French, Italian militarism is no less a dreadful enemy of the Russian revolution than the war machine of the Hohenzollerns. The salvation of the Russian revolution lies in its propagation all over Europe. Should the revolutionary movement unroll itself in Germany, the German proletariat would look for and find a revolutionary echo in the "hostile" lands of the west, and if in one of the European countries the proletariat should snatch the power out of the hands of the bourgeoisie, it would be bound, be it only to retain the power, to place it at once at the service of the revolutionary movement in other lands. In other words, the founding of a stable regime of proletarian dictatorship would only be conceivable throughout Europe in the form of a European Republican Federation. The unification of the states of Europe, to be achieved neither by force of arms nor by industrial and diplomatic agreements, would then be the next unpostponable task of the triumphant revolutionary proletariat.

*The United States of Europe* is the slogan of the revolutionary epoch into which we have entered. Whatever turn the war operations may take later on, whatever balance-sheet diplomacy may draw out of the present war, and at whatever tempo the revolutionary movement will progress in the near future, the slogan of the United States of Europe will in all cases retain a colossal meaning as the political formula of the

13. [Certain opponents of the program of the United States of Europe have used precisely this perspective as an argument that this idea can, under certain conditions, acquire a "reactionary" monarchist-imperialist content. Yet it is precisely this perspective that provides the most graphic testimony in favor of the revolutionary viability of the slogan of the United States of Europe. | This is an elliptical reference to Lenin's criticisms of the slogan.]

14. [And this perspective is on occasion adduced unjustifiably as proof of the "danger" of the slogan of the United States of Europe, whereas in reality this is the most graphic proof of its realistic and revolutionary significance. If the capitalist states of Europe succeeded in merging into an imperialist trust, this would be a step forward as compared with the *existing* situation, for it would first of all create a unified, all-European material base for the working class movement.]

struggle of the European proletariat for power. In this program is expressed the fact that the national state has outlived itself—as a framework for the development of the productive forces, as a basis for the class struggle, and thereby also as a state form of proletarian dictatorship.<sup>15</sup> Over against the conservative defense of the antiquated national fatherland we place the progressive task, namely the creation of a new, higher “fatherland” of the revolution, of republican Europe, whence the proletariat alone will be enabled to revolutionize and to reorganize the whole world.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, the United States of Europe will be only one of the two axes of the “world reorganization” of industry. The United States of America will constitute the other.<sup>17</sup>

To view the perspectives of the social revolution within national bounds means to succumb to the same national narrowness that forms the content of social-patriotism. Vaillant, until the close of his life, regarded France as the chosen country of the social revolution, and precisely in this sense he insisted upon its defense to the end. Lentsch and others, some hypocritically, others sincerely, believed that the defeat of Germany means above all the destruction of the very foundation of the social revolution. Lastly, our Tseretellis and Chernovs<sup>18</sup> who, in our national conditions, have repeated the very sad experiment of French ministerialism, swear that their policy serves the purpose of the revolution and therefore has nothing in common with the policy of Guesde and Sembat. Generally speaking, it must not be forgotten that in social-patriotism there is active, besides the most vulgar reformism, a national revolutionary messianism, which regards its national state as chosen for introducing to humanity “socialism” or “democracy,” be it on the ground of its industrial or of its democratic form and revolutionary conquests.<sup>19</sup> Defending the national basis of the revolution with such methods as damage the international connections of the proletariat, really amounts to undermining the revolution, which cannot begin otherwise than on the national basis, but which cannot be completed on that basis in view of the present economic and military-political interdependence of the European states, which has never been so graphically revealed as in this very war. The slogan, the United States of Europe, gives expression to this interdependence, which will directly and immediately determine the concerted action of the European proletariat in the revolution.

Social-patriotism which is in principle, if not always in fact, the execution of social-reformism to the utmost extent and its adaptation to the imperialist epoch, proposes to us in the present world catastrophe to direct the policy of the proletariat along the lines of the “lesser evil” by joining one of

the two warring groups. We reject this method. We say that the war, prepared by antecedent evolution, has on the whole placed point-blank the *fundamental problems* of the present capitalist development as a whole; furthermore, that the line of direction to be followed by the international proletariat and its national detachments must not be determined by secondary political and national features nor by problematical advantages of militaristic preponderance of one side over the other

15. [Our denial of “national defense”, as an outlived political program for the proletariat, ceases to be a purely negative act of ideological-political self-defense, and acquires all its revolutionary content only in the event that]

16. [Herein, incidentally, lies the answer to those who ask dogmatically: “Why the unification of Europe and not of the whole world?” Europe is not only a geographic term, but a certain economic and cultural-historic community. The European revolution does not have to wait for the revolutions in Asia and Africa nor even in Australia and America. And yet a completely victorious revolution in Russia or England is unthinkable without a revolution in Germany, and vice versa. The present war is called a world war, but even after the intervention of the United States, it is Europe that is the arena of war. And the revolutionary problems confront first of all the European proletariat.]

17. [The only concrete historical consideration against the slogan of the United States of Europe was formulated by the Swiss Social Democrat as follows: “The unevenness of economic and political development is the unconditional law of capitalism.” From this the *Social Democrat* draws the conclusion that the victory of socialism is possible in one country and that it is needless therefore to make the dictatorship of the proletariat in each isolated State conditional upon the creation of the United States of Europe. That the capitalist development of various countries is uneven is quite incontestable. But this unevenness is itself extremely uneven. The capitalist levels of England, Austria, Germany or France are not the same. But as compared with Africa and Asia all these countries represent capitalist “Europe”, which has matured for the socialist revolution. It is profitable and necessary to reiterate the elementary thought that no single country in its struggle has to “wait” for the others, lest the idea of parallel international action be supplanted by the idea of procrastinating international inaction. Without waiting for the others we begin and continue the struggle on our own national soil in complete certainty that our initiative will provide the impulse for the struggle in other countries; and if this were not so, then it would be hopeless to think as is borne out both by historical experience and theoretical considerations — that revolutionary Russia, for example, would be able to maintain herself in the face of conservative Europe, or that Socialist Germany could remain isolated in a capitalist world.]

18. “Socialist” and “Socialist Revolutionary” members of the Russian Provisional Government.

19. The internationalist Trotsky was ever a firm opponent of the reactionary programme of “Socialism in One Country”. This is powerfully shown by this piece from the 1944 translation:

[(If a completely triumphant revolution were actually conceivable within the limits of a single, better prepared nation, this messianism, bound up with the program of national defense, would have its relative historical justification. But in reality, it does not have it.)]

# From the Arsenal of Marxism

## *The Program for Peace*

By LEON TROTSKY

(whereby these problematical advantages must be paid for in advance with absolute renunciation of the independent policy of the proletariat), but by the fundamental antagonism existing between the international proletariat and the capitalist regime as a whole.<sup>20</sup>

The democratic, republican union of Europe, a union really capable of guaranteeing the freedom of national development, is possible only on the road of a revolutionary struggle against militarist, imperialist, dynastic centralism, by means of revolts in individual countries, with the subsequent confluence of these upheavals into a general European revolution. The victorious European revolution, however, no matter how its course in the sundry countries may be fashioned can, in consequence of the absence of other revolutionary classes, transfer the power only to the proletariat. Thus the United States of Europe represents the only conceivable form of the dictatorship of the European proletariat.<sup>21</sup>

20. [This is the only principled formulation of the question and, by its very essence, it is socialist-revolutionary in character. It alone provides a theoretical and historical justification for the tactic of revolutionary internationalism.]

Denying support to the state — not in the name of a propaganda circle but in the name of the most important class in society — in the period of the greatest catastrophe, internationalism does not simply eschew "sin" passively but affirms that the fate of world development is no longer linked for us with the fate of the national state; more than this, that the latter has become a vise for development and must be overcome, that is, replaced by a higher economic-cultural organisation on a broader foundation. *If the problem of socialism were compatible with the framework of the national state, then it would thereby become compatible with national defense.* But the problem of socialism confronts us on the imperialist foundation, that is under conditions in which capitalism itself is force violently to destroy the national-state frameworks it has itself established.

The imperialist half-unification of Europe might be achieved, as we tried to show, as a result of a decisive victory of one group of the great powers as well as a consequence of an inconclusive outcome of the war. In either instance, the unification of Europe would signify the complete trampling underfoot of the principle of self-determination with respect to all weak nations and the preservation and centralization of all the forces and weapons of European reaction: monarchies, standing armies and secret diplomacy.]

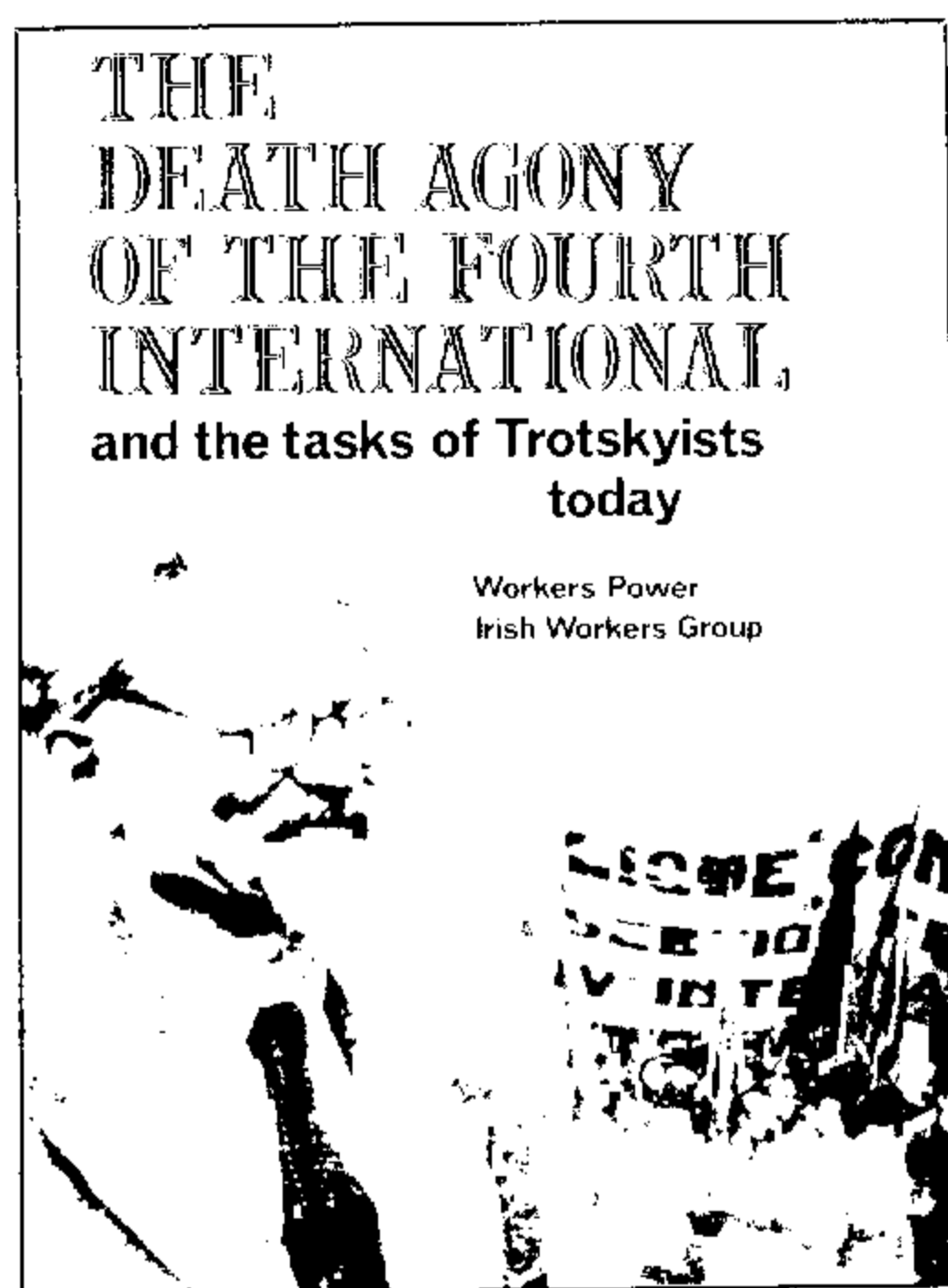
## 21. [A Postscript (1922)]

The assertion, repeated several times in the *Programme of Peace*, to the effect that the proletarian revolution cannot be victoriously consummated within a national framework may perhaps seem to some readers to have been refuted by the five years' experience of our Soviet Republic. But such a conclusion would be unfounded. The fact that the workers' state has maintained itself against the entire world in a single and, moreover, backward country testifies to the colossal power of the proletariat, a power which in other more advanced, more civilized countries, will truly be able to achieve miracles. But having defended ourselves as a state in the political and military sense, we have not arrived at, nor even approached socialist society. The struggle for revolutionary-state self-defense resulted in this interval in an extreme decline of productive forces, whereas socialism is conceivable only on the basis of their growth and blossoming. Trade negotiations with bourgeois states, concessions, the Geneva Conference and so on are far too graphic evidence of the impossibility of isolated socialist construction within a national-state framework. So long as the bourgeoisie remains in power in other European states we are compelled, in the struggle against economic isolation, to seek agreements with the capitalist world; at the same time it can be stated with certainty that these agreements, in the best case, will help us heal this or that economic wound, make this or that step forward, but the genuine rise of socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe.

That Europe represents not only a geographic but also an economic political term is graphically evidenced by the events in recent years: The decline of Europe, the growth of the power of the United States, the attempt of Lloyd George to "save" Europe by means of combined imperialist and pacifist methods.

Today the European Labor movement is in a period of defensive actions, of gathering forces and making preparations. A new period of open revolutionary battles for power will inexorably push to the fore the question of the state interrelationships among the peoples of revolutionary Europe. To the extent that the experience in Russia has projected the Soviet State as the most natural form of the proletarian vanguard of other countries has adopted in principle this state form, we may assume that with the resurgence of the direct struggle for power, the European proletariat will advance the program of the Federated European Soviet Republic. The experience of Russia in this connection is very instructive. It testifies to the complete compatibility under a proletarian regime of the broadest national and cultural autonomy and economic centralism. In this sense, the slogan of the United States of Europe, translated into the language of the Soviet State, not only preserves all its meaning but still promises to reveal its colossal significance during the impending epoch of the social revolution.]

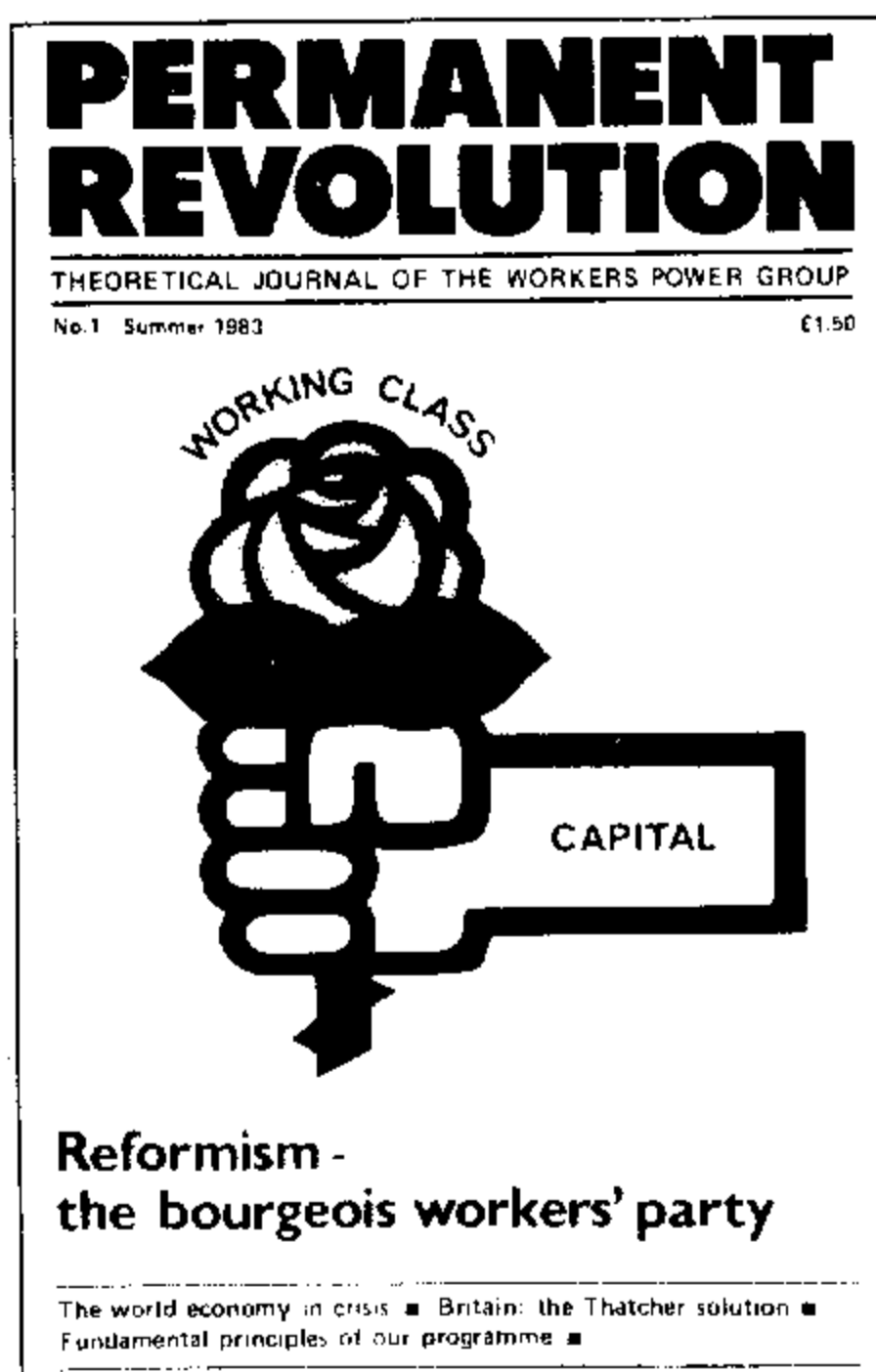
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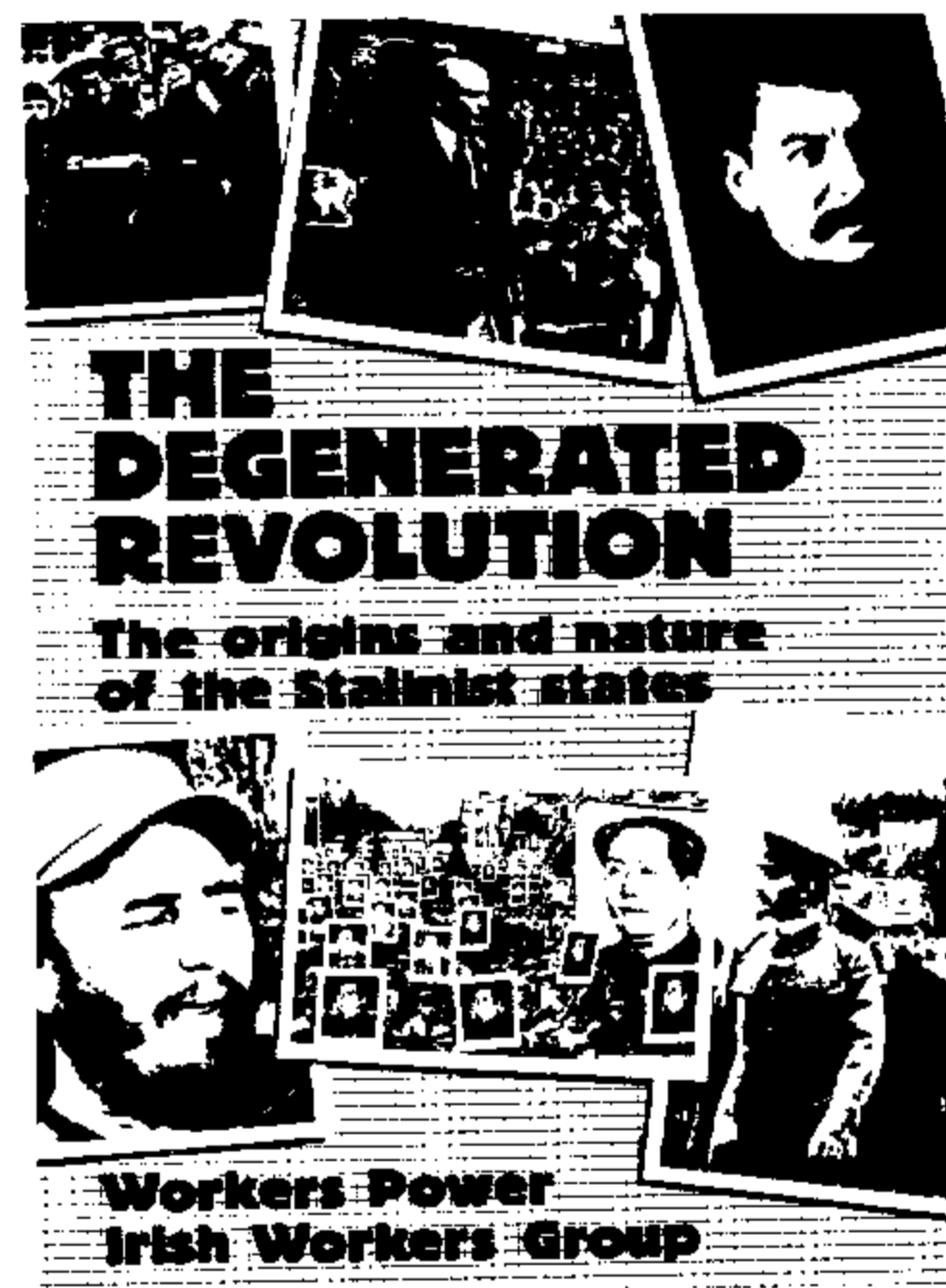
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# The war threat, the peace movements and the communist response

The dispatch of a large naval task force by British imperialism to the South Atlantic for war with Argentina in 1982, the US and French full-scale naval and military involvement in the Middle East, the manoeuvres in Honduras, and the US invasion of Grenada, all indicate that the period of enforced reticence which followed the US defeat in Vietnam has definitively ended. The failure of the Geneva talks, the dramatic expansion of the military budgets of the principal imperialist powers and the renewal of cold war propaganda - unmatched in its asperity since the Cuban missile crisis - clearly indicate a turn by the leading circles of the Anglo-American bourgeoisies in particular towards a policy of direct attacks on anti-imperialist struggles, and of nuclear threats and blackmail aimed at the Soviet bureaucracy and its closest allies. The depth of the world capitalist crisis, especially the social effects of a mass unemployment not seen since the thirties, create all the internal conditions for bellicose adventures. These adventures have as part of their rationale the justification of arms expenditure and the imposition of sacrifices on the working class. External and internal factors create increasingly sharp international crises and war scares. In response to this the radical petty bourgeoisie and the organised labour movement have become, once again, deeply alarmed. Peace movements have grown to mass proportions in the USA, Germany and Britain. The pacifist slogans of disarmament have once again become widespread.

## COMMUNISM ON WAR

The predominance within the international workers movement of social democracy and of stalinism results in the promotion of popular front type cross-class peace movements. The predominance within the oppositional elements in the workers' movement of centrist formations results in the blunting of the edge of marxist criticism with regard to these movements. It is therefore necessary to restate the classic criticisms of Lenin and Trotsky, to defend the revolutionary communist position on war and to apply it creatively to changes in world politics and the military situations which have occurred since the second world war.

## THE ROOTS OF WAR TODAY

### 1. BETWEEN IMPERIALIST POWERS

Two major tendencies propel mankind towards war in the imperialist epoch. Firstly there are the conflicts between the major

imperialist powers as they divide and subsequently redivide the globe in their search for super-profits. The first phase of the imperialist epoch, from the late 1890s onwards saw a series of clashes between the major powers which increased in severity and frequency culminating in the first general imperialist war. It was fought by Germany to secure a redivision of the colonial and semi-colonial world in its favour. It was fought by Britain and France to preserve their huge colonial empires. It was entered by Italy and the United States to seize a portion of the spoils either from the defeated powers or from the exhausted victors. The imposition of the robbers' peace of Versailles made inevitable a second round of the conflict between the older imperialisms and dynamic German capitalism - inevitable, that is, given the failure of the German proletariat to seize power in 1918-19, in 1923 and during the world crisis of 1929-33.

The second imperialist war again broke Germany's (and its Italian and Japanese allies') attempt to seize the colonies and spheres of influence of Britain and France. Yet, so near to destruction did the old powers come, so desperate was their situation, that they were obliged to make concessions to their American saviours during and after the war. Effectively the winner of the war in terms of the re-division of the world was US imperialism which gained hegemony in the former British and French spheres of influence and achieved the dismantling of their colonial empires. The result was an unparalleled world hegemony, unchallenged by any serious imperialist rivals, throughout the post-war period. It was based upon a semi-colonial system of North American client regimes backed by the US international monopolies, by US dominated economic and financial institutions and underpinned by US military forces around the globe.

### 2. IMPERIALIST WAR AGAINST THE OPPRESSED

Secondly there are the armed conflicts between imperialism and the struggles of the oppressed and exploited. Ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917 imperialism's military arsenals have been strengthened to resist all challenges to its system from proletarian revolution and national liberation struggles. Imperialism failed to overthrow history's first workers' state because of the heroism of the Russian working class and the solidarity of the international proletariat. Instead, it organised the military encirclement of the USSR preparatory to a renewed military offensive to open the USSR to

imperialist exploitation. In 1941 German imperialism attacked the USSR in a bid to reintroduce capitalism in the USSR.

The second world war, therefore, was BOTH a conflict among imperialisms and a war between imperialism and the only established workers' state. The unresolved struggle for hegemony between the imperialist powers meant that Anglo-American imperialism was prepared to ally with the workers' state in order to prevent the victory of their major imperialist rivals, Germany and Japan. Violent divisions among the imperialists, and the consolidated military and economic strength of the USSR, made it impossible for Anglo-American imperialism to launch a war to re-establish capitalism in the USSR.

Once Germany and Japan were defeated, however, hegemonic US imperialism was able to construct a unified imperialist offensive against the USSR in general, and the concessions made to it at Yalta and Potsdam in particular. This was the origin of the cold war that followed the second imperialist war. With Japan and Germany defeated and economically devastated, and British imperialism in decline, the US was able to ensure the creation of a unified imperialist camp against the USSR and the new degenerate workers' states. While differences of interests clearly existed between the imperialist powers, they were subordinated by the unchallengeable hegemony of US imperialism.

US hegemony could not, however, last for ever. It faced the challenge of anti-imperialist struggles and proletarian revolution. World War One showed vividly that capitalism had ceased to play a historically progressive role and had entered the epoch of its decay - the epoch of wars and revolution. The decay of capitalism and the decline of imperialism has accelerated since the Second World War. This is evidenced by the creation of new workers' states, albeit degenerate from birth, in East Europe, China, Indo-China and Cuba, and by subsequent defeats suffered by imperialism at the hands of national liberation struggles, for example in Angola, Mozambique, Iran and Nicaragua. US imperialism was unable to withstand these victories against it. From the late 1960s to the late 1970s it suffered a series of major defeats, and the tactics designed to reverse this process - detente, the human rights campaign, etc. - all failed to hold the line for US imperialism. The hegemonic imperialism of the post-war period has itself now suffered a series of major defeats and successful challenges to its world supremacy.

## DECLINE OF THE UNITED STATES

US imperialism's decline is also evident in economic terms. Its economy has suffered comparative decline at the expense of other imperialist powers, most importantly the BRD (West Germany) and Japan. Defeat at the hands of national liberation struggles together with US imperialism's economic decline has made it increasingly difficult for US imperialism to maintain a unified imperialist bloc under its hegemony. Not only were the defeated imperialisms bearing an insignificant part of the burden of imperialism's military expenditure, they were even able to assert their own relative autonomy from US imperialism in relation to the Soviet bureaucracy (i.e. the Ostpolitik of the BRD), and the semi-colonial world. Reagan's failure to delay the oil pipeline from the USSR, and independent 'European' initiatives on Nicaragua and the middle East all show that US imperialism in decline has become ever less able to dictate the policies of its imperialist rivals.

At present the undoubted and deepening differences between the US and the principal European powers remain subordinate to their continued, in the last analysis united, military stance against the USSR. Even their differences over the tactics to adopt towards the anti-imperialist struggles or towards trade relations with the degenerate workers' states have not, as yet, led to splits. Thus in the next period it is not inter-imperialist splits that pose the principal danger of starting an imperialist war but revanchist attempts to overthrow the results of successful anti-imperialist struggles, to redress the balance tipped by them towards the USSR or other degenerate workers' states. However, US imperialism's declining economic and political fortunes lead, necessarily, to a sharpening of tactical divisions between imperialists, and the inability of US imperialism to dictate the victory of its tactical line. Over a protracted period it makes increasingly probable a division within the imperialist camp in a pre-war situation.

## THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

Reaganism marks a bid by the US bourgeoisie to claw back the defeats it has suffered at the hands of the oppressed and exploited. It does so at a time when its imperialist rivals have succeeded in asserting a degree of materially-based political independence from the US, and after the USSR in the mid-1970s was able to strengthen its economic base, its military arsenals and its military aid to key regimes, at the expense of imperialism. Reagan's war drive has to be understood against a background of US defeat and decline. This is in no way a cause for complacency or ridicule. Reagan is not a crazed ex-actor, as clever chauvinist Labour and social democratic politicians would have us believe. He is the voice of US imperialism in decline seeking to use its remaining military and economic pre-eminence to reverse that decline. The decline is inevitable, hence the very real and immediate threat of world war that is posed by US imperialism. Only by a war against the oppressed and exploited (and necessarily with the USSR to the extent that it aids them) can Reagan hope to reverse US imperialism's decline at the hands of the exploited and oppressed of the semi-colonial world and the proletariat, AND America's own imperialist rivals. That is why Reagan is locked on a war course in the semi-colonial world (Grenada and Nicaragua), a rearmament drive to cow or decimate the Soviet bureaucracy into submission and an attempt to re-unify the imperialist powers under US hegemony by deliberately sharpening the conflict between the US and the USSR. Of course tactical divisions within the US

bourgeoisie, reflected in changes of administration, could slow down, or even partially offset the drive towards war. However, they cannot decisively halt it. The logic of imperialism is towards war and temporary shifts in bourgeois policy will always be superseded by this logic.

The accelerating nuclear arms drive of the US can only be understood in this context. The US pioneered the production and deployment of atomic weapons as a means of asserting its already achieved hegemony over its imperialist rivals, and as a threat to the USSR. Whilst nuclear weapons were developed as a means of destruction on a generalised scale that had only been achieved in exceptional instances in previous wars by conventional means (Dresden bombing, bombing in Vietnam and Kampuchea), this does not and cannot alter the causes of war or the means whereby it can be eradicated. Whilst the scale of destruction in nuclear war is indeed potentially QUALITATIVELY different (threatening either the extinction of humanity or the reversion of the survivors to the most primitive stages of social life), its roots remain imperialist class society and the solution remains the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat.

## THE SOVIET BOMB

The bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to prevent the USSR playing any role in the construction of a post-war order in the Pacific. That it was not later used in Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Kampuchea, was the direct result of the Soviet bomb, which has to date prevented US imperialism from waging counter-revolutionary wars. If it did it would face the potential threat of soviet nuclear backing for anti-imperialist forces and for degenerate workers' states.

The imperialists' bomb has a character defined not by its technology but by the system of production it serves. This is also the case for the weapon systems of the Soviet bureaucracy. The Soviet arsenal serves to defend a system of property relations that does not depend on the export of capital and the repatriation of super-profits. But like the bureaucracy and its state, it has a contradictory political character. It is not only a necessary instrument of self-defence but it is also a tool for strengthening the bureaucracy's position in bargaining with imperialism. The USSR uses its weaponry to achieve 'peaceful co-existence' with imperialism. To this extent it is prepared to arm and defend anti-imperialist struggles and degenerate workers' states.

## UNCONDITIONAL DEFENCE OF THE USSR

We consider it necessary to maintain, and therefore we defend, the existence of nuclear arsenals in the degenerate workers' states, and, of course, in future healthy workers' states. In armed conflicts between imperialism and the USSR we place no conditions on our defence of the USSR. We defend the USSR against imperialism whether or not the political revolution has taken place, or whether the forces exist to openly wage political revolutionary struggle. We do so while at all times making it clear that our programme is a programme for proletarian political revolution against the bureaucracy and at all times developing tactics to deploy the forces mobilised to defeat imperialism to destroy also the privileges and political power of the stalinist bureaucracy.

## FALSE ANSWERS

It follows therefore that we completely reject:  
A. The theories of E.P. Thompson and others who see nuclear weapons systems and their

controllers as having an autonomous form and dominance within the productive system of the society within which they are established. We completely reject the claim that the dictatorship of the military-industrial complex has replaced the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries, or the political dictatorship of the bureaucratic caste in the degenerate workers' states. The military in the imperialist countries remains the armed wing of the bourgeoisie and possesses the technology that the bourgeoisie sees fit to use to defend its system.

B. Feminist explanations of the arms race that see it as an expression of male dominance and male values.

It also follows that we necessarily reject the slogans and tactics that flow from these positions.

## THE SLOGAN OF DISARMAMENT

There will be no 'peace' until the class struggle has eliminated the roots of war. That can only take place as a result of the successful armed struggle of the exploited and oppressed against capitalism. We are for the disarming of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat. That is the only road to peace.

## THE SLOGAN OF NEUTRALITY

We are not neutral in the struggles between the semi-colonies and imperialism. Neither are we neutral in conflicts between imperialism and the USSR. Similarly, we reject as utopian, and therefore reactionary, the slogan of 'peaceful co-existence' between imperialism and the degenerate workers' states.

## THE SLOGAN OF UNILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT (UND)

UND cannot be our slogan. As a recipe for avoiding war it is no less fraudulent than other disarmament slogans. The non-possession of nuclear arms will not exempt any country from involvement in an imperialist war - nuclear or conventional - any more than Belgium's neutrality exempted it in two world wars. The military-strategic needs of the major combatants will prove decisive.

Renunciation of nuclear weapons will not set a moral example leading to a universal renunciation. Were this to be done by a non-imperialist or non-capitalist power it would immediately open it to blackmail if not attack by imperialist powers. Even were all the states to renounce nuclear weapons and dismantle them, as soon as a general conventional war began, they would quickly re-develop or re-assemble their nuclear weapons. By centering exclusively on nuclear weapons and their use the call for UND diverts attention from the possibility of imperialist war commencing as a conventional war. Further, it invests the weapons rather than the imperialist bourgeoisie with the responsibility for war and the war threat. It identifies the wrong enemy and therefore prescribes the wrong methods for fighting it.

It is a reactionary utopia to spread the illusion that it is possible to peacefully disarm the imperialist bourgeoisie of its nuclear weapons and thus save humanity from destruction. Only the disarmament of the bourgeoisie by means of its revolutionary overthrow can achieve this.

Only by seizing state power in the imperialist countries can the bourgeoisie be disarmed and the threat of nuclear annihilation be lifted. This task can only be carried out by the popular masses led by the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard. The threat of nuclear holocaust should indeed give an urgency hitherto unexampled, to the struggle against war. But for us this is all the more reason for stressing that this fight must be based on proletarian anti-militarism, on the class struggle, rather than on despairing petit-bourgeois pacifism.

## AGAINST US MISSILES IN EUROPE!

However, while UND is not our slogan we can, and do, give critical support to the struggles and demands of its supporters to the extent that these hit at imperialism. Thus we support Social Democrats and Stalinists voting in parliament against the stationing of US missiles in Europe. In Britain we demand of the opposition Labour Party that it votes in line with its conference policy against all funds for Britain's 'independent deterrent'. We demand that any future Labour government honours its pledge to dismantle these weapons. We further demand that governments of the Socialist and Stalinist parties, or future governments of the Social Democratic parties or British Labour Party, withdraw from the counter-revolutionary NATO alliance and all other such alliances. We seek united action with all willing to espouse and fight for these demands in order to enforce them. But we participate under our own slogans, making them clear at all times.

Whilst the bourgeoisie still has the state power, and this remains the case under any 'normal' parliamentary Social Democratic government, we raise the demands:

- \* Not a penny, not a soldier for the bourgeois government!
- \* Not an armaments programme but a programme of useful public works under workers control!
- \* Workers' control of the war industries - including those that are nationalised!

## CROSS-CLASS PACIFIST ALLIANCES

The CND and the European peace movements are ostensibly non-class mass-membership campaigns. In reality they are cross-class alliances between petit-bourgeois pacifists, the liberal lower clergy, the social pacifist leaders of the Social Democrats and Stalinists. The latter bring into the peace movements a conscious popular-frontist ideology.

The French Communist Party (PCF) provides a clear example of such popular frontism. Over the last two years it has encouraged the Mouvement de la Paix (Peace Movement), in which it is the dominant political force, to organise two big demonstrations under the literally all-embracing slogan of "I love Peace". Such vague, catch-all slogans are in part due to the lack of a "spontaneous" French peace movement (in turn largely due to the fact that none of the new European missiles

were to be installed in France); partly due to the PCF's fear of stimulating criticism of French nuclear arms (which the PCF supports); and partly to make it easier to construct a cross-class alliance.

These demonstrations have attracted currents ranging from radical petit-bourgeois to Admiral Sanguinetti and "left" Gaullists, relying on the mobilising capacity of stalinist youth, petit-bourgeois ecologists, "left" christian movements and sections of the extreme left. They have been used by the PCF as a stage army, brought out to put pressure on Mitterand's pro-Atlantic Socialist Party-dominated government.

France also illustrates the bankruptcy of the political content of such popular-frontism. The Moscow bureaucracy's strategy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, based on the reactionary theory of "socialism in one country", leads it to strike alliances with certain imperialist powers. The French bourgeoisie has traditionally been singled out as a privileged partner, facilitated by the historic anti-American tendencies of its Gaullist wing. This encouraged the USSR bureaucracy and the PCF to support the setting up of a French nuclear "force de frappe" that would supposedly be independent from NATO, ignoring France's continued membership of the Atlantic Alliance and the fact that its missiles cannot be operated without NATO's guidance system. Such a policy is utopian and is in no way a means of defending the USSR.

Equally utopian and suicidal is the idea, disseminated by the PCF and social-democracy, that the army is impartial - "the Republic in arms". The 1973 Chilean coup d'etat proved yet again that the bourgeois armies are not impartial, disinterested by-standers and that they cannot be reformed. Popular-frontism, and the stalinist and social-democratic forces which support it, politically disarm French workers.

## TACTICS TOWARDS PACIFIST CAMPAIGNS

The peace movements have no 'objectively anti-capitalist dynamic' as Ernest Mandel of the USFI would have us believe.

We recognise with Trotsky that: "it is necessary to differentiate strictly between the pacifism of the diplomat, professor, journalist and the pacifism of the carpenter, agricultural workers and char-woman. In one case pacifism is a screen for imperialism, in the other it is the confused expression of distrust in imperialism. When the small farmer or worker

speaks about the defence of the fatherland, he means defence of his home, his family and other similar families from invasions, bombs and poisonous gas."

We draw from this the need to intervene in the peace movements' activities and meetings, such as those of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in Britain and Ireland, wherever significant forces exist that can and must be won to a proletarian anti-militarist policy.

We attempt to mobilise the best elements to fight imperialism's particular wars - Malvinas and Grenada - so as to win them from the deathly embrace of those who only protest against war in general.

We reject the chauvinist lies of Tony Benn and E.P. Thompson in Britain, and of their counterparts throughout Europe, that the siting of nuclear arms on the West European mainland and in Britain is a symptom of the loss of national sovereignty and an indication of national oppression at the hands of the US. The British bourgeoisie, for example, is entirely a sovereign - albeit declining - imperialist bourgeoisie. However, faced with the legitimate distrust that workers have of imperialism's secret pacts and arrangements for nuclear weapons, we demand not the dual key - not British or German imperialism's hand on the trigger - but the abolition of all secret diplomacy, that all treaties between the imperialists be made accessible to the workers, AND that the Labour Party, the SPD etc. guarantee to do so if they are returned to government.

Against pacifism, we fight for military training for all, under workers' control, for the abolition of the standing army and its replacement by a workers' militia. We fight for a series of measures which aim at the breaking up of the bourgeois army and the winning of rank and file conscripted workers in uniform to the side of the working class.

However, the majority of the proletariat is not involved in and will not be won to direct involvement in CND or in pacifist organisations of this ilk. Therefore CND and other similar European movements cannot be the central arena for anti-militarist war activity. The organs of the labour movement, the unions, the Labour, Socialist, Social Democratic and 'Communist' parties etc., the organisations of women, youth, the unemployed, the black organisations, immigrant organisations, soldiers' committees, remain our prime focus and here we fight for our revolutionary tactics, not for a strategic orientation or political subordination to the



French 'I love peace' demonstration

peace movements. It is in this light in Britain and Ireland, for example, we oppose labour movement bodies affiliating to CND, counterposing to this a working class anti-war movement.

The peace movements have inevitably failed to prevent the siting of Cruise and Pershing. This was a consequence of their bankrupt politics. That fact will tend to sharpen the contradictions within the coming period.

## BRITAIN

In Britain, the CND leadership has already turned its attention towards a campaign for a 'freeze'. The continuing threat of war will mean that CND will not disappear as a consequence of the siting of the new missiles. Demonstrations, peace conferences and petitions will continue. The CND leadership - along with Labour leader Kinnock and Co. - is in headlong flight from unilateralism.

The purge of Youth CND in Britain flows from this. The CND leaders were prepared to destroy YCND DE FACTO rather than allow it to become a potential obstacle to its plans. The centrist leaders of YCND who accommodated all along to the 'objectively anti-imperialist logic' of CND and refused to politically organise to explain or defend their 'revolutionary victories' were incapable of resisting this.

The tactic of Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) threatens to squander the energies of an entire generation of youth. As expressed by the Greenham Common women, it gives rise to an extremely passive 'Ghandi-istic' protest that can appeal to sections of youth who want more action than CND's rallies and conferences can offer. As the contradictions involved in NVDA become clearer - not least at the hands of the Violent Direct Action of the state - confrontation will strengthen the petit-bourgeois moralists, opening the movement increasingly to christian and other mystical influences.

On the other hand, sections of youth will experience a militant disenchantment with the NVDA tactic. This will take the form not only of a return to the safer pastures of traditional parliamentary reformism, but also a search for meaningful action to stop war. With the best youth who turn to action, we must be ready to struggle for a proletarian anti-militarist youth movement mobilised to oppose all imperialism's wars and war preparations. Failure to do so will see the majority of the best youth demoralised by the pacifists and could see a minority drawn towards terroristic actions.

## NUCLEAR DEFENCE OF THE WORKERS' STATES

We recognise the legitimate right, indeed necessity, for any workers' state, degenerate or not, to possess nuclear weapons for self-defence against imperialism. We place no condition on our defence of these workers' states or their right to possess nuclear weapons.

However, the Soviet bureaucracy represents a counter-revolutionary force standing against the world social revolution and the advance to socialism within the workers' states. From this it flows that, in pursuit of class-collaborationist deals with imperialism, it may and does adopt counter-revolutionary policies with regard to other workers' states and anti-imperialist struggles. It sites and utilises its weapons within other degenerate workers' states by means of pressure upon their bureaucracies,

thus violating the democratic rights of the proletariats of these countries and inflaming their sense of national oppression. It deprives certain workers' states of the weapons - including nuclear ones - necessary for their defence against imperialism (Cuba and Vietnam in the 1960s). It is quite conceivable that the Soviet bureaucracy under threat from imperialism would disarm these states or leave them defenceless.

Therefore, we demand the no-strings offer of nuclear as well as conventional weapons to the other workers' states threatened by imperialism, with control over these weapons in the hands of their own governments. We demand the dissolution of the oppressive Warsaw Pact and its replacement with an equal mutual defence treaty between the workers' states. We fight for political revolution which alone can, on the basis of proletarian democracy and internationalism, on a historic scale, defend the existing gains by extending them. The overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracies would immeasurably strengthen the workers' states and at the same time increase the aid that the proletarian revolution and the anti-imperialist struggles could throw into the balance against imperialism's war threats.

The Soviet bureaucracy's decision to site new missiles in East Germany (GDR) and Czechoslovakia (CSSR) will doubtless strengthen neutralist and also anti-communist positions in the Peace Movement. 'European Nuclear Disarmament' (END) exists to give voice to such sentiments.

We defend the right of the USSR and the workers' states to have nuclear defence capability against imperialism. For that reason we defend the right of the workers' states to deploy the new weapon systems and, despite the bureaucracy's motives and methods of deploying them, oppose campaigns against their siting. We oppose all attempts to link disarmament demands in the West to equivalent demands on the stalinist bureaucracies. To do so is to destroy the progressive element within the unilateralist slogan leaving only a hypocritical bourgeois call for peace negotiations. In essence this is what the demand for a nuclear-free zone in Europe represents.

## PACIFISM IN EASTERN EUROPE

What is our attitude to the unofficial peace movements that have emerged in certain East European countries?

We cannot support a slogan of Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament for the workers' states for the reasons stated above. We oppose all neutralist demands such as those of the GDR unofficial peace movement.

We give no support to the pro-imperialist elements leading such movements in the USSR or Eastern Europe (the churches, pro-Western dissidents like Sakharov etc.). Thus we can give no political support to the existing unofficial peace movements. However, there is a proletarian anti-war policy for the degenerate workers' states, one which fights the bureaucracy's counter-revolutionary policies which threatens these states with destruction at the hands of imperialism. As long as 'defence' is exclusively in the hands of a standing army which is also the instrument of bureaucratic privilege and of political and national oppression, then the best means of defence is denied to the post-capitalist social relations. The best means is the conscious and enthusiastic support of the masses and their ever ready availability to defend them arms in hand. Imperialism's hopes for restoration rest not only upon a military coercion of the

bureaucracy but on internal confusion and counter-revolution stemming from the masses' own hatred of bureaucratic oppression. Thus we demand, as part of the slogans of political revolution, the arming of the working class and collective farmers (or small peasants) - a real democratic militia. We demand the abrogation of unequal treaties and military pacts in favour of mutual defence of all workers' states.

We demand the withdrawal of the Soviet armed forces from the East European workers' states wherever the insurrectionary or victorious proletarian political revolution demands it - distinguishing this call from imperialist or pro-imperialist calls for withdrawal aimed at facilitating a social counter-revolution.

In the degenerate workers' states today we demand the application of the norms of workers' democracy within the context of the defence of the proletariat's dictatorship. This includes the free expression of confused pacifist views, correcting by arguments those sincerely held and voiced by the masses, unmasking those hypocritically advanced by the agents of imperialism. The suppression of pro-imperialist reactionary propaganda is a question of expediency in every concrete circumstance. We espouse neither an absolute (i.e. bourgeois) democratic demand for universal free speech, nor do we surrender to the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy the judgement and execution of what is or is not counter-revolutionary. We demand that the decision be taken by the workers themselves in their class organisations.

The foreign policy of the victorious political revolution, based on support for the class struggle in all the capitalist powers and for all anti-imperialist struggles, would decisively tip the balance against imperialism, tying its hands internally in its heartlands, freeing the semi-colonial peoples. Such a policy would not of course banish the threat of war until the last major imperialist power succumbed to revolution. But it offers in the final analysis the only possible perspective for the defence of the existing social conquests of the proletariat.

## THE FATE OF HUMANITY IN THE HANDS OF THE PROLETARIAT

The imperialists now have a first-strike capacity against the Soviet missile-silos as well as the ability to destroy the Soviet population several times over. This increases the possibility of nuclear war not only as a result of proxy conflicts in the semi-colonial world - which has been an ever-present possibility - but also in the form of a strike against the USSR as a warning to all forces struggling against imperialism. The declining fortunes of US imperialism make this an ever greater danger for the workers of the world. The workers' movement internationally must be rallied to the banner of revolution if the deadly logic of declining imperialism is to be stopped from reducing the planet to a nuclear ruin.

# BOLIVIA 1952:

## Revolutionary nationalism and proletarian revolution

The first article in this exchange was written in reply to an article which appeared in the March 1983 issue of Workers Power newspaper (No. 40), entitled "Bolivia 1970/71: A revolution disarmed". It was written by Roberto Gramar, a European representative of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, of which the Bolivian Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) is a part. Gramar is a member of the Argentine group Política Obrera. The second article, by Stuart King of Workers Power, was written in response to Gramar.

Although the original newspaper article concentrated largely on 1970/71, the exchange which followed focussed on the Bolivian revolution of 1952. For reasons of space, and to make the articles more accessible for the reader, we have edited both articles,

taking out sections which referred to internal discussions between the organisations involved, and part of the material which dealt again with 1970/71. We have also included a separate Introduction which gives some background to the Bolivian political situation in the early 1950s.

The questions raised in the 1952 revolution and the role of the POR have lost none of their burning relevance. Indeed, in Bolivia today many of the figures who participated in the 1952 events continue to play significant roles in the present crisis in that country, and to peddle the same bankrupt strategies in the working class. Revolutionaries must learn from past errors in order to lay the basis for future victories.

## INTRODUCTION

Bolivia is a land-locked country of no more than 6 million people, with the majority of its population, about 60%, still working on the land as peasant farmers. Historically it has been one of the countries most exploited by imperialism. Its economy was massively dependent on the export of tin to the imperialist powers - most importantly to the USA. Exports of tin amounted to 75% of all exports by the 1920s, and still amount to over 50% today. Tin production by the turn of the century had come to be dominated by three massive family firms - Aramayo, Hochschild and Patino - which controlled 80% of the industry and dominated the government. This oligarchy, known as the 'Rosca', came to be based outside of Bolivia, firmly integrated into the business communities of the imperialist heartlands.

The enormous superprofits extracted by imperialism from Bolivia and the resistance to paying taxes of the expatriate 'Rosca' kept the Bolivian state chronically impoverished. It was completely at the beck and call of imperialism, and cruelly subject to the vagaries of the world tin market. The 1920s and 30s saw Bolivia racked by economic crises as the world slump produced

a dramatic fall in prices. The failure of Bolivian capitalism produced a number of movements, often based in the army and drawing support from the financially-squeezed urban petit-bourgeoisie, which attempted to challenge the grip of the 'Rosca', and negotiate a better deal with imperialism. The MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario), founded in the 1940s, was the most influential nationalist party during this period, and became the leading force in the 1952 revolution.

The revolution of April 1952 started as a traditional military-political coup d'état, in which the MNR, in collusion with a member of the governing junta - General Antonio Seleme - attempted to seize power. Seleme was to have become President, and an MNR/Military cabinet would have been constructed.

The coup failed because the majority of the army remained loyal. Having been deserted by Seleme, the MNR was forced to turn to the Miners' Union, the FSTMB, led by Juan Lechin. It was the miners and the working class of La Paz which broke the resistance of the army, and delivered power into the hands of the MNR.

The army, defeated in open battle and heavily purged by the MNR government, was forced to retreat to the sidelines. The miners in the battle had supplemented their "normal" weapons (the dynamite stick) with captured army weapons. Workers, and in some areas peasants, spontaneously formed themselves into militias.

Thus the April 1952 revolution opened up a period of dual power in Bolivia. The bourgeoisie no longer had a strong and reliable repressive apparatus to defend its interests, while the workers and peasants remained mobilised and armed.

Despite the revolutionary situation created by these developments, it rapidly became apparent that the Bolivian workers and peasants lacked a revolutionary leadership which could resolve the duality of power in their favour. Leadership remained firmly in the hands of the MNR, whose influence within the most advanced sections of the Bolivian proletariat - the tin miners - was guaranteed through leaders such as Lechin. Lechin, a member of the MNR, had enormous sway over the miners, and was seen as the major initiator of the mass

insurrection against the army. The workers and peasants viewed the MNR, both its "left" wing (Lechin) and its centre (the President, Paz Estenssoro) - with its radical anti-imperialist verbiage - as representing their interests against the 'Rosca', the landowners and the imperialists.

After the insurrection, Juan Lechin representing the miners, German Butron representing the factory workers and Angel Cromez, the transport workers, entered the government as "worker ministers", peddling the idea of "co-government" between the workers and the nationalist bourgeoisie. It was from this position that the call was issued for the convening of the inaugural session of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) - the Bolivian Workers Centre.

The key question for Bolivian revolutionaries was how to relate to the MNR government in a way that enabled them to break the illusions of the masses in the MNR, and win them to a revolutionary party and perspective. It is around this question - the communist use of the Anti-Imperialist United Front Tactic - that the following polemic revolves.

## IN DEFENCE OF THE P.O.R.

by Roberto Gramar

Here we can not make a concentrated study of the Bolivian revolution of 1952 and the intervention of the POR<sup>1</sup>. The situation is summed up by Lora himself: "The internal crisis which shook it (the POR) during the greater part of the sexenio (1946-52) had weakened it enormously: all the political developments led the masses to move themselves around the MNR and not the POR. These circumstances prevented the POR being physically present in the events of April 1952"<sup>2</sup>.

A central feature of the Bolivian mining proletariat is that it built its class activity around a revolutionary programme, the Theses of Pulacayo, adopted in 1946. This is a result of POR activity. The revolutionary party confronted the difficulty that its political influence in the workers movement did not mechanically translate itself into its organisational development, a difficulty which was seriously aggravated in the retrogression subsequent to 1946. A sector of the organisation, even at the level of leading cadres, adapted to the pressure of nationalism. In the situation of the reactionary sexenio, the masses confused the nationalism of the MNR with the programme they had adopted in Pulacayo.

This fact is not the fatal result of a 'chronic political weakness'. It is a concrete difficulty faced by the Trotskyists of a backward country confronted by nationalism, particularly in its period of ascent, when it recites anti-imperialist demands and appears in opposition to the regime of the old

ruling classes and persecuted by the reactionary governments.

Moreover, the POR had to confront the negative weight of the intervention of the leadership of the Fourth International, which placed itself in the vanguard of the formulation of the positions of capitulation to nationalism. "Strange that until now the erroneous policy of Pabloism in Bolivia should not have been connected with the period of crisis of the International (1950-53), over the revisionist theses of the international leadership of that moment"<sup>3</sup>. This question doesn't even figure in the analysis of Stuart King, which strikes us as strange for a non-romantic revolutionary internationalist. If the POR was "a united party" in April 1952, as claimed by Workers Power (WP), it is worth while remembering that it was already undermined by serious internal differences, which would result in the split two years later.

The POR was not physically present in the insurrection as a party, its own political physiognomy before the masses was diluted, and the workers and peasants identified the MNR with the satisfaction of their demands. This is the effective reality of the class struggle, which naturally does not fit into the schema of pedants. In these conditions, the task of the revolutionary faction of the POR, led by Lora, was double: to re-arm the party on the basis of the strictest differentiation with nationalism, including its left wing, and to win the masses to the revolutionary programme, detaching them from the political dominance of the MNR. The POR was the

only organisation of the Bolivian left which kept itself independent in the face of the MNR government, denouncing its inevitable capitulation to imperialism. It criticised the nationalisation of the mines and the agrarian reform from a class viewpoint. It opposed to the MNR government, the slogan of the workers and peasants government. The fact that it had not called for the insurrection, in agreement with the concrete analysis it made of the concrete situation of the class struggle and its development, is something else.

The re-arming of the party was carried out in its Ninth and Tenth Congresses, September 1952 and June 1953, mainly in the second. The Ninth Congress characterised 'co-government' as a "formula devised by Lechinism in order to divert the proletariat from the objective of seizing power"<sup>4</sup>. The Tenth Congress made a much more precise analysis of the government, of the situation of the mass movement, and of the 'left-wing of the MNR'. It is worth the trouble to make some extensive quotes from its political resolution<sup>5</sup>.

"The necessity in which the Paz Estenssoro regime finds itself of keeping itself in power either utilising the pressure of imperialism against the masses, imparts it its bonapartist sui generis character, just as Trotsky indicated when he analysed the nature of the Cardenas government in Mexico. The extreme weakness of the bourgeoisie and national capital do not permit the petty bourgeois government the development of an independent policy in the face of imperialism, and oblige it to continually capitulate".

"History previous to 9. April had contributed to the attention of the exploited being polarised around the MNR. In spite of these conditions, right from the start, the proletariat showed no confidence in the petty bourgeois leadership, and imposed its own elected representatives in the cabinet, launched its own slogans and created the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana). In this way the experience of the masses, acquired in a bloody struggle materialised itself. Now, a year after the revolution, one can note that the magnificent point of departure of the masses could not be politically capitalised in a satisfactory manner, mainly owing to the weakness which the vanguard of the proletariat, the POR, showed in the first stage".

"For the POR, before the immediate seizure of power, is the task of winning the masses, of educating them in the daily struggles, and of teaching them to have complete confidence in the leadership of the vanguard of the proletariat . . . The POR says to the exploited that the 'workers and peasants government' slogan is not the product of a simple intellectual speculation. The organisations of the masses themselves, increasingly accentuating their struggle for central demands and confronting themselves constantly to the present power, will come to understand the necessity of demanding for themselves the total control of the state. ( . . . ) The subsequent evolution that we indicate for the COB, where the creation of new rank-and-file organs, parallel to it or even independent, under the pressure of the masses in struggle, constantly broadening their field of intervention to all domains of the life of the exploited, will lead us to the workers and peasants government. In the culminating point of that process, it will be necessary to launch the slogan of 'All power to the workers organisations'".

## THE VIEW OF THE MASSES

We could take up whole pages with such quotes, but it is best if every interested militant reads the original texts. In every way, that portion transcribed above is enough to verify in which way the POR 'supported' the MNR government, according to the peculiar and slanderous statement of WP, and how it 'refused' to pose the necessity of a workers and peasants government, as opposed to that of Paz Estenssoro, according to the same statements. The detail, which was crucial in Bolivia in 1952, is that that 'capitalist' government was not seen by the masses as identical to that of the 'rosca', for the simple reason that it originated in a different movement of the class struggle. As a capitalist government, it had its specificity and posed a series

of totally new problems. Pabloism and Stalinism characterised it as revolutionary and supported it; the POR characterised it as bonapartist, denounced its capitulations before imperialism, placed itself in the opposed trench, and called upon the masses and their organisations to prepare its revolutionary overthrow.

This was the basic line of the intervention of the POR in the revolution of 1952. Now we can confront the accusation that it supported the participation of 'workers-ministers'.

We say right now that the POR was *opposed* to 'co-government' in 1952, and to the Comando Politico naming 'worker-ministers' for the Torres government in 1970. WP lies shamelessly about these two episodes. *From then on*, the tactical problem which the POR faced was of launching a series of demands which would allow the masses to become conscious of the character of that participation, as contrary to their class interests, and their revolutionary demands. To use an analogy which we suppose WP will not reproach us for, the conduct of the POR followed the same orientation as that of the Bolshevik Party after the formation of the first coalition, and especially during the June demonstrations.

## NOT A 'NORMAL' GOVERNMENT

Why was the question of 'workers-ministers' and 'co-government' posed in Bolivia? It is obvious that it isn't a case of a 'normal' capitalist government. On behalf of the bourgeoisie, or of its petty bourgeois representatives, the incorporation of that type of ministers starts from the need to liquidate a situation of dual-power, more or less developed, through the identification of the working class with the government and with the apparatus of the bourgeois state in general. It is a 'peaceful' way of stopping the development of the masses towards their own power, which will prepare a much more violent bourgeois offensive; it is an instrument in order to disorganise the masses in a revolutionary situation, when a frontal attack is not yet a possibility.

In their turn the capitulationist tendencies of the leaderships of the workers movement use the 'co-government' formula in order to brake, from the breast of the mass organisations themselves, their revolutionary progression, subordinating them to the bourgeois government. For that, it is necessary that the participation of the 'worker-ministers' verifies itself in very precise conditions, as a simple annexe of the government, as a guarantee of its acts and decisions. The algebraic aspect resides in the political attitude of the mass movement, which can oscillate between support to the presence of those ministers, understanding it as a form of representation of their class

interests, and the repudiation of all collaboration with the government, once the differentiation with the petty bourgeois representatives of the bourgeoisie has occurred. The task of the revolutionary party is to impel and precipitate the said differentiation, in order to transform it into a rupture, supporting itself on the progressive tendencies of the mass movement.

In 1952, "right from the start the proletariat showed no confidence in the petty bourgeois leadership and imposed its own elected representatives in the cabinet" (Theses from the Tenth Congress of the POR, quoted above). The left-wing of the MNR, with Lechin at the head, launched the formula of 'co-government' in order to institutionalise the collaboration with Paz Estenssoro, subject the COB to the government, and castrate its soviet-type development. The POR systematically criticised the 'co-government', and the tactical objective which imposed itself was that of denouncing the betrayal of Lechin. The fundamental scenario of this battle was the COB. "The policy of the POR in the breast of the COB consisted in struggling for the effectivisation of the independence of the working class (also before the government), and in accentuating the duality of power. Due to a PORist initiative, it was decided that the decisions of the COB were an imperative mandate on the 'worker-ministers'. When the struggle within the cabinet between the right and left movimientista tendencies (the worker-ministers who constituted Lechinism were among the latter) broke out, the POR launched the slogan of more worker-ministers, and, therefore, the expulsion from the government of the right, a demand which remained beyond Lechin and Company. This slogan, as many others, had a pedagogical character, it sought to demonstrate to the workers the non-revolutionary character of the MNR government, and, also, the connections and bonds which united the movimientista left with reaction" <sup>6</sup>.

## STRUGGLE AGAINST 'CO-GOVERNMENT'

These are the facts and the intervention of the POR in 1952. The struggle against 'co-government' was waged starting from the aspirations and mobilisations of the masses themselves. The content which the masses gave to the presence of the 'worker-minister' was in contradiction with the political objective of the MNR, and of Lechin, and it was this contradiction which had to break out, making both elements clash. WP imagines that it can be achieved thanks to a literary denunciation; in reality, the only thing gained via such methods are assistance to the manoeuvres of the conciliators and the government, because a denunciation as such cannot impel and organise the

effective intervention of the masses, and is in fact a sectarian obstacle.

We will draw attention, in order to jog the memory of some people, to the intervention of the Bolsheviks: "On the placards which had been prepared by the Bolsheviks for the cancelled demonstration of June 10, and which were afterward carried by the demonstrators of June 18, a central place was occupied by the slogan: 'Down with the Ten Minister-Capitalists!' . . . In the government besides the 'Ten Minister-Capitalists' there were also six Minister-Compromisers. The Bolshevik placards had nothing to say of them. On the contrary, according to the sense of the slogan, the Minister-Capitalists were to be replaced by Minister-Socialists, representatives of the Soviet majority. It was exactly the sense of the Bolshevik placards that I expressed before the Soviet Congress: Break your bloc with the liberals, remove the bourgeois ministers and replace them with your Peshekhonovs. In proposing to the Soviet majority to take power, the Bolsheviks did not, of course, bind themselves in the least as to their attitude to these Peshekhonovs . . ." <sup>7</sup>

## CONCERNING SUPPORT AND FRONTS

Comrade Lora, who like every revolutionary is implacable with his own history and that of his party, totally clarified the legend of 'critical support'. The formula was used by the XII plenum of the IEC of the IV. International, November 1952, in its resolution on Bolivia, when it stated that the position of the POR "concretised itself in critical support given to the MNR government, accompanied by a revolutionary activity directly among the masses, in order that the latter exercise and reinforce their pressure, and develop their autonomous organisation in the unions and in the militias". But the reality of the positions of the POR in the 1952 revolution is something different: "The ideological confusionism conquered the ranks of the POR itself. 'Critical support' for the MNR government was frequently mentioned, as if it was a part of its traditional programme. But it happens, that as a party line there was no 'critical support' or lack of criticism of the MNR, but the most bitter criticism of its most important measures, of precisely those which Stalinists and nationalists referred to in their frustrated attempt to demonstrate its 'anti-imperialist' and 'revolutionary' character. The policy of the POR was orientated to breaking the masses from nationalist control, and not to proclaiming the revolutionary praiseworthiness of nationalism" <sup>8</sup>. If the philistines can be scandalised by the 'ideological confusionism' of a revolutionary party, we



Guillermo Lora

remind them in passing of the similar situation the Bolshevik Party underwent after the February revolution.

The issue of 'critical support' was one of the most important questions which precipitated the confrontation between the POR and the Pabloite leadership, which criticised the refusal of the Bolivian leadership to support the MNR government.

Using political fraud once again, WP quotes a paragraph from the Theses of the Tenth Congress as a proof of the sin. It concerns a political fraud because that section of the Theses refer to the position of the POR in the face of the threat of an imperialist coup: "At the present time, our tactic consists in grouping our forces, in uniting the proletariat and the peasants in one bloc in order to defend a government *which isn't ours*, and to which we apply an implacable critique, before the imminent threat of the latifundist and imperialist reaction" <sup>9</sup>. In January 1953 a reactionary coup attempt had already occurred, and imperialism combined negotiations with the government alongside preparations for a new attempt. The fall of the government in favour of an 'oligarchic restoration' was a burning political question, and it is in the above quoted terms, of defense of the government in the face of a coup, of a circumstantial agreement without renouncing the strictest differentiation and the most intransigent criticism, that the POR established its tactical orientation in those months. Only sectarians can mistake this position with that of 'support' to the nationalist government.

## SOVIETS: MYTH AND REALITY

WP has the quite strange virtue, in addition to those already indicated, of

not discovering soviets where they actually exist, in order to later invent their necessity. At no moment in their 'analysis' of the 1952 revolution is it agreed that the COB took on a soviet character. The Popular Assembly only reached the level of a 'proto-soviet' (sic), and WP gives us the recipe whereby it could have been transformed into a real soviet. <sup>10</sup>

We will put the recipes aside, because they only serve for the self-proclamation as revolutionaries of those who give obvious advice from far away and much later, and we will examine the development of the class struggle. The COB developed its soviet character in a very advanced form, bearing in mind that the army had been destroyed and workers militias built, and that the masses engaged in direct action. In this same way, the POR posed in its time the slogan of 'All power to the COB'. The situation of the Popular Assembly was simultaneously more advanced and more backward, and we cannot but lament the fact if reality doesn't correspond to the schemas. More advanced from the point of view of the leading role of the revolutionary party; more backward if we examine the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses.

According to the analysis of the POR: "The soviets are such by their organisational amplitude and by the functions which they assume: the indisputable authority of the masses, which for the latter are the expression of its power and of its tendency to govern the country, and not by its radicalism . . . The common error of the leftist critics of the Assembly consist in their confusing soviets with extremism or with insurrection. The grandiose channel of mobilisation of the masses, was called upon to convert itself into the leading head of the insurrection. At the opportune moment, that is to say, when the masses had materially placed themselves to fight the military government for the rule of the state, it would have launched the slogan of 'All power to the Popular Assembly' " <sup>11</sup>.

The comparison with February 1917 must be formulated in different terms to those WP enumerates. The effective power resided in the soviets, *as a material force*, and it is the conciliatory leadership which transfers it to the bourgeoisie. The 'April Theses' take this point of departure in order to raise the slogan of 'All power to the soviets'. This wasn't the situation of the Popular Assembly. It had to precisely develop its material force, and as the means to develop it the POR posed the vital questions of its organisation and extension, of armaments, of the majority worker leadership of the mines and education. The only thing WP can oppose to this is . . . one had to organise soviets. The political mechanism, the intervention of the mass movement, are a

mystery for these critics who think that it is enough for someone to raise an idea, because it isn't even a matter of a slogan, in order for the masses to follow it.

The Founding Documents of the Popular Assembly established that its objective was the installation of the workers government and socialism, they

define it as an "organ of the power of the masses", and declare that with its existence the process of dual power is *initiated*. To accelerate this process wasn't a question of virulent words and expressions, but of the material development of the mass movement. The slogan 'All power to the Popular Assembly' was inscribed perfectly in its develop-

ment and in the orientation of the POR. Its concrete posing, as an insurrectional slogan and not as a propagandist expression, required precise conditions, without which it was a simple expression of wishes, or a calamitous adventure.

#### Footnotes

1. One of the virtues of the POR, and of cde. Lora, is that they have published an extensive amount of books on the class struggle in Bolivia, in particular on the 1952 revolution, and on the workers movement and its vanguard. They have the excellent habit of expounding their political trajectory and positions in print. In 1978, Guillermo Lora published *Contribucion a la historia politica de Bolivia*, in 2 volumes of 384 and 522 pages.
2. *Contribucion* . . . Vol 2, p232.
3. *Contribucion* . . . Vol 2, p242.
4. *Contribucion* . . . Vol 2, p255. We do not have at our disposal any direct version of the Theses of the IX Congress and therefore quote from *Contribucion*.
5. These quotes are taken from an anthology in French of the works of cde. Lora, entitled *Bolivie: de la naissance du P.O.R. a l'assemblee populaire* (EDI, Paris 1972). They were retranslated by us into Spanish and therefore of course, do not coincide with the original in literal terms.
6. *Contribucion* . . . Vol 2, p252-53. On the next line Lora explains in what conditions the POR launched the slogan 'All power to the COB'.
7. *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky, Appendix III to the chapter *The Soviet Congress and the June Demonstration*, p488.
8. *Contribucion* . . . Vol 2, p240.
9. The quote used by WP from the Theses of the X Congress comes immediately after the paragraph quoted by us.
10. The Popular Assembly referred to came into existence in 1971 after a right-wing coup attempt against the "left" Nationalist government of General Torres. Workers and peasants organisations were represented within it, alongside political parties and representatives of the teachers and students. For a fuller account, see *Workers Power* newspaper no 40, "Bolivia 1970/71: a revolution disarmed".
11. Quoted by Lora in his work *De la Asamblea Popular al golpe fascista*, published in the compendium *Estudios historico-politicos sobre Bolivia*, in 1978, p189. Previous editions are in existence.

## A REPLY TO GRAMAR

### by Stuart King

Gramar complains in his reply that the impact of the degeneration of the Fourth International "does not even figure" in our analysis of the POR. He goes on to say that the POR was far from being a united party in April 1952 implying that any "mistakes" of the POR could be put down to the evil influence of the "Pabloites". If the comrade had bothered to read the Theses in "The Death Agony of the Fourth International" dealing with the POR in 1952, he would have seen that we indeed set the positions and mistakes of the POR within the context of the triumph of Pablo's perspectives within the International Secretariat.

To say this however, does not absolve the POR's leadership, and Guillermo Lora as one of its principal leaders, from their responsibility. Firstly, there is no evidence, and Gramar provides us with none, that Lora disagreed with or opposed the line of the International, even partially, until the end of 1953. Indeed, most of the quotes demonstrating the POR's opportunist positions on the MNR, worker ministers etc, come from the POR's 10th Congress in June 1953, the positions that Lora *defended* against the Pabloites' demand for further liquidation. Secondly, if these mistakes, committed by a young party, under the influence of a centrist International leadership, had been corrected or criticised by Lora or the POR in retrospect, this would be one thing. But we are talking of positions which were repeated in 1970/71 with equally disastrous results, and are defended by the POR—Masas (and the European representatives of the FIT) — today.

All the evidence points to the POR, even before 1952, as failing to distinguish itself clearly from, and in intransigent opposition to, the bourgeois nationalist MNR, and in particular, from its left wing. It certainly did not organise itself in terms of membership or structure as a democratic centralist

combat party. Referring to 1950, Lora describes the POR as existing "more as a set of ideas than as a tightly knit organisation"<sup>1</sup>, yet it is precisely in the successful use of the united front tactic with other parties, that a politically homogenous and centralised party is essential. From the "Theses of Pulacayo" on, Lora demonstrates a chronic 'processism' in his approach to the winning of the masses to a revolutionary perspective. The theses, themselves unclear on the question of government, which were adopted by the miners union at its 1946 Congress, are endowed with virtually magical properties in maintaining and embodying the "revolutionary consciousness" of the miners.

Indeed, the very idea of concentrating upon getting trade union bodies to adopt general programmatic theses is a very curious one indeed. The task of strike and factory committees, unions, union federations and in the whole first phase of their existence, soviets, are as combat organs of the proletariat. In this period they have the character of a united front — agreed unity in action, freedom and diversity of political discussion within them. For this reason revolutionaries try to win them to concrete actions or plans of action, and in that process seek to maximise the party's representation in these bodies. This is a struggle for leadership. It is or should be no surprise that winning the Bolivian miners union to the Pulacayo theses was an ephemeral gain if the POR did not win a commensurate leadership role in the union. The Pulacayo theses might have been the best programme in the world, but a trade union or even a soviet is not the instrument for fighting for a programme (i.e. a prolonged and complex strategy). For this task there is only one instrument — *the party!* For Lora, however, this failure to organise the POR as a party fighting for its

programme appears to have little detrimental effect, for he tells us:

**"However, our work did in fact have enormous importance, for it enabled PORista ideology to penetrate the social and intellectual life of the country to the extent that after the insurrection of April 1952, the ideas contained in the Pulacayo theses became the predominant political tendency" 2.**

The idea that the revolutionary programme can 'penetrate' or 'permeate' the working class, not only separate from, but apparently in inverse proportion to, the development of the revolutionary party as its vanguard, is either chronic self-delusion, or pure syndicalism. Of course, the dominant political tendency within the Bolivian working class after 1952 was not revolutionary communism, but the petit-bourgeois nationalism of the MNR, and the failure of the POR to distinguish itself from this current explains why "the masses confused the nationalism of the MNR with the programme they adopted at Pulacayo" (Gamar). Here we, unlike comrade Gamar, do not blame the 'confusion' of the masses, but the wrong politics of the POR.

Despite the ringing declarations of Pulacayo in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat, against class collaboration, against worker ministers as 'merely puppets of the bourgeoisie', the practice and tactics of the POR were very different.

In 1947, Lora entered the Bolivian congress at the head of a political bloc between the POR and the leaders of the FSTMB — the Frente Unico Proletario (known as the Bloque Minero Parlamentario). The opportunist labour leaders — such as Lechin — made use of this bloc with the 'revolutionaries' to further their left image, but almost immediately proceeded to use their positions to attack the POR in the unions. By June 1948, the Lechin group had made a deal with the PUR's (party of Rosca), to purge the POR from the FSTMB and dump the Pulacayo programme. This political accommodation to the labour leaders, who ideologically and in the political practice were unreconstructed MNRers, was even reflected in unclear boundaries of POR membership. The wide interpretation of the term 'PORista' reflects the amorphousness of the Party. Incredible as it may seem, Juan Lechin, who as Lora himself points out, never broke from his MNR politics, was considered a 'PORista' or 'affiliated to POR' between 1946–52, before he rejoined the MNR prior to the April 1952 revolution. 3

Given this record it is clear why the POR's "political physiognomy before the masses was diluted" in 1952 (Gamar). The FI's Third World Congress summed up the POR's record as follows:

**"In Bolivia, our past inadequacy in distinguishing ourselves from the political tendencies in the country which exploit the mass movement, sometimes the lack of clarity in our objectives and in our tactics, the loose organisational structure as well as the absence of patient, systematic work in working class circles, has caused a certain decline in our influence and an organisational crisis". 4**

Having quite accurately diagnosed the poison, the leadership of the FI promptly prescribed as an antidote . . . a larger dose of the poison!

**"In the event of the mobilisation of the masses under the preponderant impulsion, or influence of the MNR, our section should support the movement with all its strength, should not abstain, but on the contrary, intervene energetically in it with the aim of pushing it as far as possible up to the seizure of power by the MNR on the basis of a progressive program of anti-imperialist united front.**

On the contrary, if in the course of these mass mobilisations, our section proves to be in a position to share influence over the revolutionary masses with the MNR, it will advance the slogan of a workers and peasants government of the two parties on the basis, however, of the same programme, a government based on committees of workers,

peasants and revolutionary elements of the urban petit-bourgeoisie". 5

So the Pablo-led IS was proposing the POR enter an MNR government — i.e. a popular front with a bourgeois party — on a 'progressive programme'. All in the name of the anti-imperialist united front and the workers' and peasants' government! Although Lora was prevented from attending the 1951 Congress, by imprisonment, there is no evidence that he disagreed with its decisions. The positions that the POR took following April 1952, which Lora subscribes to, clearly follow the line laid down by the IS, while the 10th Congress theses (which Roberto Gamar thinks 'rearmed' the party) merely enshrine the 1951 theses.

## THE CHARACTERISATION OF THE M.N.R. AND THE QUESTION OF SUPPORT

**"We are told, instead that it (the POR) supported the MNR government, that it favoured the entrance of 'workers' ministers' into it. Lastly, it refused to fight for a workers' and peasants' government, and for arming the masses. We will demonstrate at once that the accusations of WP are simple slanders" (Gamar)**

We are slanderers, according to Gamar, for saying the POR gave 'critical support' to the MNR government. Why then did the POR raise as its central slogan in April 1952 "Restoration of the constitution of the country through the formation of an MNR government which obtained a majority in the 1951 elections"? Why did the POR support the MNR's presidential candidate (Paz Estenssoro) in those elections? Why does Lora state: **"Today far from succumbing to the hysteria of a struggle against the MNR, whom the pro-imperialists have described as 'fascists', we are marching with the masses to make the April 9th movement the prelude to the triumph of the workers' and peasants' government". 6**

Lora himself explains the POR's notion of "critical support": **"The POR began by justifiably granting critical support to the MNR government. That is, it desisted from issuing the slogan 'down with the government'; it gave the government critical support against the attacks of imperialism and reaction, and it supported all progressive measures. But at the same time it avoided any expression whatever of confidence in this government. On the contrary it propelled the revolutionary activity of independent organisations of the masses as much as it could. The POR limits its support and sharpens its criticism insofar (!) as the government proves itself incapable of fulfilling the national democratic programme of the revolution, insofar (!) as it hesitates, capitulates, indirectly plays the game of imperialism and reaction." 7** So we are *not* 'slanderers' when we say that the POR gave critical support to the MNR government.

Does refusing to support such a government, to be in favour of struggling against it, to be in favour of its overthrow, mean, as Lora's justification of critical support implies, that we would have been in favour, in 1952, of raising the slogan 'Down with the MNR government'? No it does not. It is one thing to be in favour of overthrowing a government, and quite a separate thing to make this a slogan of the day — i.e. an agitational slogan. Without having won the majority of the proletariat, the army etc, such a slogan would indeed be adventurist. But not to raise the slogan does not necessitate critical support for such a government. Gamar, following Lora, deliberately confuses these questions in order to provide an alibi for Lora's 'critical support'. Then he turns on a straw man position that he labels ours, exclaiming that it: **"Doesn't take into consideration the state of mind of the masses, their political evolution, the place of each slogan. Everything is so simple one must call for the overthrow of the government and power to the soviets" (Gamar)**

Carried away by his own polemic, Gamar finds himself completely at odds with the Bolshevism of 1917. What was Lenin's position in April 1917 when the Central Committee



*Bolivian tin miners*

of the Bolsheviks had to pull up its left wing for raising the slogan "Down with the provisional government" on an armed demonstration of 25-30,000 workers and soldiers? **"Should the provisional government be overthrown immediately? My answer is 1) That it should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchic bourgeois, and not a people's movement; 2) It cannot be overthrown just now, for it is being kept in power by a direct and indirect, a formal actual agreement with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies."**<sup>8</sup> And who was it who consistently opposed this position? It was none other than Kamenev and Co., who consistently adapted towards the Mensheviks and towards a position of giving 'critical support' to the provisional government.

What does the POR's position of critical support lead to? The POR "avoids any expression . . . of confidence"!! Implacable criticism? Constant warnings to the masses of its bourgeois nature; of its deals with imperialism? No — criticism 'insofar' as it is incapable of fulfilling the national democratic tasks, 'insofar' as it plays the game of imperialism and reaction. Here you have the fatal errors of 'critical support' — the failure to raise warnings, to conduct an implacable struggle against a bourgeois government in which the masses have enormous illusions.

Lora and the POR refused to characterise the MNR government as one which defended capitalism and was therefore a bourgeois government. Indeed, Gramscian feels the necessity to put inverted commas around "capitalist" when he refers to the MNR government of 1952. The extensive quote which Gramscian gives sums up succinctly the thoroughly centrist politics of Guillermo Lora: **"The necessity in which the Paz Estenssoro regime finds itself of keeping itself in power either utilising the pressure of imperialism against the masses, imparts its bonapartist sui generis character, just as Trotsky indicated when he analysed the nature of the Cardenas**

government in Mexico. The extreme weakness of the bourgeoisie and national capital do not permit the petit-bourgeois government the development of an independent policy in the face of imperialism, and oblige it to continually capitulate."

A 'petit-bourgeois government'?! What Marxists, apart from the 'Marxists' of the international Spartacist tendency, have ever heard of such a phenomenon? It is merely a centrist convenience to avoid saying what property relations the MNR government actually defended — i.e. bourgeois property. The same goes for the term "Bonapartism sui generis". It comes from the same stable, and has the same purpose, as the term 'Entryism sui generis' (or for that matter, 'centrism sui generis'), coined by Michel Pablo. This 'special kind' of bonapartism, appears to have the great advantage, for those who want to extend 'critical support' to it, of defending neither bourgeois nor proletarian property forms; of being a "petit-bourgeois" or "transitional" government (transitional to what?).

This characterisation of the MNR in power flows naturally enough from Lora's characterisation of the MNR itself: **"The MNR is a mass party, the majority of its leadership is petit-bourgeois but fringed (!) with a few (!) conscious representatives of the nascent industrial bourgeoisie, one of whom is very probably (!) Paz Estenssoro himself. Its ideology, its confused programme, is a mixture of revolutionary aspirations and phrases with opportunist and in the last analysis (!!!) capitulatory practices."**<sup>9</sup>

Imagine this being said of Peronism in 1946, or of Mugabe's ZANU! Paz Estenssoro was a bourgeois, nationalist politician with a long history. He had been in charge of the Mining Bank under the regime of German Busch (1937-9), and was a founder member of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), founded in 1941. This was a nationalist party, which originally leaned towards the Axis powers; in which 'anti-imperialism' and anti-communism coexisted side by side with a virulent anti-semitism (one of the largest tin-mine owners in Bolivia was Mauricio Hochschild — a German Jew). The MNR linked up with a group of fascist-inclined officers (Radepa) and took part in a coup which brought Major Caulbartto Villarroel to power in 1943, with Victor Paz Estenssoro as Treasurer, the most important figure in the government which was overthrown for trying to seek a degree of independence from US imperialism and its direct agents 'the Rosca' (the mine owners).

Such parties and governments were nothing 'new' or 'special'. Neither do they pose 'a series of totally new problems' (Gramscian). They had already been comprehensively analysed by Trotsky. He pointed out many times the similarities between the Kuomintang, the Mexican PRM and the Peruvian APRA. The contrast between Trotsky's and Lora's analyses could not be more striking. On the APRA: **"It (APRA) is a people's front party. A peoples' front is included in the party, as in every combination of such a nature. Direction is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie fears its own workers"**<sup>10</sup>. And on the Cardenas government in Mexico, which Trotsky is supposed (by Lora) to have indicated as having a 'bonapartist sui generis' nature: **"In Mexico the power is in the hands of the national bourgeoisie and we can conquer power only by conquering the majority of the workers and a great part of the peasantry, and then overthrowing the bourgeoisie. There is no other possibility"**.<sup>11</sup>

Trotsky's analysis was clear about the nature of the regimes like Cardenas' in the semi-colonial countries, regimes which leaned on the workers and peasants in their attempts to lessen the weight of imperialism on their countries. They were *bourgeois regimes* to which revolutionaries could give no political support whatsoever! Such regimes set out not to break the hold of imperialism, but to negotiate a better deal for their own stunted national bourgeoisie. Such a course necessitated agrarian reforms, essential to providing their own bourgeoisie with an internal market, as well as tying the peasantry to the bourgeoisie and using its weight to discipline the workers.

It also however, and this is what (according to Trotsky) gave this type of Bonapartism its 'distinctive character', meant taking various measures to reduce and restrict the power of imperialist or imperialist-linked capital; measures which necessitated, to one degree or another, seeking the support of the workers against the fierce resistance put up by the imperialists and their agents. But of course such regimes, ever-conscious of the mortal threat posed to bourgeois property by a mobilised working class, attempted to carefully *control* such mobilisations. Thus 'state capitalist' nationalisations were favoured because the workers apparently face not their own rapacious bourgeoisie, but a 'neutral', 'anti-imperialist' state as employer. Another necessary characteristic of this form of bonapartism is the fostering and support given to the trade union bureaucracy and its integration as far as possible into the state bureaucracy, often via forms of participation and 'co-management'. These are the classic features of 'state capitalist' bonapartist regimes (often using an alliance with the Soviet Union as an additional base of support against imperialism), which are in power in numerous semi-colonial countries — Algeria, Libya, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua to name but a few. In Bolivia the regimes of Paz Estenssoro and later General Torres were archetypal of such governments, as was the government of Peron in Argentina.

Would we give support to such governments under the direct threat of imperialist-backed intervention? For Gramar the answer is obvious — "Yes". He accuses us of "political fraud" for not making clear that a statement by the POR on its support for the government was made after the attempted coup of June 1953, which involved prominent MNR members and sections of the Army and police. The POR said at this time, June 1953: "At the present moment, our tactic consists in grouping our forces, to unit the proletariat and the peasants in a single bloc to defend a government which is not ours and to which we apply implacable criticism in the face of imminent threat of latifundist and imperialist reaction. Far from advancing the slogan of the overthrow of the Paz Estenssoro regime, we support it in order that it resists the offensive of (La Rosca) and we call on the international proletariat to defend unconditionally the Bolivian revolution and its transitional government".<sup>12</sup>

Firstly, we have already demonstrated that the POR had a position of 'critical support' right from the beginning of the regime, not as Gramar implies, in response to an attempted coup. Secondly, revolutionaries do not change their position of refusing to support bourgeois governments, even 'anti-imperialist' ones, under the threat of counter-revolutionary coup d'états. Lenin lambasted the Bolshevik compromisers who fell into such opportunism at the time of the Kornilov coup against Kerensky: "It is my conviction that those who become unprincipled are people who (like Volodarsky) slide into defencism or (like other Bolsheviks) into a bloc with the SRs, into supporting the Provisional government. Their attitude is absolutely wrong and unprincipled. We shall become defencists *only after* the transfer of power to the proletariat . . . Even now we must not support Kerensky's government. This is unprincipled. We may be asked: aren't we going to fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing; there is a dividing line here, which is being stepped over by some Bolsheviks who fall into compromise and allow themselves to be *carried away* by the course of events"<sup>13</sup> Gramar does not even have the excuse of being 'carried away by the course of events': he is defending this unprincipled position some twenty years later!

A revolutionary position following January 1953 would have had nothing to do with giving one iota of support to the Paz Estenssoro government. It would have aimed at mobilising the armed workers and peasants against the coup. It would have exposed the government's vacillations by raising a series of demands, directed not so much at the MNR government, but at the rank and file of the army and the work-

ers and peasants, to immediately implement a radical agrarian reform — 'land to the tiller' (the government commission had spent, by this time, months dragging its feet on the agrarian law). These tactics, the revolutionary rather than the opportunist use of the united front tactic, have nothing in common with offering 'critical support' or 'defence' to the MNR government. Revolutionaries would have certainly defended the *gains* that the masses, through their own struggles, had won in April 1952, but that has nothing in common with defending the government as such — a bourgeois government — which had every intention of clawing back those gains the moment it had demobilised the masses. To do so could only *reinforce* the illusions of the masses that such a government was 'supportable', 'theirs', etc.

## ENTRY INTO A BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENT AND "WORKER MINISTERS"

"We say right now that the POR was *opposed* to 'co-government' in 1952, and to the Comando Politico naming 'worker-ministers' for the Torres government in 1970. WP lies shamelessly about these two episodes" (Gramar).

In Gramar's justification of the POR's unprincipled record with regard to worker ministers, two related arguments co-exist side by side. The first argument that he uses is that the POR opposed 'worker ministers' or 'co-government' right from the start of the two revolutionary situations of 1952 and 1970, but that once worker ministers were installed, the POR developed tactics equivalent to those developed by the Bolsheviks to expose the nature of that participation. This argument is simply untrue. But secondly, and more importantly, there is lurking in Gramar's polemic, a position which argues that in the early period of the 1952 revolution, the entry (or 'imposition' as he likes to call it) of worker ministers into the MNR government *was not the same as* 'co-government'.

Gramar tells us once again that the MNR in 1952 was not the 'case of a 'normal' capitalist government'. Such a 'normal' capitalist government would seek to resolve the dual power in its favour by the incorporation of the reformist leaders into the government, using them to subordinate the workers' organisations to the bourgeois regime. "For that, it is necessary that the participation verifies itself in very precise conditions, as a *simple annexe of the government*, as a guarantee of its acts and decisions" (Gramar — our emphasis).

So were the worker ministers, or were they not, initially a 'simple annexe of the government?' Apparently not, for then we are told: "The left wing of the MNR, with Lechin at its head, launched the formula of 'co-government' in order to *institutionalise* the collaboration with Paz Estenssoro, subject the COB to the government, and castrate its soviet type development. The POR systematically criticised the 'co-government'." (Gramar — our emphasis). This is in fact a shamefaced attempt to make a distinction between Lechin's 'institutionalised co-government' and the 'imposition' of 'genuine worker ministers'.

While Gramar never brings this argument fully out into the open, its originator, Guillermo Lora, is much more brazen about his opportunism and explains in various writings why it *was* possible to support 'worker ministers' in 1952, and why this is different to the 'non-supportable' concept of 'co-government': "Immediately after the April revolution, Labour leaders occupied these ministries. This fact has given rise to considerable misinterpretation. Some people have argued from it that during the first stage of the revolution there was a period of co-government, but this is an extremely superficial conclusion . . . In fact the first worker ministers were real representatives of the workers engaged in imposing the COB's decisions on the government. It was therefore vital that ministers should be accountable to the COB assembly and should keep it constantly informed about their work".<sup>14</sup> No wonder the POR could give its support to the entry of worker ministers if they

thought they were the 'real representatives of the workers' imposing 'the COB's decisions on the government'.

How would a party hope to break the miners away from their massive illusions in Lechin, a labour bureaucrat with a proven collaborationist record, if they were arguing that these ministers and Lechin himself were 'real representatives of the workers'. Lora goes on to explain how these 'real representatives of the workers' gradually became the opposite: **'Later the role and function of the worker ministers changed radically and they came to act as a petit-bourgeois fifth column in the labour movement merely representing the wishes of the government'**.<sup>15</sup>

A fifth column, one might add, whose credentials as 'real representatives of the workers', the POR vouched for from the beginning.

The POR's schema is thus fairly easily summarised. The MNR government is not a 'normal' capitalist government, it is 'bonapartism sui generis', it can be pressurised by both the workers and the imperialists, it is more over, a 'transitional' regime. The workers, who have 'imposed' their ministers and their policies on it, are dominant as long as workers keep up the pressure on the government. Therefore it is possible to give it 'critical support', to be in favour of 'worker ministers'. As long as the workers maintained their pressure on the 'transitional government' it moved leftward. Right wing elements would leave and then either there will be a left MNR government or even a POR/MNR 'workers' and peasants' government', all the things that communists should have done, is "ultra leftist", is being "pedantic", is being "out of touch with the masses". Such "ultra-leftism" would spoil the whole 'transitional' schema. Such is the POR's Marxism.

But Gramar is not finished with his apologetics for Guillermo Lora's position on 'worker ministers'. To 'back up' his argument he brings in — the Bolsheviks! The comrade explains to us that: **"The content which the masses gave to the presence of 'worker ministers' (their illusions — WP) was in contradiction with the political objective of the MNR and of Lechin, and it was this contradiction which had to break out, making both elements clash"**

Precisely: the question was how to break the workers' illusions in Lechin and Co, and win them to a revolutionary programme and party. Leaving aside for the moment the fact that the POR helped peddle these illusions with its claptrap about Lechin and Co being 'real representatives of the workers', how did the POR set about this task and how does this compare to the methods the Bolsheviks used in relation to the 'Soviet ministers' in the Provisional government? Lora tells us: **"When the struggle within the cabinet between right and left movimentista tendencies . . . broke out, the POR launched the slogan of more worker ministers and therefore (!) the expulsion from the government of the right, a demand which remained beyond Lechin and company"**.<sup>16</sup>

Did the POR address demands to the COB and the 'worker ministers' to break with the bourgeoisie? Did they raise the slogans 'Down with the capitalist ministers', 'Down with Estensorro' etc? No. They raised the slogan 'More worker ministers', and 'therefore', the expulsion of the right. Why 'therefore'? 'Therefore' has nothing to do with it. It was precisely the expulsion of *all* the capitalist ministers that *was* not called for! More 'worker ministers' of Lechin's stripe would have happily coexisted with the Estensorro's of the MNR. This is a centrist evasion, a cover up for the fact that the POR precisely did not raise the equivalent of the Bolshevik slogan 'down with the capitalist ministers'. And why didn't they? Because of course, they were against the MNR government's overthrow, they gave it 'critical support'. Their perspective was not one involving a sharp struggle with the MNR, of placing a series of demands on Lechin and Co, which would either force them to break with Estensorro or expose them as class collaborators before the masses. It was a

perspective of pushing the government leftwards, of achieving 'more worker ministers'. This is why they raised the slogan for 'complete control of the government by the left', i.e. the left MNR.

Gramar even tries to drag in Trotsky to defend Lora. He asks, didn't Trotsky call for more 'worker ministers', for more Peshekkonovs in 1917? Gramar 'forgets' one thing. As Trotsky says, "a *central place* was occupied by the slogan 'Down with the ten capitalist ministers' ". The Bolsheviks refused to give 'critical support' to the coalition government. They opposed vigorously the entry into the provisional government of 'worker ministers' despite them being responsible directly to the soviets. They were not in favour of more 'worker ministers', they were in favour of kicking *all* the capitalist ministers *out*. Trotsky's position was a million miles away from that of Lora's on the question of 'worker ministers': **"The masses, in so far as they were not yet for the Bolsheviks, stood solid for the entry of the socialists into the government. If it's a good thing to have Kerensky as minister, then so much the better six Kerensky's. The masses did not know that this was called coalition with the bourgeoisie, and that the bourgeoisie wanted to use these socialists as a cover for their activities against the people"**<sup>17</sup>

So what the Russian masses didn't know in April 1917, the POR, the claimed leadership of the Bolivian workers and peasants, 'didn't know' in April 1952, and again in 1970. Moreover, the Bolsheviks were not afraid of giving expression to this opposition to coalitionism: whatever the momentary illusions of the proletariat that 'worker ministers' in a capitalist government amounted to soviet control of the latter: **"One 1st May the Executive Committee (of the Soviet — WP), having passed through all the stages of vacillation known to nature, decided by a majority of 41 votes against 18 with three abstaining, to enter into a coalition government. Only the Bolsheviks and a small group of Menshevik Internationalists voted against it."**<sup>18</sup>

## SOVIETS AND THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT

Was the COB a 'soviet', as Lora and Gramar claim, or was it in fact only the embryo of a soviet, retaining many of the features of its origins as a trade union confederation, and rapidly being turned into a 'popular power' adjunct of the MNR government? We would argue that it was the latter. Comrades may consider this distinction 'pedantic'. Yet a doctor or midwife that could not distinguish between an embryo and a baby — let alone a mature human being, would find themselves in very severe practical difficulties. Our contention is that the COB had not in 1952/3, and did not thereafter, give birth to soviets. This fact should have determined the slogans and tactics necessary to help the masses bring this about. Lora and the POR (and Gramar's) method is completely different.

The soviet for them is a hollow-sounding title to be awarded to any convenient *existing* workers' organisation. Of course, soviets do not fall from the stars, they have to be created — often *out of* existing workers' organisations: strike committees, factory committees, united front committees, peasant unions or soldiers' rank and file organisations. But to do this requires a vigorous struggle for 'sovietising' these bodies, in revolutionary struggle against the government, the employers, the imperialists and therefore against the union bureaucracy and the petit-bourgeois nationalist or imperialist currents. Why? Because even fully-formed soviets — under Menshevik leadership — can become instruments of class collaboration, subordinating and ultimately conceding their own liquidation. The Russian and German experiences of 1917 — 19 demonstrate this — positively and negatively. The 1960s and 1970s in Latin America have shown countless examples under the rubric of "peoples' power".

The COB in fact had many of the characteristics of its predecessor the CON (Central Obrera Nacional), a trade union federation of miners, flour workers, print workers and

factory workers of Oruro. Indeed, Lora argues: "The COB was a revival of the CON both in terms of its ideology and its personnel, and like its predecessor, it was organised by the FSTMB" <sup>19</sup> Or to be more accurate, by the leadership of the FSTMB. Of course, the circumstances in which the COB came into existence, a revolutionary situation, made it *potentially* a very different type of organ. But was it a 'soviet' – an organ of struggle embracing the vast mass of workers, peasants (and soldiers) through their directly elected and recallable delegates? Did it represent a leading soviet, in direct relation to local soviets and peasant committees? Clearly it was neither of these. The COB never reached this stage of development, becoming rapidly bureaucratised, which is why we describe it in April 1952 as an 'embryo soviet' <sup>20</sup>

From the point of view of both the centre and the left of the MNR, the COB was seen as a means of leaning on the

joined the COB through their TU leaderships who, apart from their various political tendencies, brought along very different forms of organisation. The founders of the COB appealed to the old leaders and not to the democratically elected rank and file delegates. This organisational (sic) mistake carried within it the seeds of the weakness which facilitated its bureaucratisation and its isolation in relation to the masses and its artificial control by the government." <sup>21</sup>

Is this the description of a 'soviet' – one that workers join through their trade union leaderships? A 'soviet' where Juan Lechin, was elected by these leaderships, at the first meeting, as Executive Secretary *for life*? A 'national soviet' where local affiliates had to elect as their representatives people resident in the capital? A 'national soviet' the *first* congress of which was delayed until October 1954!

By this time, the MNR had achieved almost complete control of the delegates. Within two or three months of the setting up of the COB, its headquarters was based in the Presidential Palace. POR members were, at the instigation of Lechin and the MNR leadership, being expelled from the unions and blocked from being delegates. Artificial organisations were being created by the government to pack the COB, and public employees along with paid TU officials were being drafted in as delegates. Lora recounts how the secretary of Press and Propaganda in the MNR government sat as a delegate 'representing' his employees! When and in what way, Comrade Gramar, did the COB develop a 'soviet character'? Isn't Workers Power *absolutely right* when it describes the COB as an 'embryo' or 'proto-soviet' which *could* have developed into a full soviet only through a political struggle against the bonapartist project of the MNR? This would have involved concentrating on building Soviets both in and outside of La Paz, drawing in and organising peasant syndicates in the localities, calling for the construction of rank and file soldiers' committees in the army, drawing their delegates into the soviets, strengthening and placing under soviet discipline the militias, and ensuring that all delegates were elected by rank and file factory and workplace committees subject to immediate recall.

Every one of these measures would have been fought against by the MNR, particularly its 'left' wing, but their achievement offered the only possibility of establishing a real dual power situation, and opening the road to a workers' and peasants government. As Trotsky pointed out in Spain: three conditions were necessary to fulfill these tasks: "A party: once more a party: again a party!" The POR in its unwillingness to distinguish itself politically and organisationally from the left of the MNR, failed all three conditions!

We have already dealt thoroughly with why the Popular Assembly of 1971 was only a proto-soviet in our previous article <sup>12</sup>. Gramar's 'reply' only exposes all the weaknesses and contradictions of his position. He tells us that we cannot make a comparison with the soviets in Russia in 1917 by using the equivalent of 'All Power to the Soviets' in relation to the Popular Assembly. Why? Because "this was not the situation of the Popular Assembly, it had precisely to develop its material force." (Gramar). Gramar cannot have it both ways. Either the Popular Assembly was a 'soviet', i.e. an organ because it embraces the mass of the workers and peasants in a country, has a gigantic 'material' force behind it, or it does not and is therefore not a soviet, but only represents the potential development of dual power. The fact that the popular assembly declared itself for "The installation of a workers government and socialism" and defined itself as "an organ of the power of the masses", initiating a period of dual power (Gramar) is neither here nor there in determining whether it represents a real soviet. Revolutionaries as opposed to centrists and demagogues, have never taken such rhetoric for reality. They look at the actual class forces and policies that organisations represent.

We note that Comrade Gramar is unable to answer any of our points about the failure of POR-Masas to fight to turn the assembly into a real soviet, in particular its failure to raise

Guillermo LORA

## BOLIVIE :

### DE LA NAISSANCE DU P.O.R. A L'ASSEMBLÉE POPULAIRE

Textes politiques du mouvement ouvrier  
et du parti ouvrier révolutionnaire

INTRODUCTION ET NOTES DE  
François et Catherine CHESNAIS

TRADUCTION COLLECTIVE  
sous la direction de  
François et Catherine CHESNAIS

EDI paris  
ETUDES ET DOCUMENTATION INTERNATIONALES  
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workers and peasants organisations. Neither wing had *any* real intention of allowing the COB to develop in the direction of a real soviet organ, establishing a dual power with the MNR government. While Lechin and Butrow, as labour leaders, also wished to use the power of the workers' organisations in their struggle with the right of the MNR, they showed themselves absolutely as one with Estensorro in taking measures to stifle the development of the COB in the direction of a soviet.

How does Lora himself describe the organisation of the COB and its political characteristics? As follows: "Perhaps one of the most serious mistakes in organising the COB was that it was created from the TU leaders who very quickly gave their allegiance to the petit-bourgeois government, and that it became crystallised in the middle level leadership cadre . . . it would have been correct to have proceeded in opposite manner, from the bottom upwards. The workers

political slogans in relation to breaking up the army (because of its reliance instead on Torres and the 'Left' officers to arm the workers) beyond *asserting* that they did so. Bring forward the quotes comrade, the slogans raised, the concrete practice of the party! We know you cannot without proving us correct. Gramar's support of the POR's refusal to raise the slogan "All power to the Popular Assembly" in 1971 proves that he, like Lora, fails to understand the transitional nature of the demand for a Workers and Peasants Government, only seeing its concrete posing as an insurrectional slogan. The opportunist kernel to this apparently 'left' position is revealed when we look at the POR's use of the Workers and Peasants Government slogan in 1952/3.

As important as the fight for soviets was, the question of the masses relation to the government and the slogans necessary to pose the question of a government which really stood for the interests of the workers and peasants was of equal importance for a revolutionary party in Bolivia. Comrade Gramar claims that the POR raised as a governmental slogan "All Power to the COB". We can find no evidence that the POR itself raised this slogan — certainly not between April 1952 and June 1953. But no doubt comrade Gramar will be able to tell us where and when the POR raised this slogan. Certainly we know that the POR *was* raising the slogan for "complete control of the Cabinet by the left" during this period, a position completely in line with the FI's and the POR's perspective of pushing the MNR leftwards. In one of Guillermo Lora's few (partial) self criticisms he reveals the disastrous consequences of this slogan: **"This slogan could be justified (!) at a stretch as a pedagogical (!) measure intended to show the masses, who had been blinded by passion for the MNR, that the left of the MNR was in no way capable of taking power against imperialism. However the demand revealed in reality an enormous principled mistake, to believe that the workers would come to power through Lechinism. It would have been more correct to have channelled the mass mobilisation through the slogan "All power to the COB"."** 23

#### "ALL POWER TO THE C.O.B." ?

We have already shown the bankruptcy of the position of calling for "more worker ministers", of "complete control of the cabinet by the left", but what about the slogan "All Power to the COB" in the circumstances in 1952? How does this slogan relate to the question of a workers and peasants government and the Bolshevik slogan "All power to the soviets"? Given that the COB formed in April 1952 was *not* a soviet such a slogan could only have been correct if it was launched in the context of the fight to turn the COB into a real soviet body — a body representing the workers' organisations nationally, as well as the peasant committees and sindicatos. Such a slogan would have to have been linked to demands on the "worker ministers" to break with the bourgeoisie, to base themselves on the workers and peasants organisations, to enter onto the road of struggle for a workers' and peasants' government. The masses would have to have been organised around a series of demands — a programme of action — placed on these labour leaders. Central to these would have been the immediate nationalisation of the mines, without compensation and under workers control, land to the tillers, arm the workers and dissolve the army into the workers militia. A programme of action not just left at the level of "demands on leaders" but fought for through occupations of the mines, land seizures, revolutionary fraternisation with the troops etc. In such circumstances the slogan "All Power to the COB" would have had the same meaning as the Bolshevik slogan "All Power to the Soviets", where the soviets were under the control of the mensheviks and SRs, it would have been a demand on the workers and peasants leaders to break with the bourgeoisie and take the power.

As with the Bolshevik use of the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" — a transitional slogan — it would have had a power-

ful use in exposing the weakness and vacillations of the 'left' of the MNR and winning its base to revolutionary communism. If under the pressure of the masses Lechin and his allies had entered this road of struggle, such would have been the opposition from the imperialists and their agents, amounting to all out civil war, that such a government, supported by communists, could have only survived as a short transitional government to the full dictatorship of the proletariat. If, as was more likely to have been the case, Lechin and Co refused to enter on this path, then the possibility existed for breaking up the MNR, winning its working class base for communism and potentially splitting it in the same way as the Bolsheviks split the SRs. That is, bringing over a section of its most revolutionary elements to an alliance with the communists.

In the later period, given the growing bureaucratisation of the COB, the expulsion of POR members from the unions and the consolidation of the bonapartist regime with the full restoration of its standing army, revolutionaries would have brought to the fore the demand for immediate elections to a constituent assembly — organised on the most democratic basis e.g. votes to all over 16 years irrespective of literacy. Such an assembly should be convened and overseen by the workers and peasants organisations once again organised around the above action programme this time directed at the assembly.

Gramar fulminates at us for suggesting that the POR failed to pose the question of the workers and peasants government in this way. He declares "It (the POR) opposed to the MNR government, the slogan of the workers and peasants government." So it did, but there are, as any Trotskyist should know, workers governments and workers governments. The POR's use of the slogan was totally devoid of its transitional content. Either it used it simply as a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and therefore only to be raised as an agitational slogan on the eve of the insurrection, or it used it in a thoroughly opportunist manner as designation for a government of the 'left' (and not so left) MNR, perhaps including the POR.

In both cases the governmental slogan — the keystone of the transitional programme as Trotsky called it — is pulled out of its place at the head of an action programme of inter-linked demands. The 'revolutionary party' stands helpless, while the revolutionary 'process' sweeps the masses forward. Look at how Lora uses the slogan as a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat: **"... The subsequent evolution that we indicate for the COB, where the creation of new rank and file organs, parallel to it or even independent, under the pressure of the masses in struggle, constantly broadening their field of intervention to all domains of the life of the exploited, will lead us to the workers and peasants government. In the culminating point of that process, it will be necessary to launch the slogan of "All power to the workers organisations"."** 24

Comrade Gramar tells us he could take up whole pages with such quotes. Wisely for him, he does not. But if the reader will bear with us, let us give a couple more examples of this combination of chronic processism combined with emptying the slogan of its transitional content. From 'One Year of the Bolivian Revolution': **"Moving toward the final aim of the struggle, the formation of a genuine workers and peasants government. This government will not arise mechanically, but dialectically (!), basing itself on the organism of dual power created by the mass movement . . . The workers and peasants government will appear (!!!) tomorrow as the natural (!) emanation (!) of all these organisations on which it will base itself."** 25

Another example is in the Programme of the POR-Masas: "The POR uses the slogan "workers and peasants government" in the same way as did the Bolsheviks, as a popular expression for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." 26

Thus the slogan is relegated as something to be raised only on the eve of the insurrection or only as abstract propaganda

for the dictatorship of the proletariat. But of course the vacuum left by a missing governmental slogan has to be filled with something, thus the demand is given a totally opportunist agitational use. In June 1953 at the 10th Congress, the congress at which Lora 're-armed the party', the workers and peasants government was raised in the following fashion. Speculating on a possible split by the right wing, the Theses argue: "The total predominance of this sector (the left) could profoundly effect the nature of the MNR and would enable it to greatly come closer to the POR. It is only in these conditions that we can raise the possibility of a coalition government of the POR and the MNR which would be a way of realising the formula of a Workers and Peasants Government which in its turn would constitute the transitional stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat." 27

Here we can see the impact of the schemas of the 1951 world congress of the FI adopted and implemented by the POR. A strategy of pushing the MNR leftwards, "complete control of the cabinet by the left", of dubbing it a "workers and peasants government", meriting communist support and participation in. In this way the POR's positions in 1952 were neither better nor worse than the SWP's positions on the Nicaraguan government today. Their common thread is the fundamental agreement with the 1951 congress positions of Pablo.

Who the 'right' was the POR's theses never tell us, deliberately so because to name names would be to 'give up' on 'centre' figures like Paz Estenssoro, who might after all remain with the 'left' in such a government. And the programme that such a government would have to carry out to be a "workers and peasants government"? We are not told, but presumably the 'progressive programme' of the 1951 congress resolution.

This was the programme and record of the POR in Bolivia, on which in all its fundamentals Lora defends to this day. There was complete agreement within the POR on this programme, apart from the section which in 1952 took the conclusions of the POR's failure to distinguish itself from the left MNR and joined it. It was only at the end of 1953 when Pablo and his Latin American bureau decided to speed up the liquidation of the POR (arguing that such was the speed with which the masses were heading for power under the leadership of the 'left' MNR that the POR's main task was to immerse itself in the left) that Lora opposed the tactical implications of the International's line. It was only in 1956 that a small group around Lora and the paper Masas finally broke from the then dominant Moscoso International Secretariat Faction.

Finally, we would emphasise that the issues raised in the Bolivian revolutionary upsurges of 1952 and 1970/71 are of vital importance for revolutionaries today. A correct assessment of the failure of the POR to pursue a truly communist policy in Bolivia is crucial in a period in which degenerate "Trotskyism" has distorted and trampled on Trotsky's programme for the semi-colonial countries. Perhaps more than any other tactic the "Anti-Imperialist United Front" has been perverted to allow so-called revolutionaries to capitulate before petit-bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism and betray the workers and peasants of whole continents. Ernest Mandel and Jack Barnes tread the same well-worn path in Nicaragua today. It is up to revolutionary communists, Trotskyists, to rescue this tactic and turn it once more into a real weapon of the enslaved masses of the imperialised world. We make this contribution on the Bolivian revolution as part of this struggle.

## Footnotes

1. G Lora *History of the Bolivian Labour Movement* (Cambridge 1977) p276.
2. *ibid* p276.
3. see Lora's account of Lechin's role in *ibid* p243.
4. 'Third Congress Resolution: Latin American Problems and Tasks', *Fourth International* Nov/Dec 1951 p211.
5. *ibid* p212.
6. G. Lora Article in *The Militant* (New York) May 12th 1952.
7. G. Lora 'One Year of the Bolivian Revolution', *Fourth International* (New York),
8. Lenin 'The Dual Power' Vol.24 *Collected Works* p40.
9. 'One Year of the Bolivian Revolution' *op cit*.
10. Trotsky 'Latin American Problems' supplement to the *Writings 1934-40*, p794.
11. *ibid* p793.
12. G.Lora *Bolivie: de la naissance du POR a L'Assemblée Populaire* p35.
13. Lenin 'To the C.C. of the RSDLP Vol 25 *Collected Works* p289. (Emphasis in original)
14. G. Lora *A History of the Bolivian Labour Movement* p.286.
15. *ibid* p286.
16. G. Lora *Contribution a la historia politica de Bolivia* quoted by Gramar p6.
17. Trotsky *The Russian Revolution* Vol.1. p337.
18. *ibid* p339.
19. Lora *History of the Bolivian Labour Movement* p281.
20. In much the same way, and originating out of similar circumstances, the Nicaraguan Civil Defence Committees (CDC's) which sprang up during the insurrection against Somoza, took on many of the forms of Soviet organs — organising armed actions, food supplies, health, transport, etc — during this period, but were rapidly bureaucratised and turned into the 'popular power' organs of Sandinista bonapartism, becoming the present 'Sandinista Defence Committees'.
21. Lora *La Revolucion boliviana* (La Paz 1963) p262.
22. *Workers Power* No 40 March 1983 "Bolivia 1970/71: A revolution disarmed".
23. G. Lora *La Revolucion ...* *op cit* p267.
24. G.Lora *Bolivie ....* *op cit*. Quoted in Gramar's document.
25. *Fourth International* Jan/Feb 53 p15.
26. *The Programmatic Basis of the POR* p58. Translation by British Section OCRFI.
27. Tenth Congress Theses *Bolivie: de la naissance ...* p43.

## Central America, the Caribbean revolution and imperialist reaction

The invasion of Grenada by US imperialism and the overthrow of its government demonstrated the determination of the Reagan administration to crush under foot any regime that it sees as a threat to its hegemony in the region. For US imperialism the nationalist-led revolutions in Grenada (March 1979) and Nicaragua (July 1979) posed a serious threat to its interests in the area. Somoza and Gairy had been important as part of the whole semi-colonial system which allows the US to economically dominate and exploit Central America and the Caribbean. A whole network of dictatorships, whose armies, national guards, death squads and secret police were trained and financed by the CIA, deny to the populations of the region the most elementary democratic rights.

The destruction of two of these regimes threatened the whole system. After the overthrow of Somoza and Gairy, the Grenadian and Nicaraguan attempts to gain a degree of independence from US imperialism, to loosen the economic stranglehold of the US by seeking aid and investment from Europe as well as the Soviet Union and Cuba, were regarded as a direct threat to US economic interests. Their progressive social reforms in health, education and literacy etc. in an area of the world where corrupt dictatorships presiding over the deepest poverty were the norm, threatened to spread these revolutions to neighbouring states. Their close economic and political links with Cuba not only threatened to undermine Washington's twenty year old blockade of that country, but posed the possibility of these countries attempting to take the "Cuban Road" out of the orbit of world imperialism. Even the mildly social democratic regime of Michael Manley's PNP was considered an intolerable threat by the US ruling class in the wake of the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua. By October 1980, having sowed the seeds of his own defeat through his government's attacks on the working masses, Manley was brought down "democratically" following a virtual economic blockade engineered by international financial institutions dominated by the United States.

### SANDINISTAS AND THE NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT

The revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada were political rather than social revolutions. They remained revolutions which did not transcend bourgeois democratic limits or transform the property relations in these countries.

They were none the less genuine popular revolutions based on the workers and poor peasants and thus containing the fullest potential for social revolution. However, the

Peoples Revolutionary Government of Grenada (PRG) and the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua (GNR) openly declared their commitment to maintaining a capitalist economy on achieving power. Both the Sandinistas (FSLN) and the New Jewel Movement formed coalitions with sectors of the bourgeoisie, instituting Popular Front governments.

Of course, these governments are not Popular Fronts in the 'classical' French and Spanish form experienced and analysed by Trotsky in the 1930s; that is, they are rarely formal blocs between clearly defined reformist workers' parties (Stalinist and/or Social Democratic) and parties of the bourgeoisie. This lack of open and clear political demarcation and party division corresponds to: the fluidity and relative lack of definition of class divisions in an underdeveloped or backward semi-colony; the 'socialist' rhetoric of pettybourgeois nationalists and the chameleonism of the Stalinist currents within the guerrilla movements; and the absence of large bourgeois nationalist parties, given the weakness of the bourgeois and its comprador-like subordination to US imperialism.

All this produces an amorphous movement containing stalinist or social democratic as well as petty bourgeois and bourgeois nationalist currents or factions. This alliance has itself a popular-frontist political character, and when it attains power it constitutes a Popular Front Government - albeit that the formal class independence of the proletariat is dissolved within it and the alliance with the bourgeoisie may be with only a "shadow" of it - that is, with an insignificant fraction or certain political representatives of the bourgeoisie.

### FROM DUAL POWER TO BONAPARTISM

In both Grenada and Nicaragua the regimes of this type were inherently unstable. In the process of overthrowing their respective governments, the New Jewel Movement and the Sandinistas opened up a new period of dual power. Both revolutions fractured and disintegrated the armed state power on which bourgeois rule rested. On the one side stood the aroused movement of workers and peasants eager to throw off years of exploitation and oppression. On the other side stood the bourgeoisie backed by imperialism, deprived of direct control of its state - its repressive apparatus. Political power rested in the hands of the armed nationalist movements which had led the revolutions, the FSLN and the NJM. These were not 'parties' but rather coalitions of various political groupings and tendencies. The FSLN encompassed proto-stalinists who identified with the Cuban and Vietnamese rev-

olutions (the Proletarian Tendency and the Prolonged Peoples War Tendency) and a social democratic current around the Ortega brothers - the Terceristas, which had close links to the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie and sections of the Catholic church. The NJM contained a similar political spectrum with an organised minority around Bernard Coard, the ORFI grouping, which had close links to the stalinist Jamaican Workers Party.

What united these coalitions on coming to power, and enabled them to strike a governmental alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie, was their commonly held perspective that the next stage of the revolution was NOT to be an anti-capitalist one. This perspective necessitated the preservation of a 'mixed economy' (that is, a capitalist economy) and an alliance with the 'anti-imperialist' and 'patriotic' sectors of the bourgeoisie. The leaders of these movements sought to develop their economies by: promoting a state capitalist sector; seeking loans from European imperialism (as well as the 'non-aligned' countries); and by welcoming financial and technical aid from the Soviet Bloc countries.

The commitment to defend capitalism, relegating the struggle for socialism to the distant future, necessarily brought these regimes into conflict with the immediate demands of the masses. The organs of popular mobilisation thrown up during the struggles against the US backed regimes, and whose existence created dual-power situations, had to be disciplined and controlled, to be turned into powerless organs of "popular power" which would serve as organs mobilising support for the FSLN or NJM leaders.

At the same time the bourgeoisie, with its indissoluble links with US and world imperialism, posed an ever present threat in its attempts to reassert direct control over its state. Above all the bourgeoisie demanded unfettered control over its factories and farms and a complete demobilisation of the workers and peasants. Terrified by the threat of the aroused masses, it sought by all means to achieve a compromise with US imperialism.

It was the prolonged existence of this dual power situation (albeit in an attenuated form now in Nicaragua) which gave these regimes their specific left-Bonapartist character, balancing between the masses on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other. However, there should be no confusion as to the class character of these governments. Despite their socialist and populist colouring they were constructed as BOURGEOIS governments, committed to defending capitalist property relations.

## UNITED STATES INTERVENTION

The last period of Carter's term in office marked a decisive shift in the US ruling class strategy following the fall of the US's most trusted agent in the Middle East, the Shah of Iran. In Central America and the Caribbean this expressed itself in a determination to 'roll back' the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua, to destabilise the Manley government in Jamaica and crush the revolutionary movements in El Salvador and the rest of Central America. The Reagan Administration's tactics have followed a well worn path. It has applied economic sanctions and blockades through its domination of the international aid bodies, with the aim of undermining popular support for these governments which it intends to overthrow. It has made full use of its internal allies - the landed oligarchy, the bourgeoisie and the church, to destabilise these regimes. It has financed and organised external counter-revolutionaries in economic sabotage and military interventions. It has promoted the organisation of regional military blocs (CONDECA, OECS) tied to the US military and designed for interventions against revolutionary movements. And finally, it has resorted to direct military intervention by US forces, in Grenada.

## EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

The current strategy of the Reagan administration has opened up a number of tactical differences between the USA and the European imperialists which have traditional interests in Latin America. While the European imperialists also clearly recognise the danger to their economic interests posed by the revolutionary situation in Central America, they also understand their opportunities. Michael Manley in Jamaica, Maurice Bishop in Grenada and sections of the FSLN all looked to the "progressive sections" of the European bourgeoisie to aid them in their struggle with Washington. Thus their close links with the social democratic and Labour parties in Europe. Fearful of Reagan's policies producing a repetition of Cuba and driving these countries into the arms of the Soviet Union, the Europeans prefer to aim for a democratic counter-revolution in these countries, on the Portuguese model. They have encouraged regimes such as the PRG of Grenada when in power, and the GNR of Nicaragua to agree to "free elections", to steer clear of aid from the

Soviet Bloc and to retain the mixed economy. In return they have offered aid and the use of their good offices to stay the hand of Washington. Despite the verbal differences that this has led to between the European and US bourgeoisie, the European powers clearly recognise their SUBORDINATE position, both economically and militarily in these regions. As a result their promises of substantial aid have remained on paper and none of them has shown any willingness to seriously challenge Reagan's policies. As in the case of Grenada, they will continue to recognise the real relationship of forces in the region and, in the end, acquiesce to US strategy.

## FATAL WEAKNESS

The defeat of the Grenadian revolution, as previously with the ousting of Manley's party in Jamaica, showed the fatal weaknesses of social democratic and stalinist strategies in the imperialised world. The attempt to preserve the 'mixed economy', that is a capitalist-dominated economy, while seeking to promote a state capitalist sector through loans from European imperialism and the non-capitalist countries, has been proved bankrupt.

The European imperialists have shown themselves no more 'philanthropic' with aid than the US, while the Soviet Union has been less than open handed. The result in Grenada before the invasion, and in Nicaragua today - a growing economic crisis as social reforms have to be increasingly financed out of internal revenue or borrowing. The massive foreign debt repayments and economic blockading measures exacerbate these problems and ensure economic stagnation in the long term.

## THE DEFEAT IN GRENADA

In Grenada, a tiny island chronically dependent on the world imperialist market, the PRG's utopian economic strategy rapidly ran into severe problems, provoking a dramatic political crisis in the regime. The Popular Revolutionary Government of Grenada was formed as a Popular Front involving important sections of the island's capitalist class alongside the NJM, which itself contained Social Democratic and Stalinist wings. This Bonapartist regime, which balanced between the bourgeoisie and the worker and peasant masses

was by mid 1983 becoming increasingly isolated. Having failed to satisfy the crucial demands of the masses for land, for permanent employment or for control over the capitalists, the regime was severely weakened. Its organs of 'popular power', Parish and Zonal Councils, developed on the Cuban model, gave the masses no control over the government or any real decision making power. These powerless consultative bodies were increasingly boycotted by the masses. The NJM, which had never held a congress since the overthrow of Gairy, remained a tiny grouping of no more than three hundred members which was dependent for popular support on its populist figurehead, Maurice Bishop. The political disputes within the NJM between its two wings were fought out behind the backs of the masses and the party membership. The settling of these disputes via an army-led coup and the killing of Bishop and his supporters in the government provided the excuse for the US invasion and the guarantee of its success. The masses were politically demoralised, while the militia had been disarmed because of its 'unreliability'.

## REAGAN TARGETS NICARAGUA

Having achieved 'success' in strangling the anti-imperialist movement in Grenada the Reagan government is proceeding apace to achieve the same objective in Nicaragua. The economic blockade has been tightened to the point where basic necessities are now in short supply. 'Contra' attacks and economic sabotage have been stepped up dramatically, while internally the bourgeoisie maintains its sabotaging techniques and a boycott of investment. A large US fleet hovers off the Nicaraguan coast, practising the invasion of Nicaragua with its newly reactivated CONDECA alliance (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador). The Church has recently moved openly to the fore in the organisation of the counter-revolution inside Nicaragua.

For the USA, the task of overthrowing the GNR in Nicaragua grows ever more urgent. The collapse and demoralisation of the El Salvadorean army is developing apace. The desperation of the El Salvadorean ruling class is expressed in its stepping up of indiscriminate terror through its 'death squads'. Washington must quickly strike a decisive blow at Nicaragua if it is to stem the tide of revolt in Central America.

The GNR of Nicaragua remains caught in the contradictions of its long term policy of coexistence with Nicaraguan capital. Like its overthrown counterpart in Grenada the GNR was a Popular Front alliance between the FSLN coalition and the bourgeoisie. After four years of pressure and subversion by US imperialism, the vast majority of the bourgeoisie has defected to the camp of the counter-revolution. The FSLN is left preserving the Popular Front with the 'phantom' of the bourgeoisie, but nevertheless remains committed to its part of the 'bargain'; namely, to preserve the private sector and to try to reach a compromise with US imperialism.

This policy will lead to disaster for the masses. The bourgeoisie is enabled to continue its economic sabotage: payments on the debts to imperialism now run at 45% of Nicaragua's export income. The resultant economic crisis provides fertile ground for the arguments of the counter-revolution within the masses.

The Bonapartist nature of the FSLN regime results in a complete lack of workers democracy in Nicaragua. As was the case in Grenada, the masses have no organs through which they can exert direct control over government or the economy. The 135 municipal juntas, as well as the Council of State are appointed, not elected. In the CST (Sandinista Trade Union Organisation) appointment from



US-backed 'contras' in Nicaragua

above is the norm, as it is in the other 'mass organisations'. The CDSs, the AREs (Economic Reactivation Assemblies), the *cubidos abiertos* (discussion meetings) etc. have no real executive power but are classic organs of plebiscitary democracy where the masses are asked to contribute their opinions to decisions taken from above. The parish and zonal councils in Grenada were bodies of a similar character.

The debate going on within the FSLN on how to respond to the present crisis takes place not within the 'mass organisations' or organs of 'popular power' but within a tiny circle of 'commandantes of the revolution' and ministers of the government. The offensive of US imperialism has posed point blank the utopian nature of the programme of the GNR. To continue their present course invites growing economic disintegration, a "Contra" invasion backed by the CONDECA and US forces, leading to the establishment of a 'provisional government' and the start of a civil war internally as the bourgeoisie and the Church mobilise for the counter-revolution.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FSLN

Two options are posed to the FSLN leaders as a means of escaping this ever-worsening crisis. Firstly, they can compromise with imperialism. In practice, little short of outright capitulation and the imposition of a regime that is totally subservient to the US ruling class will satisfy the Reagan Administration.

For sections of the FSLN the option of breaking completely from the world imperialist system is undoubtedly preferable. The bureaucratic overturn carried out by Castro in the face of intolerable imperialist pressure, would be the model to be emulated. Such a course of action depends heavily on the willingness of the Soviet Bloc to underwrite such a regime both politically and economically. All the evidence suggests that neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba is willing to encourage such a course. Cuba has consistently encouraged a 'cautious approach' both in Nicaragua and with the Bishop regime in Grenada; advocating the 'mixed economy' and the maintenance of links with imperialism for aid and trade. Castro's support for Bishop and his condemnation of the Austin-Coard coup reflected this policy. His open admission that Cuban military assistance would not be forthcoming to Nicaragua if it faced US invasion, was a further reminder to the FSLN to seek a compromise rather than a confrontation with US imperialism.

However, whilst the ruling bureaucracies of the Stalinist states seek to avoid confrontation with imperialism by systematically restricting struggles for national liberation within bourgeois limits, their wishes are not an all-powerful historical law. It takes two to make such a bargain. If imperialism remorselessly seeks the destruction of Stalinist-led or Stalinist-influenced forces, the latter may, having first assured the atomising and the subordination to itself of the proletarian vanguard, take steps to expropriate the bourgeoisie. The more such a party or forces are materially dependent on, or ideologically subservient to Moscow (or Havana) the less likely are they to take this leap.

Just as the Castroites moved forward to ensure their own survival, against the wishes of both Moscow and the Cuban Stalinists, so sections of the FSLN COULD attempt to present the USSR and Cuba with a fait accompli. To let such a regime go down to a counter-revolutionary intervention would be a dramatic blow to the Soviet Bloc's influence amongst the anti-imperialist movements and thus weaken its own position vis a vis US imperialism.

It is clear from the present course of the GNR of Nicaragua that at the moment those in favour of the first option dominate within the FSLN and the Government. While having few illusions of being able to stay the hand of the dominant hardline faction of the US ruling class, the GNR has taken a series of measures designed to appease European imperialism and, they hope, even sections of the US ruling class aligned behind the Democratic Party.

The FSLN leadership places great hopes in a Democratic victory in the US elections. It believes that this would be less dangerous for Nicaragua than the present Reagan Administration, demonstrating again that the present strategy of the FSLN provides no alternative but the illusory hope of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. The measures they have taken include the removal of El Salvadorean guerilla headquarters from Managua, the scaling down of the numbers of Cuban advisors in the country, an amnesty for almost all those who have taken up arms against the Nicaraguan government, together with a promise to return all farms seized in response to counter-revolutionary activity or else to give compensation; and the lifting of censorship on the right wing newspaper *La Prensa*. Most importantly these measures included the decision to hold elections to a Constituent Assembly in November 1984 and the lifting of restrictions on opposition parties' activities introduced under the 1982 State of Emergency.

## THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

As long as the major democratic tasks remain unfulfilled within Nicaragua and as long as Nicaragua remains a capitalist state, the slogan of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly remains applicable. In Nicaragua the left-bonapartist GNR regime has denied the masses this democratic right, counterposing to it their bureaucratically dominated and powerless organs of 'Popular Power'.

In 1979 we raised the demand for elections to a Constituent Assembly following the fall of Somoza, not in counterposition to the fight for Worker and Peasant councils, Soviets, the building of which remains the fundamental and strategic task of revolutionaries, but as part of the struggle to overcome the democratic illusions of the masses. In contrast, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI - in Ireland PD), who previously denounced this demand as playing into the hands of the "bourgeois democratic counter-revolution", now dance to the tune of the latest twist of the FSLN leadership in endorsing 'free elections' uncritically. Unlike the USFI we place no reliance on would-be Bonapartes to safeguard the democratic rights of the masses, a position which leaves the workers and peasants to be mobilised by the bourgeoisie posing as the 'real' defender of democratic rights.

But neither do we fall in behind the method by which the bourgeoisie wishes to convene, and thereby dominate, such an assembly. Communists support the convening of a Constituent Assembly through methods which allow the greatest degree of self-organisation of the masses. They fight for the most democratic franchise possible, for the secret ballot, for votes at 16 years, proportional representation, no financial restrictions on candidates, annual elections. They place at the centre of the campaign for a Constituent Assembly the revolutionary tasks necessary for the liberation of the masses from the yoke of imperialism:

- For an agrarian revolution, based on peasant committees, which breaks the power of the oligarchy and big farmers - "land to the tiller".

- For the cancellation of the debts owed to the imperialist powers through their banks and agencies.
- For the nationalisation of the banks without compensation under workers' control.
- Open the books of the capitalists to workers' inspection, establish workers' control of production and distribution.

The fight for these demands, of course, is not left to the ballot box but is primarily directed to the struggle for workers' and peasants' councils to achieve these demands. In this way democratic and transitional slogans are used to mobilise the masses for power.

## PERMANENT REVOLUTION

For revolutionaries this is the only perspective which offers a serious possibility for defending and extending the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution - the perspective of Permanent revolution. The present course of the FSLN leadership threatens disaster for the workers and peasants of Nicaragua. The response of US imperialism to the latest FSLN proposals has been predictable - it is stepping up its counter-revolutionary offensive.

We reject the utopian notion that an alliance can be made with "patriotic sections" of capital against imperialism. In Nicaragua the defence of the revolution means above all breaking the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie. It means expropriating the saboteurs and establishing full workers' control over production. It means establishing democratic control in the militia and army - the election of officers and commanders. It means transforming or replacing the powerless organs of bonapartist "peoples power" with genuine organs of proletarian democracy - workers and peasants councils. It means establishing a real Workers and Peasants Government, in place of the popular front Government of National Reconstruction. Above all, the defence and extension of the Nicaraguan revolution means full military and economic aid to the FMLN insurgents and the other anti-imperialist movements in Central America as part of the fight for a Socialist Federation of Central America.

The present offensive by US imperialism in Central America and the Caribbean calls for the utmost organisation of solidarity with movements struggling against imperialism. Extending and organising solidarity actions in no way means extending uncritical political support to these movements. In the imperialist heartlands the labour movements must be mobilised to block and disrupt any actions by their own governments aimed at facilitating the overthrow of the GNR or the suppression of the FMLN.

- \* All US and East Caribbean Troops out of Grenada!
- \* Immediate and untrammelled self-determination for the Grenadian People!
- \* Defend Nicaragua and Cuba against imperialist aggression!
- \* For workers power in Grenada and Nicaragua!
- \* Victory to the FMLN against imperialism and its stooges in El Salvador!
- \* Forward to a Socialist Federation of Central America!

# Declaration of fraternal relations

**GROUPE POUVOIR OUVRIER**

**GRUPPE ARBEITERMACHT**

**IRISH WORKERS GROUP**

**WORKERS POWER**

The years since the Second imperialist World War have fully confirmed the characterisation of the Twentieth Century as the century of wars and revolutions. The war itself was fought to redivide the world between the imperialist robber states. The United States of America emerged as the victor in that war and, freed from the cramping restrictions imposed by the old European Empires, reshaped the world in its own interests. This, coupled with the massive destruction of capital during the war, allowed a hitherto unprecedented expansion of the productive forces which lasted until the late sixties.

That expansion, however, was, first and foremost, the expansion of capital, and therefore, of capital's social relations and the social contradictions that attend them. Whilst capital has harnessed the labour of numberless millions, boosting production to unheard of proportions, private ownership of the means of production and the subordination of their potential to the pursuit of profit now doom millions to misery and starvation. Humanity itself is now threatened with annihilation as the imperialists prepare to unleash nuclear war to protect their global domination.

However, while the content of Capital's domination of the world has changed not one iota, the form of that domination, and of the class struggle which it engenders, have seen substantial changes. Thus the countries exploited by imperialism are now ruled, typically, through the puppet regimes of semi-colonies rather than by direct colonial rule.

## LIMITS OF EXISTING STRUGGLES

Although there have been many determined and heroic struggles against colonial rule and semi-colonial oppression, these have taken place under Stalinist or petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships, that is, leaderships committed, ultimately, to achieving a compromise with imperialism and not its international defeat. Such forces mobilised the masses in struggle to force concessions but, wherever that mobilisation threatened to pass beyond their own control and to pose the possibility of struggle for power by the proletariat and its peasant allies, they have demobilised, undermined and openly sabotaged the struggle in the interests of their projected compromise. They are both unwilling and unable to utilise the struggles of the exploited and oppressed to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and, thereby, open the way to socialism with the strategy of Permanent Revolution.

In the metropolitan centres the post war period witnessed a long economic boom under US hegemony which strengthened the hold of reformist ideologies and organisations. When the boom ended, and was replaced by increasing instability and crises, those reformist parties and trade unions, both stalinist and social democratic, proved capable of disorienting, stifling and directly sabotaging the militant response of the working class.

A further obvious change in the form of the class struggle has taken place in relation to stalinism. In the thirties it appeared that the clique around Stalin, which had usurped proletarian power in the Soviet Union, and their programme of socialism in one country, would not survive the developing crisis. In the event, divisions within the imperialist camp did allow not only their survival but an increase in their power, prestige and influence. The existence of a workers' state, even though degenerated, altered the balance of class forces in the post war world and allowed the creation of equally counter-revolutionary and degenerate workers' states in other countries. However, stalinism has not gone unchallenged by the masses. Time and again proletarian and peasant forces have had to be suppressed by military force to ensure the survival of stalinist regimes. This force has often been aided by the confusion of political direction and strategy within the rebellious forces who have frequently been misled by reformist, nationalist or even counter-revolutionary leaders.

## ADDRESSING THE CHANGED WORLD

Similar dramatic changes in the class struggle have occurred before, for example, at the outbreak of the imperialist First World War and, again, in the period of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Workers' State. In those periods, however, there existed, as a result of the political and organisational advances made in preceding periods, a communist cadre able to re-analyse the changed circumstances and to derive from that analysis a communist strategy, a communist programme and communist tactics equal to the needs of the working class in the new period. This was the historic contribution of Lenin and, later, Trotsky in the creation of the Third and Fourth Internationals.

Today, revolutionaries the world over stand in need of a similarly refocussed communist programme and the International Party needed to implement it. As in earlier periods it is not a matter of rejecting previous programmes out of hand but of

re-applying their methods, principles, strategies and tactics to the political problems of the present period. However, unlike the earlier periods, there is today no already existing communist leadership capable of winning to the revolutionary banner the millions who wish to destroy capitalism's hold on humanity. Instead that leadership must be forged precisely through the programmatic, theoretical and practical work necessary to re-elaborate the communist programme. The task of building a new revolutionary International stands before us today as an urgent necessity. Before it can be built, however, programmatic clarity over the changed circumstances of the class struggle, and of the leaderships which it has thrown up, must be achieved.

## THE OBSTACLE OF CENTRISM

The task of building a revolutionary party has always been hampered by the existence of centrism in the workers' movement. The Kautsky centre in the Second International shielded most member parties from Bolshevism. Bureaucratic centrism in the stalinised Comintern hindered the Left Opposition's struggle for reform. Centrism also stood as an obstacle - in the shapes of the POUM (Spain), the ILP (Britain), the Gauche Revolutionnaire (France) etc. - to the building of the Fourth International during the 1930s.

## CRISIS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The Fourth International of Leon Trotsky, founded in 1938, was the authentic continuation of Bolshevik Leninism, the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the revolutionary Comintern (first four congresses). After the war, however, that organisation was racked by crisis. Unable to explain the continued existence, and indeed expansion, of stalinism, the stabilisation of western capitalism and the apparent victories of petit bourgeois nationalism, it began increasingly to shed fundamental elements of the Trotskyist programme.

This programmatic degeneration became qualitative in the period 1948-51. In 1948 Tito's split with Stalin was presented as proof that, under pressure, stalinism could be transformed into a centrist force capable of overthrowing capitalism and creating workers' states which, like Yugoslavia, only required reforms to become healthy workers' states. On this basis both the strategy of political revolution against stalinist bureaucratic rule

and ultimately, the need for independent revolutionary (Trotskyist) parties were abandoned.

Flowing from this the FI, under the leadership of Pablo, Frank and Mandel, and with the approval of Cannon and Healy, moved further in the direction of liquidationism. If stalinism could be transformed under pressure so also could social democratic reformists or, in the semi-colonies, petit-bourgeois nationalists. The perspective of an immediately imminent War-Revolution was used to justify a new tactic of "entrism sui generis" (entrism of a special type). There being insufficient time to build revolutionary parties on a Trotskyist programme, it was argued, adherents of the FI should enter and loyally build reformist or petit-bourgeois nationalist parties, thereby helping to develop the pressure that would, supposedly, transform their hosts into left-centrist formations which would be capable of imitating Tito and, later, Mao.

This period of programmatic degeneration came to a head in 1951. The World Congress of that year codified the revisionism that had been adopted piecemeal in the preceding three years. The fact that there was no revolutionary opposition to the wholesale abandonment of the fundamental tenets of Trotskyism is proof positive that the FI, by this date, had undergone a qualitative degeneration. It was no longer a revolutionary current which had made some centrist errors but a consolidated centrist formation incapable of self-reform.

Organisational collapse followed programmatic collapse. Different tendencies within the "FI" wished to accommodate to different politically popular or dominant currents. The split of 1953, which created the International Secretariat (IS) and the International Committee (IC), took place purely on organisational grounds. Neither side challenged the liquidationist position of the 1951 Congress; hence neither can be said to have represented any continuity with the revolutionary programme of Trotsky.

## NO TROTSKYIST CONTINUITY

There has been no such continuity of Trotskyism on a world scale since 1951. The International created by Trotsky in the face of enormous difficulties, had, within 11 years of his death, failed to overcome its isolation - a fate which MIGHT befall any revolutionary tendency for long periods of time - and collapsed into centrism - a fate that WILL befall any tendency that believes mass growth or influence can be attained by dissolving or abandoning the revolutionary, that is Trotskyist, programme.

For revolutionaries today the centrism of the Fourth International itself, and its offshoots, is a major obstacle to the establishment of revolutionary parties and a revolutionary International.

## DEGENERATE FRAGMENTS

More than thirty years have passed since the collapse of the Fourth International. Since then the fragments of what had been the world Trotskyist movement have compounded their errors, suffered further splits and engaged in unprincipled fusions. Of the principal tendencies to emerge from either the IS tradition (the USFI and various national groups) or the IC tradition (the IC, OCREI of Pierre Lamport, the IWL of Nahuel Moreno, the SI, or the TILC created by the British WSL) none has broken from centrism. Today there is no such thing as a world Trotskyist movement. What still exist are the degenerate fragments

of the Fourth International. Once again revolutionaries are confronted with the task of defeating centrism - this time a centrism emerging from the FI - in order to develop national revolutionary parties and a revolutionary International.

## THE 'UNITED SECRETARIAT' OF THE FI

The USFI today stands on the threshold of yet another internal upheaval. Since its formation in 1963 it has never transcended its existence as a coalition of permanent factions. Today the conflict is between the SWP(US) and the European based Mandel tendency. The terms of the debate - an outright rejection of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and the embracing of Castroite stalinism by the SWP(US) versus the defence by Mandel of the centrist 'objective processism' whereby the revolutionary party is rendered irrelevant in the 'process' of permanent revolution - is not a principled battle between orthodoxy and revisionism.

## USFI ON IRAN

The USFI's most recent positions in revolutionary situations confirm its chronic tendency to adapt to alien class forces. In 1979 in Iran and Nicaragua the USFI advised its members programmatically to liquidate themselves into the religious-led mass movement and the petit-bourgeois FSLN respectively. In Iran, despite the imprisonment of its own members by Khomeini's regime, the USFI section, prior to splitting, refused to criticise Khomeini and refused to rally the forces and raise the programme necessary to fight his counter-revolution. After a split the Mandelite HKS offered some criticisms of Khomeini but still refused to raise the call for his overthrow by the independently organised working class. The SWP-sponsored HKE, on the other hand, carried away by Khomeini's anti-imperialist rhetoric during the US hostage crisis, enlisted in the "Jihad for Reconstruction" - a united front with the Khomeini forces who were at the very same time butchering the Kurds and the left Islamic Mojahedin. Indeed the latter were condemned as sectarian by the HKE for refusing to unite with their murderers! Throughout this period both the HKS and the HKE - potentially on opposite sides of a physical conflict - remained affiliated to the USFI.

## USFI ON NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua a similar course was followed. During the struggle that brought down Somoza the USFI condemned and disciplined its own members for forming an independent organisation (the Simon Bolivar Brigade). It demanded that they cease all attempts to form a separate 'Trotskyist' organisation and instead become loyal Sandinistas. After the fall of the Somoza dictatorship the SWP(US) christened the popular-front GRN a Workers and Peasants' Government, ignored its attacks on workers' democracy and hailed it as the vanguard of the world revolution. The split that this led to in late 1979 was along familiar unprincipled lines. Moreno's factional difference with the majority led him to walk out of the USFI with significant forces. His limited criticisms over Nicaragua, his preceding and subsequent history all pointed to the centrist nature of his politics.

As for the factions remaining in the USFI, the SWP have begun to theorise their capitulation to petit-bourgeois nationalism and stalinism. The Mandelites donning the utterly fake mantle of 'orthodoxy' still utilise the terminology of Permanent Revolution which in their view still has use as a means of disguising their centrism from

serious revolutionary militants. However, since they fill the empty formulas with a thoroughly centrist content in practice, like the SWP they also capitulate time and again to the foes of proletarian revolution.

In the imperialist countries the sections of the IS/USFI have been consistent only in their opportunist accommodation to varying political currents. In the 1950s and early 1960s it was primarily towards the left reformists of Social Democracy and/or the Trade Unions. In the late 1960s and early 1970s it was the generally ultra-left student movement and Black nationalism. Presently they appear to be intent on forming a bridge between reformists, the feminist movement and peace campaigners. In each case the method has been, essentially, the same; adaptation to the political norms of whatever current is identified as 'moving left', uncritical support for the leadership of that current in the belief that this will help to develop that leadership into the leadership of a 'left wing' within which the 'Trotskyists' will wield some influence. The left wing in turn becomes a substitute for the revolutionary party and the revolutionary programme is conveniently dropped.

## POLAND

Finally the USFI offers no independent programme for political revolution in the degenerated and degenerate workers' states. In the Polish political-revolutionary crisis of 1980-81 the USFI failed to raise the question of the revolutionary overthrow of the stalinist ruling bureaucracy. The building of an independent revolutionary party was subordinated to accommodation to the existing leadership of Walesa and Co. The call for genuine soviets was replaced by the call for a second chamber in the Polish parliament (Sejm). This, said the USFI, would lead to the evolution of dual power which would evolve into workers' power. No mention of soviet power, insurrection, the general strike, the arming of the workers etc. In a piece of evolutionism worthy of Kautsky the USFI reduced political revolution to a 'total series of reforms' - the formula originally used by their leader Hansen in the 1950s.

Time and again the USFI has demonstrated its bankruptcy, its centrism. Yet it still masquerades as THE Trotskyist International. It is probably the largest grouping of so-called Trotskyists at the moment, though it seems doomed to split before long. Its claim to be the continuity of Trotsky's FI is a total sham. We have dealt here with a mere handful of its errors. It has committed many more in its long history. They are not isolated mistakes. They constitute an unmistakable pattern of centrism. As such, on a world scale, the USFI is, at the moment, the principal centrist obstacle to the construction of a new International. It attracts, and then dupes and miseducates, thousands of militants who will genuinely strive for a revolutionary answer to the world crisis. We will criticise, debate with and polemicalise against the USFI - while at the same time uniting with it in action where appropriate - in order to address and win these militants away from their centrist leaders.

## THE 'INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE' TRADITION

The 1953 split spawned not only the USFI. Apart from this mainstream centrist current a host of sectarian and centrist offshoots today litter the world. In certain countries a particular offshoot may be more important than a USFI section. For this reason our battle with centrism cannot be restricted to polemics against Mandel and Barnes of the USFI.

# Fraternal Relations

The International Committee (IC) originally made up of the SWP(US), the Lambertists in France and the group led by Gerry Healy in Britain, now only consists of the latter and its satellites. It was at its birth a parody of orthodoxy, never able to break with the politics of Pablo, only with the man. It is now a deeply opportunist collection of sects who have replaced revolutionary marxism with Horatian idealism to justify their long-term catastrophism and their gross capitulation to petit-bourgeois nationalism. The British WRP (led by Healy) is now a cheerleader for Gadaffi, Yasser Arafat and the Ayatollah Khomeini, brooking no criticism of these leaders. Even at the height of Khomeini's bloody counter-revolution the Healyites were singing his praises.

The Lambertists have undergone various mutations since breaking with Healy in 1971. Various manoeuvres and splits have led to a series of name changes all around the theme of 'reconstructing' the Fourth International - the OCRFI, Parity Commission, FI(OC) and now the FI(ICR). They have danced with the rightist Guillermo Lora of the Bolivian POR, the PO of Argentina, the USFI itself and, most recently, Moreno. In every dance the ill-matched partners have, inevitably, stamped on each other's feet.

The splits, fusions and further splits have ALWAYS dodged the question of programmatic agreement or disagreement. This is because the partnerships have only ever been for factional convenience or gain. As a result they demoralise or render rank and file militants cynical. Good militants are sacrificed for the sake of shoddy manoeuvres. The Lambertists are characterised by their making a fetish of the democratic programme in the semi-colonial countries and the workers' states, centering on a repeated opportunist use of the Constituent Assembly slogan. In Europe, and particularly in France where the largest Lambertist group, the PCI, is located, they pursue a rightist course of adaptation to social democracy. In this respect they are on a par with the Militant Tendency.

A large number of smaller tendencies have laid claim to the mantle of orthodox Trotskyism and have announced their intention to defend it against the revisionism of Mandel, Healy and Lambert. The French organisation Lutte Ouvriere and its satellite organisations (Combat Ouvrier in the Antilles, Spark in the USA and the African Union of International Communist Workers), the International Spartacist Tendency (IST), the Fourth International Tendency (FIT), the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (TILC), and Moreno's IWL are all in the same camp. However, none of these tendencies has transcended centrism.

Lutte Ouvriere, like many others, claims allegiance to the Transitional Programme of 1938 but, in so doing, it rejects the need to re-elaborate that programme. The programme becomes little more than abstract principles, not a guide to action. Its inability to apply the method of the 1938 programme, refocussing it to the modern world, has led LO to glaringly inconsistent positions. It characterises the countries of Eastern Europe as capitalist but the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state. In the French class struggle its sectarian refusal to apply the tactic of CRITICAL electoral support to the mass reformist parties (PS and PCF) collapses into OPPORTUNIST calls for support for Mitterrand - "he can't be worse than Giscard" (1981). Like the SWP in Britain with which it once had close relations, LO is fundamentally an isolated national variant of degenerated Trotskyism.

The IST is a stalinophile sect willing to countenance the crushing of Solidarnosc by Soviet tanks. The TILC, while it lasted, presented neither political clarity nor any

will or perspective to achieve it. In essence it was a cluster of politically disparate groups unified by the British WSL's pretence of being a major factor in the class struggle. When this pretence was exploded, when the British section refused to take a defendist position with regard to Argentina during the Malvinas war, it was effectively blown apart. Since then it has fragmented further with, for example, the Italian section heading off into the USFI.

The FIT likewise has no real existence as an international tendency. Its main organisations, the PO of Argentina and the POR of Bolivia both have histories of opportunism. The POR failed the test of two revolutionary crises (1952 and 1971) by capitulating to 'anti-imperialist' nationalists. The PO attempted to build an electoral bloc, effectively a popular front, with the bourgeois Intransigente party in the recent elections in Argentina. This was a logical extension of its opportunist misuse of the anti-imperialist united front tactic. This slogan they convert into a strategy in the semi-colonies, with persistent opportunist results.

Moreno's IWL split from Lambert supposedly because of his capitulation to social democracy in France. However, this long-standing opportunist Moreno led his organisation into the MAS. This was a social democratic formation of no independent significance. However, Moreno now argues that in the transition from dictatorship to democracy a stage of social democracy is inevitable. To achieve mass growth he argues that it is necessary to set up social democratic organisations or participate in and build them loyally, without raising the revolutionary programme. The 'process' will do the rest. This is classic centrism that would do Mandel proud. Indeed it points to the likelihood of further unity manoeuvres by these centrists.

## THE KEY TO REGROUPMENT

The fundamental problem with all of these groups, and others like them, is that they refuse to recognise there was a break in the continuity of Trotskyism. They do not recognise that the FI of 1951 was not, programmatically, the Fourth International of 1938. Unable fundamentally to break with whichever of the IS or IC traditions they themselves spring from, they are left proclaiming their allegiance to the "FI" but this necessarily implies allegiance not only to the letter of the 1938 programme but to the spirit of the 1943-51 revision. Thus, they characteristically call for the "reconstruction" or "rebuilding" or "refoundation" of the FI without specifying, programmatically, what the basis for such a re-establishment should be. They are incapable of recognising that, without a thorough assessment of the degeneration of the FI a new revolutionary international cannot be built. They are doomed to mimic the manoeuvres and dishonest diplomacy of their IS or IC forbears. An understanding of the process of degeneration through which the FI passed would enable them to see that reconstruction without the re-elaboration of the political basis, the programme, for regroupment would only lead to the recreation of the atmosphere of mistrust and national exclusiveness that organisationally wrecked the FI.

The rotten traditions of the past have to be transcended by a commitment to re-elaborate the revolutionary programme, exposing and so rectifying past mistakes and clearing the way for the building of a new International on a principled basis. The point of departure for the undersigned groups is that we believe programmatic re-elaboration to be a pre-requisite for real unity and the creation of a healthy International. We are committed

to addressing this task and fulfilling it. At present our tasks can be summed up in the slogans:

- \* Forward to the building of a Leninist Trotskyist International!
- \* For a new World Party of Socialist Revolution!

We recognise that there have been and will again be tendencies, factions and whole groups emerging from the so-called Trotskyist groups throughout the world who are aware of the errors of their leaderships and are prepared to fight them. All of the undersigned groups recognise their own origins in left centrist splits from degenerate fragments of the Trotskyist movement. Our limited international experience prevents us from pointing to the existence of other groups like ourselves. However, we remain confident that such groups, if they do not already exist, will come into being under the impact of the international class struggle when the bankruptcy of their parent organisations stands exposed. We will search out, help to create, discuss with and if possible unite with such tendencies on a principled basis.

## NECESSITY OF THE PARTY

Our goal is the creation of national revolutionary parties and a revolutionary International. The unevenness of the working class, divided as it is by country, race, industry, religion, sex and age, means that it cannot spontaneously achieve a homogeneous anti-capitalist struggle. The need for an armed insurrection to seize state power, to build the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and to overcome the hopeless decline of capitalism, are all vital tasks which cannot be left to the spontaneous struggle of the working class. Their fulfilment requires that the working class be won to a programme of scientific socialism, which is embodied in the revolutionary party.

The centralised power of the bourgeoisie must be overthrown and smashed by a conscious disciplined force which has won the allegiance of the majority of the proletariat. Thus, a revolutionary party is the indispensable instrument for seizing and holding state power. Party struggle within the workers' movement is the indispensable means whereby the proletariat selects and tempers the right party. Defeat and demoralisation await it if this process of party struggle WITHIN the labour movement is not won by revolutionary communists.

Communists have, at various times, had to pass through successive stages of development. From an ideological current primarily concerned with acquiring a thorough understanding of scientific socialism and, on this basis, hammering out the main components of a revolutionary programme, to a fighting propaganda group which seeks to combine a struggle for that programme (against the numerically stronger mass forces of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois influence within the workers' movement) with an orientation to, and involvement in all key struggles, to the creation of a small party which, because it embraces a serious section of the advanced workers, the militant minority, can combat other parties on the terrain of the class struggle itself where the leadership of the reformists can be openly disputed and broken.

Our groupings stand close to the beginning of this process of development because of the collapse of the Fourth International into centrism. However, the new period of crisis and profound instability in the capitalist world will throw all the existing leaderships and parties of the proletariat into crisis and confusion. It is into that flux that communists must intervene

to prove to the best elements that, correctly applied, the revolutionary inheritance of Lenin and Trotsky can provide a way forward. It is along that path that we must advance, winning and tempering a cadre of communists and, thereby, building the nucleus of a revolutionary communist party of the proletarian vanguard.

While the revolution can be carried through in one country, socialism cannot be built in one country. The point of departure for marxists is the fact that capitalism has created a world economy. It is an international system that must be combatted internationally. The building of a revolutionary party is, therefore, inseparably linked to the building of a democratic centralist World Party of revolution, an International.

The building of the International cannot be put off until national parties have been built. Nor can it arise out of unprincipled international alliances that are not founded on programmatic agreement. The International must be built by revolutionaries simultaneously with the building of national parties. It must be founded on the basis of an international programme guiding and informing the work of the national sections. On this basis it can and must be organised as a democratic centralist International.

## INTERNATIONAL TENDENCY

If the building of a democratic centralist International requires the elaboration of a programme to guide the international's work and form the basis of its discipline then it is clear that, prior to its foundation, there must exist a more embryonic form of organisation whose purpose is to develop that programme. We call such an organisation an International Tendency. Such a Tendency would be characterised by:

1. the recognition by its component parts of the need to re-elaborate a world programme on the basis of the method of the 1938 Transitional Programme;
2. proven agreement between the component sections with regard to the interpretation

of fundamental tenets and tactics of marxism and, therefore, agreement on how to proceed with the necessary programmatic work;

3. proven agreement with regard to the application of the principles, strategy and tactics of revolutionary communism in the context of conjunctural crises of proletarian leadership both historically and contemporarily and expressed in the resolutions of the international conferences of the national sections;
4. an established and recognised democratic-centralist leadership, based on the decisions of, and elected by, international conference; and the necessary organisational structures to ensure the disciplined application of agreed policy.

An International Tendency founded upon such agreement would be a fully principled grouping and a major step towards the creation of a new revolutionary International.

## FRATERNAL RELATIONS

However, even such a Tendency could not spring unprepared into existence. In order to examine programmatic positions and methods of work, to overcome weaknesses of national one-sidedness and to establish a recognised and trusted leadership and organisation, it is necessary for revolutionary groups to develop an organisational framework within which collaboration and private discussion can take place. Within such a framework autonomous groups of communists could test their ability to generate programmatic advance, to adopt common responses to current political problems, to create a leading cadre and organisation worthy of the trust and loyalty of the various groups.

Such an organisational framework we call 'fraternal relations'. We base the establishment and declaration of such relations between our groups on a proven and public record of past agreement on fundamental political and programmatic issues. These are summed up in the document "Fundamental Principles of our Programme", adopted in common by each of our groups. Whilst this document, in its characterisation of, for

example, the nature of reformism and the tactics to be used against it, and in its analysis of stalinism since the Second Imperialist World War, already signifies a higher level of agreement than exists in many a so-called 'International', we recognise it as only a necessary though important step forward. It is the necessary basis for further and closer collaboration between our groups and for their mutual assistance and development.

At another level, the agreement of common positions between our groups on such diverse issues as the Polish crisis, Nicaragua, Iran, Grenada, the Malvinas war and the destruction of the South Korean airliner over the territory of the Soviet Union, are all further testament to the principled nature of proceeding to closer co-operation and identification.

From now on each of our groups undertakes to open its internal organisational life to the others. We shall attempt, wherever possible, to present internationally agreed positions on major political issues and we shall collaborate on programmatic work. However, given the difference of resources, size and circumstances of our groups, we recognise the present autonomy of the groups and respect each group's right to publish its own positions.

As an identifiable international grouping of nationally based communist groups, but not yet an International Tendency, we adopt the name Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International. We call on all groups and individuals who recognise the need for the building of a new International, free of unprincipled manoeuvre and programmatic compromise, to examine the positions and documents of our grouping and to join with us in the vital and urgent work necessary to pass beyond our present stage of development towards the building of a new Revolutionary Communist International - a true and worthy successor to the Internationals of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

GRUPE POUVOIR OUVRIER - France  
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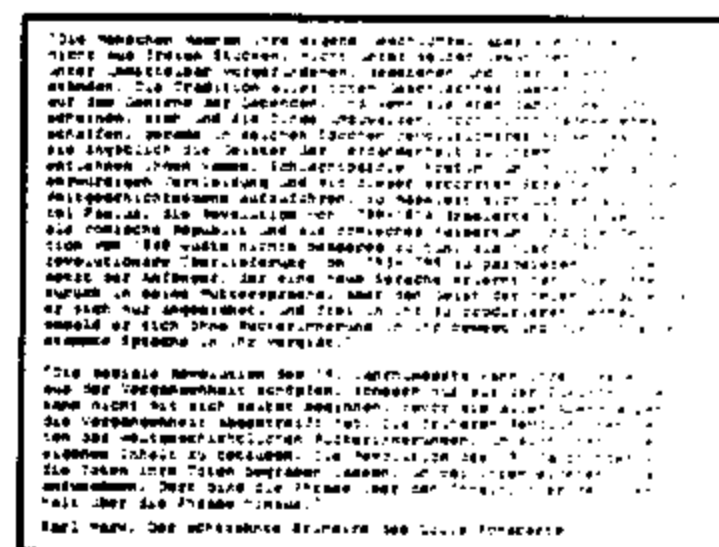
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## Inside the PLO

**The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics.**

Helena Cobban *Cambridge University Press*  
1984 Price: £6.95 (pb) 305pp.

This is a well-researched and documented study of the PLO by an experienced journalist who was based in Beirut from 1976 to 1981. The major section of the book, "The history of the PLO mainstream" runs to over 100 pages. Cobban's concern is primarily with the history of Fateh: "the roots of the resilience of Palestinian nationalism... lay not so much in the history of the PLO's own rather ponderous bureaucratic apparatus as in the development over the preceding quarter-century of its dominant member group, Fateh". The chapters in this section describe in detail the historical development of Fateh and the PLO against the ever-changing political balance of the post-1948 Middle East.

Cobban's book is a eulogy on the "historic" generation of leaders - notably Yasser Arafat, Salah Khalaf, Khalil Wazier, Farouk Qaddumi and Khaled al-Hassan - who were active in Fateh before the launching of the armed struggle in January 1965, and who continued to dominate that organisation, and through it, the PLO. Her admiration for the Fateh/PLO leadership and her support of their political method define the parameters of the book. Two recurrent themes are the ability of these leaders to gain a consensus of support within the PLO to legitimise their actions and their ideas, and the development of these leaders as "statesmen". Both are important arguments in the European bourgeoisies' canvassing for the recognition of the PLO by the United States.

This book shows that for the Fateh leaders, the armed struggle went hand-in-hand with diplomatic manoeuvring to gain financial and political support from heads of state in the Arab world and beyond. Successful guerrilla actions brought new recruits and additional leverage with the Arab regimes. Defeats not only undermined the faith of the Palestinians in the ultimate effectiveness of armed struggle, but also created the necessary environment for acceptance of the Fateh leaders' political concessions. In every bitter conflict from the Six Day War (1967) to the Battle of Beirut (1982), the Fateh leaders had an eye to the prospects for a negotiated settlement. The ultimate goal of a Palestinian state on the ruins of Zionist Israel receded over the horizon. In its place came the Palestinian "national authority" - a mini-state on the West Bank and Gaza.

Cobban describes the bumpy course of the Fateh leaders' manoeuvrings with considerable insight. Thus, in the aftermath of the Lebanon war 1975/76, when the Palestinian groups most opposed to the mini-state solution had been significantly weakened, she writes: "one of the first moves of the Fateh/PLO bosses... was to start making preparations for the next session of the Palestinian National Council at which they could capitalise on this change, to strengthen their mandate for the turn towards diplomacy".

Since the evacuation of Beirut in August 1982 and the massacres at Sabra and Shatila the following month, bloody splits have opened within Fateh and the PLO. Cobban's study ends with the 16th PNC in February 1983 when the frustrations and dissent were only beginning to surface. However, she wrongly sees the PLO's future as best safeguarded by the continued leadership of Fateh's "inner core" with their "real-politik" approach to the resolution of the Palestinians' quest for their homeland.

In May 1984, Arafat called for peace negotiations with Israel under UN auspices, stating that he favoured mutual recognition between the states of Israel and Palestine - once such a state is established. This is a

far cry from the articles in "Filastinuna" which brought together the groups that formed Al-Fateh. It advocated "the eruption of a complete guerrilla movement from all the Arab lands" to destroy the Zionist state. Arafat's latest moves are a testimony to the inability of petit-bourgeois nationalism to develop a consistent and effective political method against imperialism and its allies.

Guerrillaism and bourgeois diplomacy are the two sides of petit-bourgeois nationalism. Cobban's book reveals - despite her obvious sympathies - the mechanisms by which one side reinforces the other at the expense of a revolutionary victory over Zionism. Arafat is the incarnation of Palestinian nationalism. Despite the defeats and betrayals suffered under his leadership he remains the repository of the hope and aspirations of thousands of Palestinians. This fact is largely due to the absence of a principled alternative to Fateh and Arafatism. This much is clear too from Cobban's account of the rival factions to Fateh in the PLO.

Cobban's book is not a history of the Palestinian resistance - it is a history of the PLO/Fateh. Not surprisingly, there is little coverage of the independent struggles of Palestinian workers and peasants in the occupied territories and the diaspora. Yet, together with the workers and peasants of the Middle East, this is the only force capable of crushing the Zionist state. A revolutionary Trotskyist party is needed to bring the working class to the head of the struggle that can build a secular workers' republic of Palestine on the ruins of the Zionist state.

In the absence of such a critique, Cobban remains mesmerised by the resilience and popularity of Arafat. In the end she has written a book which comes unfortunately close to bolstering the fiction that history is a product of the strengths and weaknesses of "great men".

Verna Care

## IRELAND'S BRITISH PROBLEM

**The British in Ireland: a suitable case for withdrawal**

Geoffrey Bell *Pluto Press* 1984  
Price: £2.95 (pb)

Geoff Bell's latest offering from Pluto Press is certainly his most flawed. Much narrower in their subject matter, *The Protestants of Ulster* (1976) and *Troublesome Business* (1982), provided a great deal of ammunition for socialists seeking to explain both the reactionary character of Unionism, and the pro-imperialist record of the Labour Party on Ireland. In his latest book, he goes much further by attempting to outline a socialist strategy for solving the Irish Question. It is at this point that Bell's politics seriously undermine the value of this book.

The strengths of *The British in Ireland* lie in his dissection of Ulster loyalism, and through it the reactionary nature of the partition of Ireland in 1921. Bell places the religious bigotry of Paisleyism in the context of the need to defend Protestant workers' social and political privileges. Through his account of the Orange statelet's actions, Bell is able to give the lie to the notion of "Two Nationism". This idea - so pervasive on the Labourite and Stalinist left - suggests that such privileges either do not exist or are not politically important.

Bell demonstrates the utopian and ultimately pro-imperialist logic of any "socialist" strategy that tries to treat Catholic and Protestant workers as essentially equal because they are both exploited by capitalism.

There is one flaw in this chapter - "Why

loyalism?". It occurs when Bell tries to insist that James Connolly fully understood Unionism. He correctly states that the Irish delegates to the Second Congress of the Third (Communist) International had a naive view of Unionism, one which underestimated the grip of Loyalism on Protestant workers. But to play off Connolly's "less starry-eyed" view of the Protestants against this will not do. Connolly did not give "a sound materialist examination of reality" (p. 67). In fact, the great revolutionary wrongly believed that plebian Unionism would give way to industrial working-class solidarity as Orange landlordism's power faded in the early part of this century.

For most of his life, Connolly explained the sectarian divisions as a result of skilful ruling-class manipulation. Certainly, on his return to Ireland in 1910 as a union organiser, Connolly abandoned much of his earlier optimism, but he embraced then a view which dismissed the Protestant workers until after the national question was solved. After 1912 Connolly expressed the view that Protestant workers would have to be coerced into accepting Home Rule.

It is not surprising that Bell should slide over all this. Essentially, Sinn Féin - whom Bell faithfully follows - hold to the same view today. On the other hand, revolutionary communism while recognising the need for coercion against sections of the Unionist population also advance class demands that can split the Protestant bloc and win over decisive sections of Protestant workers to the struggle against imperialism.

By far the major weakness in Bell's book is Bell's attitude to present-day Sinn Féin. He effectively underwrites their political strategy and does so with that characteristic USFI fig-leaf of an argument that the British left would do well to "not judge the Provisionals on the basis of its own tactics, strategy or obsessions (!), and instead to remember the wisdom of Connolly's remark that 'each nation must work out its own means of salvation'." (p.59).

In short - Sinn Féin are Irish Marxists. Bell forgets that our only "obsession" is that working class power, leadership and independence of programme is a precondition of a progressive 32 County Republic, and that Sinn Féin's programme and record eternally insists that "Labour Must Wait".

Bell is guilty of incredible irresponsibility when he says that we must not "complain of the Provo's lack of programmatic clarity" because "there is no organisation in Western Europe as far to the left as the Provisionals which can still boast their kind of mass support". Has Bell forgotten the price the Chilean workers have paid these last ten years for heeding similar advice with regard to Allende?

In the final chapter - "Why Socialism?" - Bell also outlines the tasks of a solidarity movement in Britain. Here Bell rightly stresses the need to campaign around an end to the Unionist veto, for the disbanding of the RUC/UDR, and repeal of the PTA. But he wrongly rejects the importance of the demand "Troops Out Now".

He takes this view because the malevolent role of the troops has "won greater acknowledgement" (p. 113). This is a ridiculous statement and can only be made by one blinded by the "greater acknowledgement" given by certain constituency activists within the Labour Party.

The many-millioned bulk of British trade unionists remain largely impervious to the logic of this position, however. In fact, the Troops Out Now slogan expresses the principle of unconditional opposition to British imperialism. As such, it has been attacked for years by Stalinists and liberals who wish to water it down as a sop to Unionist sentiment.

These flaws in the book are crucial, but elsewhere Bell scores some important points. His chapter on "Why Ireland?" reveals the rich vein of radical writing on Ireland from the Levellers to the Chartists. Other positive features of the book include a useful refutation of the "bloodbath theory", often advanced against troop withdrawal, and a detailed exposure of the reformist labour organisations North, South and in Britain, and their failure to understand or tackle the roots of sectarianism. As a result they have fallen victim to this sectarianism. There is, in addition, an excellent bibliography of introductory texts to most of the problems raised by the situation in Ireland.

Overall then, the book is a political hybrid. Bell is a Labour Party member now. But in a previous life Bell was part of the centrist "Trotskyism" of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. There, at least, he learned how to develop a materialist analysis of Loyalism. But his book also demonstrates the chronic weakness of that apprenticeship: a hopeless lauding of left Republicanism and retailing Sinn Féin "socialism" as the way to achieve a united Ireland.

As a result, we have a book which in the hands of a militant with average trade union consciousness provides some antidote to the head-fixing of the bosses' media. Yet Bell has also given us a book which merely compounds the catalogue of confusion over socialist strategy and the political basis of solidarity work. Certainly worth buying, but read with care.

Keith Hassell

## Obituaries to a revolution

**Grenada: whose freedom?**

Iitzroy Ambursley and James Dunkerley  
Latin American Bureau £2.95 (pb) 128pp.

**Grenada: Revolution, invasion and aftermath**  
Hugh O'Shaughnessy Sphere Books  
£2.95 258 pp.

These two books cover nearly the same ground. They look at the history of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), the policies of the Peoples' Revolutionary Government (PRG), the split in the NJM and the aftermath of the invasion. Both books give a virtually identical account of the events which led up to the bloody carnage in which a major part of the NJM leadership were executed. More surprisingly, the book by Dunkerley and Ambursley - two openly-declared Marxists not unsympathetic to Trotskyism - ends up coming to similar conclusions to that of the liberal journalist O'Shaughnessy who works for the Observer.

Both books confirm that the NJM was never a party rooted in and organising the mass of workers and peasants in Grenada. Having organised itself from 1973 as a highly selective and tightly-knit organisation, the NJM had only 45 full members when it seized power in March 1979, and by the end of 1983 no more than 300. This was a tiny number in a population of 110,000.

This weakness was not just a question of size. The model on which the NJM was organised was a Stalinist one. The party was run from the top down, with the Politburo changing its own composition and that of the Central Committee without reference to the membership. Political decisions were taken by a small grouping at the top of the party.

This method of organisation was fostered not only by the Coard wing of the party, but by Bishop's supporters as well. Bernard Coard, who had been close to the British

CP while at Sussex University, quickly organised a "Marxist-Leninist" (i.e. Stalinist) wing of the party (OREL), on his return to Grenada in 1976. Bishop, Unison Whiteman, Vincent Noel, Kendrick Radix and others were in fact much closer to the politics of the Socialist International, to which they affiliated the NJM.

Despite much talk about "the masses" by the NJM, their involvement in directing the course of the revolution was strictly limited. Bishop was no doubt genuinely popular, as proven leader of the opposition to Gairey's tyranny.

Bishop naturally leaned towards the plebiscitary, populist type of "democracy" which is still fostered by Fidel Castro as an adjunct to his Stalinist regime. Dunkerley and Ambursley accept the organs of "Popular Power" virtually uncritically. Against the bourgeois Westminster-style system, they argue, Grenada offered "by contrast a form of continuous direct democracy". (p.39). Yet at the same time they refer to these bodies as organs of "popular consultation". There is a difference. They had no real power or control over the government.

Because of this, these authors cannot explain the dramatic falling-off in participation in these bodies, which they suggest was the "normal" falling off of revolutionary impetus. Any worker or student involved in useless "participation" and "consultation" committees could give them the real reason. Consultation without control is useless. In arguing that there was basically no alternative between these two systems - bourgeois democracy and bonapartist "popular power", Ambursley and Dunkerley reject the only possibility of real workers' democracy - soviets or workers' councils.

On the economic policy of the PRG while in power, both books confirm the NJM's pursuance of a capitalist stage of the revolution. Dunkerley and Ambursley point out that while the state sector grew to 30%, "the bulk of the economy and its most dynamic sectors remained in private hands"

(p.40). O'Shaughnessy points to a number of World Bank and IMF reports praising Grenada's economic management.

The economic and political sacrifices necessary were made by the workers and peasants of Grenada, in a society where, as the LAB book points out, the richest sectors, the merchant-houses, had considerably increased their profits (p. 44).

Neither of these books manages to make the link between the strategy of the PRG, the growing economic crisis it produced and the split in the NJM. As a result, both give the impression of an apparently motiveless factional battle, inexplicably breaking out over the NJM leadership.

In fact, March 1983 saw the start of the crisis, with Coard reporting that state employees could not be paid for much longer unless the budget was slashed by 20%. The situation appears to have evoked two responses. Bishop visited the USA seeking a compromise with Washington (a trip opposed by the OREL members), and delivered a promise of elections in 1985 to Caricom a month later.

Coard, who had just come back from a months visit to the Soviet Union, directed his supporters on a different course. In September, OREL launched an onslaught on the Bishop wing. What was needed was closer cooperation with the "socialist countries" - the USSR, Cuba, East Germany. All this meant downgrading the role of Bishop and his group in the government, and placing Coard in charge of the party and in "joint leadership" with Bishop. While still absolutely committed to the "capitalist stage", the OREL grouping clearly realised that the flagging enthusiasm of the masses and the future sacrifices they were about to exact from them, demanded a more homogenous Stalinist party and a strengthened army.

From this point on, the party was effectively split, with OREL in the majority. Within five days of returning from Cuba, Bishop was under house arrest.

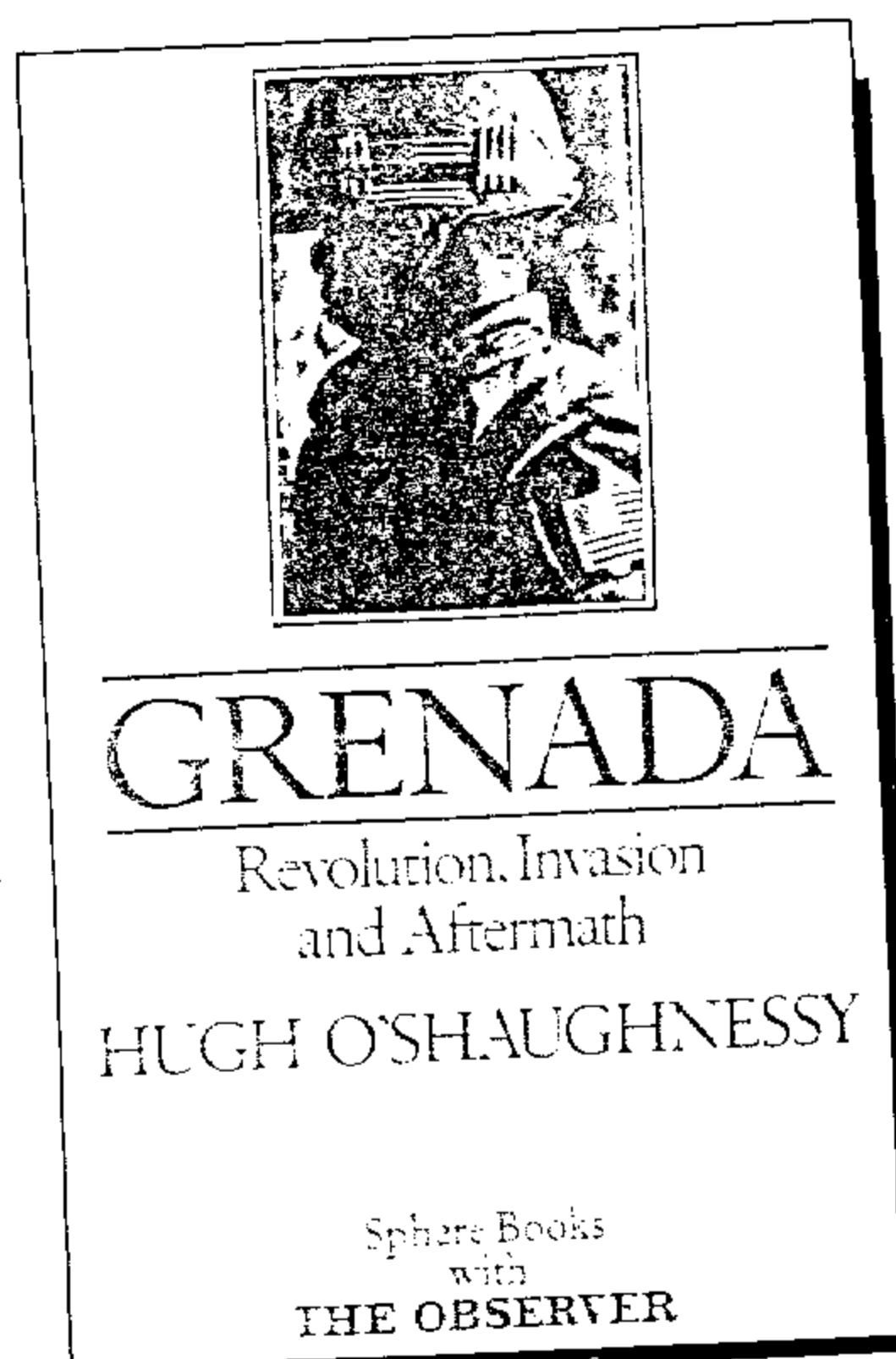
When the news broke to the masses, kept in ignorance of the debates in the party, they entered into the course of the revolution again with a vengeance. Under the slogans "No Bishop No Revo", "We don't want Communism" and "C for Coard, C for Communism", a demonstration of 3-4,000 released Bishop, and under his direction seized the military headquarters of Fort Rupert. It was here that they met a murderous hail of fire from PRA units sent by the Central Committee - the same units that proceeded to execute Maurice Bishop and five other NJM leaders.

The strategy pursued by Bishop and Coard at the head of the NJM had led the revolution into crisis. The Stalinist response of OREL had aborted it. As could be expected, O'Shaughnessy puts the blame on the NJM for "trying to put into practice the theories of democratic centralism and the primacy of party over state". In castigating the Stalinist norms of internal party organisation and its relationship to the masses, O'Shaughnessy follows many other bourgeois commentators in, genuinely or deliberately, confusing Stalinist and Leninist methods.

More surprisingly, Dunkerley and Ambursley give credence to the same view when they blame the NJM for seeking "complete imposition of their party-based conceptions of discipline and public order on the state" (p.35).

The lessons of the debacle in Grenada are not that "Leninist vanguardism = brutal dictatorship", but that the Stalinist theory and practice of stages guarantees only bloody defeat for the masses.

Stuart King



# Welsh miners against fascism

Miners Against Fascism

Hywel Francis *Lawrence and Wishart 1984*  
Price: £4.95

By a strange twist of fate the publication of *Miners Against Fascism* coincided with the start of the 1984 miners strike, when Welsh miners once again found themselves in the forefront of working class struggle. This alone should generate interest in Francis's detailed history of Welsh miner volunteers for the Republican forces in the Spanish Civil War.

What makes this whole episode instructive as well is the light it sheds on the politics of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) who then and now exercise some leadership in the Welsh coalfield.

Francis states that the aim of the book is 'to explain the social and political reasons why Wales, and especially its miners, responded in the way it did to the struggle against fascism in Spain in the 1930's.' And, in many ways, this is a book that Francis is uniquely suited to write. He grew up in one of those South Wales valleys where Communism was thought to be hereditary. His father was the late miners leader Dai Francis, and such legendary figures as Will Paynter and Jack Jones were well known to him. *Miners Against Fascism* draws heavily upon this background and on a mass of oral evidence from those who participated in the Spanish Civil War and the class struggles in the South Wales coalfield which preceded it.

Fifty years ago the South Wales coalfield provided no less than 118 'volunteers for liberty'. These Welsh miners formed one of the biggest contingents within the British Battalions of the International Brigades. One South Wales valley alone - the Rhondda - provided more volunteers than the combined total of miners from the English coalfields.

Why did so many volunteer? Francis puts forward two major reasons. First, it was an extension of the unique 'extra-parliamentary' form of class struggles which re-emerged in South Wales in the inter-war period. Secondly, it was an expression of a particular form of internationalism, a 'proletarian internationalism'.

It must be said that the first part of Francis's case is the strongest. The miners, betrayed by the TUC leaders in 1926, were left to fight on alone. The bosses employed starvation tactics. Police were drafted into South Wales to physically crush the resistance. And although the miners were eventually defeated, as Francis says the 'collective coalfield experience was a salutary one for many'.

While the more general experience of the defeat was demoralisation, the bitter struggles of the period served to heighten the political consciousness of a significant minority of South Wales miners. The CPGB managed to capture the best of these militants.

The real value of Francis's book lies in the detail he paints of the class struggle in the valleys in this period. But his inability or unwillingness to break with Stalinism blinds him to the treacherous role played by the CPGB during these years.

In the late 1920's the CPGB, faithfully parroting Stalin's 'Third Period' class against class line, launched a bitter attack on the Labour Party and the leadership of the South Wales Miners Federation (SWMF), denouncing both as social fascists. As a result, the CP succeeded in actually marginalising itself.

Francis recognises that this policy proved disastrous but believes that 'out of the errors of this sectarianism grew a united front strategy which anticipated later national and international Communist policy changes.' This is nothing short of disingenuous. The victory of fascism in Germany (itself partly due to Stalin's

criminal 'social fascist' policy) caused the Comintern to perform a sharp turn towards right opportunism. For Stalin, the fight against fascism now required not simply a united front of fighting workers' organisations (previously dubbed 'social fascist') including the reformists, but the 'democratic wing of the bourgeoisie itself. This was called the Popular Front. The CPGB was only required to rubber stamp this change of line.

In South Wales each and every ruling class attack was interpreted by the CPGB as further evidence of 'creeping' state fascism. This necessitated the defence of 'democracy' (of the bourgeois kind) as a lesser evil. For the Party, 'Revolution Now! was seen to be tactically infantile and politically indulgent'.

Moreover, for the Stalinists, any working class activity which threatened the continuation of the Popular Front was 'tactically infantile'. Within the rank and file of the SWMF there was strong support for the policy of 'strikes for Spain' and against the government's policy of non-intervention. But the Stalinists on the Executive of the SWMF believed that 'limited and realistic demands in support of the Spanish Republic with only moral and organisational pressure being used, would be the best way of securing maximum results.'

While in Spain the Popular Front had tragic and well known consequences, in South Wales it proved no less effective in strangling working class resistance under the banner of 'democracy'.

What of Francis's claim that the miners who volunteered for Spain exhibited 'proletarian internationalism'? The overwhelming majority of South Wales miners who fought in Spain were members of the CPGB who saw the Spanish Civil War as a straightforward defence of bourgeois democracy and Spain's 'national rights'. In the words of one of them, 'The major thing was the defeat of the rebellion and to reject and counter Fascist Germany's and Fascist Italy's attempt to encircle France and Britain and go forward with their conquest of Europe'. This social chauvinism was constantly flogged by the CPGB. In so far as 'proletarian Internationalism' existed in South Wales it was despite the CPGB, not because of it.

*Miners Against Fascism* is a book of uneven merit. It draws its strengths from Francis's closeness to those who created the history it explores; it is 'history from below'. As an account of the development of political consciousness within the South Wales coalfield in the twenties and thirties it is a valuable study, but Francis's blindness to the CPGB's crimes limit its educational usefulness in training a new generation of militants.

Jon Lewis.

## SISTERS AND WORKERS

Class struggle and women's liberation: 1640 to the present day

Tony Cliff *Bookmarks 1984* Price: £4.50  
271pp.

Women have played an active role in the great revolutionary struggles of the past 350 years. This role has been by and large 'hidden from history'. Feminist writers over the last fifteen years have striven hard to uncover this history. Yet they have built into their accounts not only a false patriarchal conspiracy theory, but have also hidden from their histories the glaring class differences and antagonisms within 'the women's movement'.

Tony Cliff sets out to remedy both these errors. The ambitious title Cliff gives his book indicates the enormity of the task. Those

340 years can hardly be done justice in 250 pages, but Cliff provides a readable and entertaining journey through some of the key revolutionary situations. By drawing together accounts of the heroic role of women both as individuals and as mass movements (all this information is gleaned from scholarly or hard-to-obtain sources), the book is a valuable introduction to the history of working class women.

The overall political theme of the book is one Cliff has been stressing for many years: the fundamental antagonism between bourgeois feminism and socialism, and that working class women must be seen as an integral part of the wider working-class struggle for socialism and women's emancipation.

The arguments put forward are a continuation of Cliff's fight within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) against the feminism which had been expressed through their *Women's Voice* organisation. Having successfully wound up this 'sister' organisation of the SWP, Cliff soon got rid of their eponymous magazine, and is now delivering the final literary blows against any closet feminists who may remain.

Women's movements have historically always been divided by class. The French Revolution saw women of the rising bourgeoisie demanding political equality and the right to vote for themselves, whilst the propertyless women fought for bread, price controls and a constitutional republic. The two groups were eventually to come into direct conflict during the Terror, when propertyless women cheered as their Girondine 'sisters' were guillotined.

In the USA in the 19th Century, the bourgeois feminist movement sought equality with men of their own class by gaining votes for women at the expense of blacks and workers. By contrast Cliff quotes Mother Jones, the famous working class women's leader who argued at a meeting of suffragettes in New York: 'You don't need a vote to raise hell! You need convictions and a voice!...The women of Colorado have had the vote for two generations and the working men and women are in slavery'. (p.58).

Whilst militant trade unionists correctly criticised bourgeois suffrage campaigners for ignoring the terrible conditions of their supposed sisters in the proletariat, and for their parliamentary cretinism, they also make a fundamental error. It is an error that Cliff follows them in making. To reject or downplay the struggle for democratic rights and legal equality in society was wrong. This struggle held the potential of raising the political consciousness of working class women.

Engels, Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky saw this clearly. They saw that militant organisation and revolutionary tactics such as the mass strike for political goals educated and developed the working class as a whole. Whilst struggles for democratic rights could not solve the social roots of proletarian oppression and exploitation, it helped Marxists to create a force that could - a revolutionary party.

Cliff's economism is demonstrated again and again in his counterposing of women's trade union struggles to the bourgeois feminists' concentration on politics (meaning parliament). He cannot discover the basis for a specifically proletarian politics which comprises democratic demands as well as economic demands, and which can link them all together in a transitional programme for working class power.

The incompatibility of bourgeois feminism and socialism is a basic but grossly neglected tenet of Marxism which Cliff is correct to demonstrate in his book, especially since the growth of the women's movement in Britain has seen many left groups ditching Marxism and compromising with feminism.

However, in his eagerness to defend the unity of the working class, Cliff neglects the necessity for revolutionaries to have a

specific approach to working class women. In the Introduction he writes: "The history of efforts to organise working class women into socialist organisations like the general history of the working class movement, is a long story of ebbs and flows, of great achievement and heart-rending disappointments. Yet the struggles go on, even though time and time again they have to start as from the beginning". (p.11).

Cliff's habitual spontaneism which here he applies to women is capable of short bursts of wild optimism and enthusiasm, which fall back into a bleak pessimism. There is an alternative method to Cliff's. It is one that understands clearly that it is the task of an organisation of revolutionaries, and specifically of women communists, to intervene in each major upheaval, to test out other leaderships, to draw larger numbers to their programme, even after a defeat. It is a tradition that not only built parties and movements of working class women, but also tested, corrected and developed its programme.

For example, the experience of the Russian women's movement from 1905-7, combined with that of Zetkin in the German women's organisation, enabled Kollontai and the Bolsheviks to reach a better understanding of how and around what to organise working class women by 1917. Cliff constantly neglects that aspect of these historical examples.

You would imagine from Cliff's account that there were no problems with the woman question in the German and Russian movements. In fact, the Bolsheviks were slow and inadequate in their work on women right up to 1917, due to a reticence to recognise the special needs of women workers. It was leading women like Kollontai and Zetkin who combined a Marxist rejection of bourgeois feminism with a revolutionary strategy and tactics, designed to mobilise women for their own emancipation and working class power.

This programme, which became the Bolshevik position during the 1917 revolution, included raising specific demands relating to women's oppression and the need for special forms of agitation, propaganda and organisation to draw women into struggle. This remains the case today.

The major blind spot in Cliff's analysis is that he continues to see women simply as backward workers who must be drawn into the general class struggle. He rejects any notion of special interests and argues: "As workers too, the needs of men and women are identical. Because of these things any separatism between men and women workers will damage both, and will damage women more than men". (p.102)

Cliff maintains that whilst women's oppression is a result of their position within the family, it is only as workers that they become able to struggle against capitalism: "The workplace, and the fight by working women to improve their circumstances there, is the key to changing ideas, raising consciousness" (p.235); and again: "the starting point for a struggle against women's oppression is not that of oppression itself, but the point where working class women are strong, where, with the men of their own class, they can fight to change society" (p.235).

Cliff here confuses two points. Of course, women can only decisively act to change society through their struggle alongside men, based in the workplace. But it is totally false to limit the issues for launching a mass movement of working class women to the problems they face as workers. The movement of miners wives in the 1984 strike shows that the problems working class women face as home managers can be an enormous spur to militant struggle. Cliff has nothing to offer these women except trade unionism or joining his party. In this he falls decisively below the level of Kollontai and Zetkin who wanted to build a mass working class women's movement under communist leadership.

Cliff's book, whilst a very good introduction to the history and militancy of working class women, fails the reader because it ends up with an economicist language of feminism which suggests that the heart of a revolutionary programme for women consists in overcoming the barriers that prevent a backward section of our class from fighting alongside their brothers. On finishing this book the reader would do well to turn to the writings of Kollontai and Zetkin for the full picture.

Helen Ward



## COMMUNISM IN GERMANY UNDER THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

BEN FOWKES

### THE RISE AND FALL OF THE K.P.D.

Communism in Germany under the Weimar Republic

Ben Fowkes MacMillan 1984  
Price: £7.95 (pb) 246pp.

The history of German communism in the period 1918-33 is rich with lessons for revolutionaries today. During this period the German Communist Party (KPD) grew from a handful around Luxemburg and Liebknecht into the largest CP outside the USSR.

Between 1918 and 1923, Germany was engulfed in revolutionary crises and in the years up to 1933 the KPD had and then lost the opportunity to smash Nazism.

Hitherto there has been little material on these years in English. Ben Fowkes' book is therefore welcome. The book deals with events between 1918 and 1933. Communist policy in the face of Hitler's rise to power is given somewhat cursory treatment, while the book concludes with a factually interesting section on the sociology, organisational structures and international relations of the KPD.

Fowkes has limited his history to the activity of the party's leaders, "saying little of the middle cadres, let alone the ordinary members". This is a pity, since it leaves us

with a very partial view of the party's role in the revolution. The book is a good introduction to the history of the KPD, but it is not a complete history. It is a pity that the book is so short, as it leaves out many important details of the party's activities and the role of its leaders.

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Instead of leading an armed struggle, the KPD argued against a general strike and claimed that the government would give a finger for the democratic revolution. Despite changing its line when the mass of the working class went to strike against Kapp, the KPD maintained a sectarian attitude towards the SPD's mass base.

The Third and Fourth Comintern (1921 and 1922) advised the united front policy, and encouraged the KPD to join the pro-United Front KPD of 1920. By this time the KPD had joined with the left wing of the USPD (October 1920), and had in effect become a mass party. It had regained members and influence after the ill-fated March Action of March 1921 it issued a largely unheeded call for a general strike and to arms. It had also thrown out the right-opportunist grouping around Paul Levi who publicly broke ranks in denouncing the March Action.

Under the leadership of Ernst Thälmann the KPD implemented the united front policy with considerable skill and success. Fowkes records that through their work around strikes, in which they united with non-communists, they were able to significantly expand their influence in the trade unions. For example at the 10th ADGB (the then German TUC) Congress, the KPD had seven delegates, while at the 11th Congress in June 1922, they had 90 delegates (p.81).

Despite these successes, a strong left within the party, around Ruth Fischer and Arkady Maslow, was ever ready to overturn the united front policy. Fowkes shows the way in which the failed revolution of 1923, associated with Heinrich Brandler's opportunist use of the united front/ workers' government tactics in Saxony, enabled this left to secure control of the party in 1924-5. Once again the united front was abandoned.

Even before the Brandler/Thälheimer leadership had been ousted, the new course was evident in the call for the united front only from below, and "a life and death struggle" was announced against "the Social Democratic accomplices of fascism" (p.114). The disastrous policy of "social fascism" was born. After a short list to the right (1925-1927), the KPD under the new leadership of Stalin's man Ernst Thälmann, led the party through the "Third Period" and towards destruction at the hands of the Nazis. The failure to internalise the lessons and limitations of the united front was a decisive factor in the collapse of the KPD.

In demonstrating this, Fowkes' book is effective and informative. In explaining it, it is politically flawed. His thesis boils down to a critique of Bolshevik organisational methods and the influence (usually malign, as he sees it), of the Executive Committee of

the Communist International and its agents. In other words, he lights upon the familiar theme that Stalinism is merely a continuation of Leninism.

In the German party the development of democratic centralism resulted, in December 1920, in the creation of a real leading body or *Zentrale*. Fowkes complains "this was a clear move towards the Leninist conception of an elite party" (p. 185). This move away from the federal organisation inherited from Luxemburg went hand-in-hand with the KPD becoming "bound to the Comintern" (p.192).

According to Fowkes, the connection between these organisational measures and the party's political failures is that they robbed the party of people like the rightist Paul Levi. People who for Fowkes enshrine something he counterposes to political correctness - "independence of judgement and deeply-held humanistic values" (p.201). In siding with Levi, and seeing his resignation as "a decisive moment in the internal history of the KPD" (p. 62), Fowkes reveals much about his own politics.

In detecting only the evil influence of an "outside force" distorting the KPD's development, Fowkes fails to distinguish between the vital, positive role played by the Comintern in the early 1920s, especially through Lenin and Trotsky's united front policy, and its negative, destructive role in the period of its degeneration - especially Zinoviev's bureaucratic leftism and Stalin's "social fascism" policy. Fowkes records the mistakes made by the German party accurately. To learn from them, however, we must dispense with his all-pervasive anti-Cominternism, and predilection for "independent" opportunists of the Paul Levi stripe.

Mark Hoskisson

## In Brief

What is to be done about law and order?

J. Lea and J. Young *Penguin* 1984  
Price: £2.95 (pb) 284pp.

This book has two themes. The need for "effective policing responsive to the needs of the community and the ending of the drift towards a political marginalisation of the young unemployed" (p. 231). The authors outline two paths of advance. On the one hand, democratic accountability of the police, and on the other, increasing the political power and sense of belonging of those who turn to street crime.

These ideas fairly accurately represent the latest stage in the thinking of a whole generation of radical criminologists spawned in the 1960s and 1970s. They believe the left should turn its attention away from exposing the crimes of the rich and powerful, and address the problem of street crime in which victim and offender are both working class. This is to key into the concerns of a majority of the population. Not to do this, claim Lea and Young, is tantamount to "leaving the running to the conservative press" on the issue of law and order.

By far the best part of the book is the first four chapters. Here they succinctly summarise many of the valuable insights of radical criminology; namely, the problem with taking official statistics at face value, the complexity of the causes of crime, the truth about black crime, the tooling up of the police force, and the political alienation that lies behind working class crime.

The problems occur when the authors advance a solution. They fundamentally misconceive the nature of the police, an arm of a class state. They believe the state has only "occasional recourse to violence" (p.204). Consensus and co-operation is both achievable and desirable. The truth is, however, that intra-working class crimes

against person and property have long existed, but the police force dates from the 1830s and 1840s when working class concentration in urban industrial centres demanded a repressive force within these cities.

Revolutionaries do not, as Young and Lea suggest, dismiss the reality of working class crime or its effects on their victim. What we do recognise, however, is that the police protection of the "citizen" while real, is secondary and police repression of the unions and workers' struggle is the fundamental essence of the police. This latter fact reduces the book's democratic reforms to utopian schemas because the ruling class can not allow the executive of its state to be held accountable. The book fails - despite being well-written, well-researched and thought-provoking - because it peddles the illusion that such accountability can be more than a transitory product of revolutionary crisis on the road to the destruction of the police, and believes that it can be a normal stable feature of bourgeois democracy.

Carol Roberts

### The making of Marx's critical theory - a bibliographical analysis

Allen Oakley *Routledge and Kegan Paul* 1983 Price: £4.95 (pb) 143pp.

This book is precisely what its author subtitled it - "a bibliographical analysis". It covers in a detailed fashion the development of Marx's writing - philosophical, political and economic. While not pretending to be a biography of Marx, the book necessarily gives an insight into the life of Marx the theorist and author, and shows the importance of Engels to the development of his work.

Oakley explains how each work of Marx was commissioned and executed, and guides the reader through the complex relationship between the various pre-cursors of Marx's major work - *Capital*. Each chapter is rounded off with a diagrammatic chronology of published and unpublished manuscripts, which in themselves are useful reference points in the study of Marx's writings.

While much of the finer detail will be of more interest to academic "Marxologists" than to revolutionaries, the book as a whole is a highly useful contribution to the study of Marx's work.

Peter Bolton

Women in Trade Unions  
Barbara Drake *Virago* 1984  
Price £4.50 244pp.

This book was first published in 1920, written by Barbara Drake who was a Fabian and the niece of Beatrice Webb. She carried out numerous detailed investigations of the role of women in particular trades before producing this remarkably detailed and fascinating account of women and trade unionism. Virago have done a great service in making this work - long out of print - available to socialists and trade unionists today.

The book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the history of women in the labour movement from the 'Combinations' of the eighteenth century through the craft unions of the nineteenth to the general unions of the early twentieth century. The mountain of information she marshals demonstrates how women themselves organised in unions, and were not simply organised by men. At the same time she shows the enormous material difficulties that confronted women in this task. At the end of the First World War women, having been used as 'diluted labour' during the war were being driven out of the factories. Yet, despite this, Drake records that women continued to struggle against their use, by

the bosses, as scabs against the working men: Whilst trade union men are pressing forward towards the goal of economic freedom, trade union women - with infinite courage and patience, and free from bitterness against men because they are excluded from trades whose hard won traditions they have been unable to uphold - have set themselves to the task of wiping out forever from their name the time-long stain of 'black-leg' labour. (p 67)

The second part of the book is a detailed empirical study of the situation of women in the trade unions. This demonstrates both the difficulties encountered, and the possibilities of women becoming a decisive force in the unions. A similar study of today's unions would be a useful source of information for women activists.

The final section looks at problems which remain familiar. The difficulties women face in getting jobs, overcoming male prejudices, getting equal pay for equal work, and winning the right to play a full role in the trade unions - all these are shown to be as old as capitalism itself.

As a Fabian, Drake had only a gradualist, reformist perspective for overcoming these problems. Organisations of emancipation she looked to included that band of imperialist robbers, the League of Nations. Nevertheless, as a piece of social investigation this book is extremely valuable.

Jenny Scott

### BOOKS RECEIVED

Women's rights in the workplace  
T. Gill and L. Whitty *Penguin* 1983  
Price: £2.95 (pb) 438pp.

Immigration and Race  
M. Wilson *Penguin* 1983 Price: £2.50 (pb) 229 pp.

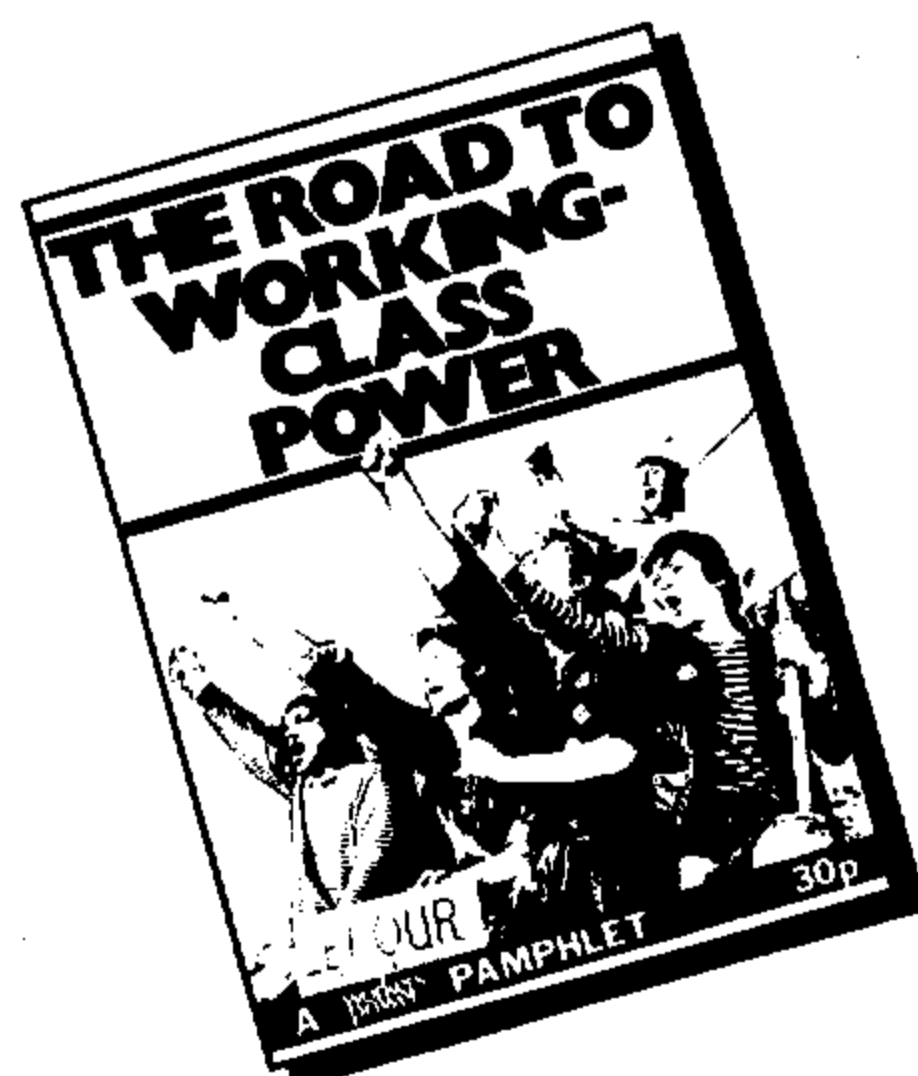
How to survive unemployment  
R. Nathan and M. Syrett *Penguin* 1983  
Price: £2.95 (pb) 249pp.

The democratic alternative: a socialist response to Britain's crisis  
P. Hain *Penguin* 1983 Price: £2.50 (pb) 185pp.

Inside the inner city  
P. Harrison *Penguin* 1983 Price: £3.95 (pb) 443pp.

Arguing for socialism: theoretical considerations  
A. Levine *Routledge and Kegan Paul* 1983  
Price: £14.95 (hb) 241pp.

Marx's construction of social theory  
J. M. Barbalet *Routledge and Kegan Paul* 1983 Price: £12.95 (hb) 228pp.



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