

# REFORMISM AND POPULAR POWER

Historically reformism has been based on two main standpoints. Conventionally we understand it as the theory and practice that accepts the 'national interest', thus eliminating the fundamental conflict between the classes. It forsores the possibility of achieving socialism through a series of reforms within the capitalist system, without destroying the bourgeois state.

This denial of the necessity of destroying the capitalist state gives rise to parliamentarianism — the strategy based on slowly winning over a majority inside the bourgeois parliament, and the reduction of class struggle to a form of pressure on parliament to pass more 'progressive' legislation. Historically, this tendency is embodied in the Second International [1]. In this country it is represented by the Labour Party. Recently, the West European Communist Parties have adopted reformist policies too.

But reformism is based on a deeper fault and misconception — that of failing to understand the contradiction between the forces and relations of production. Firstly, the reformists tend to identify the relations of production solely with who owns the profit-making property. The result is that they see socialism in limited terms, concerned only with changing some patterns of ownership (through nationalisation) and wealth (through income distribution), at best. They do not stand for the transformation of all social relations of life, work and leisure. Secondly, reformism accepts the supposed 'neutrality' and 'objectivity of production. Science, technology and machinery are seen simply as 'productive forces' to be developed regardless of the type of society we live in. We must oppose this idea with the necessity to transform the nature of science, technology and all productive forces under socialism.

Furthermore, reformism denies that the main productive force is the working class itself. This not only means ignoring the creativity and necessity for self-emancipation of the working class, it accepts the capitalist organisation of production and work. The workplace is not seen as the centre of class antagonism, but simply the ground for 'economic struggle'. The fight for 'better conditions' to be fought only by the unions, while the 'real' struggle would be the 'political' reform of the state.

In this country reformism rooted itself inside the working class more than in other countries, for three main reasons:

a) The imperialist nature of British capitalism. This often put the British working class as a whole on a better deal, often allied to its masters in common interests against the people of the colonies.

b) The 'non-bureaucratic nature of the British state, its 'democratic' nature.

c) The highly skilled composition of the working class (or the domination of the skilled working class inside the struggle). Because of the characteristics of production in skilled sectors (the old skilled workers who have a knowledge of the whole productive process), production could seem neutral. The problem could be seen merely as that of *ownership, property*.

All this was at the basis of the formation of the traditional organisations of the working class — the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The hold of reformism over the working class has many aspects. There is the acceptance of certain ideas (eg. the neutrality of the state and the law, action through official channels/parliamentarianism etc.) and the dominance of reformist institutions. This 'hold' is neither static nor permanent. At high points in class struggle and crisis, like the General Strike, either the ideas or the institutions seem to crumble. Even in everyday situations they are challenged directly and indirectly by many different struggles. But the *power* of reformist organisations and the weight of tradition always tends to limit the situation unless a clear alternative is built.

The obstacle cannot be overcome simply through a battle of ideas. Reformism is not just an external stranglehold on struggle, it is a living relationship that is inside the experience of the working class. Failure to grasp this leads to a non-historical understanding of the relationship between reformism and the class struggle. This can be illustrated by seeing how reformism has changed since the last war. The Labour Party and the trade union machines have been integrated into the running of the system. The Labour Party was the overseer of the important post-war reforms aimed to extend the system by using working class needs and struggle as a motor of development in a conscious and planned way. Since then they have not had a real reforming strategy, now competing solely as better managers of capitalism without altering the structures. Recent events have also shown that the

union leaders too are prepared to play the role of co-managers of the system.

These processes have been clearly visible to the working class. The effect has been that even when fighting in very ways for limited goals, the working class has had to rely on its own struggles. Even during the 1950s, when a period of economic expansion guaranteed a low level of struggle, a new 'home-made' reformism replaced working through the Labour Party and official union channels. This new reformism was therefore based less on a traditional ideological basis of illusions in parliament and the Labour Party. It was rooted in the type of struggle characteristic of this period, in particular on sectionalism and delegation.

When we talk about sectionalism we must be clear on a point of confusion. We do not say that every struggle, if it is confined to one sector, is reformist and that the only revolutionary struggle is that of the working class as a whole for the seizure of power. On the contrary, struggles of one sector can open up the way for the rest of the class, and therefore to the revolutionary process. No struggle is in itself revolutionary or reformist — this depends on the content, context and form of the struggle. The struggle of women on an estate for safety barriers, for example, is not reformist if it increases the level of anti-capitalist consciousness of the women, their organisation and the unity of the working class in the community.

Secondly, delegation. The habit, pushed by the institutions of the labour movement, to leave it to others — 'your representatives'. The politics which doesn't stress the necessity of involving the mass of the people. The best way to keep the working class under control. At a general level, the conviction that a Labour government still may deliver the goods without struggle.

So even today at the height of the crisis, when many people are very clear about the pro-capitalist policies of the Labour Party and union leaders; years of experience of these limited forms of thinking and acting trap the working class in a limited response. It has led to a feeling of powerlessness to oppose the measures.

For the above reason we reject any strategy that is based on entrism into the Labour Party or the concept of 'exposing' Labour. Both are rooted in fundamental misconceptions about the relationship of the Labour Party and reformism to the working class. Entrism is based on the assumption that the mass of the working class identifies with the Labour Party, therefore it is necessary to be inside it and expose to the masses the wrong ideas of its leaders. The main 'evidence' used is that the majority of the working class vote Labour and belong to the unions which are linked to it. But few working class people vote Labour because they have illusions that it will advance socialism, or even their daily interests. They do so because of the basic class instinct which makes them choose the lesser evil. Entrism, combined with a blind 'Vote Labour' under any conditions, can reinforce any illusions that people have left. Large numbers of Labour voters have, and will, abstain, in certain situations because of disillusion with Labour's capitalist policies. While voting Labour is a *tactical* question, dependent upon the particular situation and balance of forces: we must put stress on building a political and organisational alternative to Labour, as a reference point for vanguard sectors.

influence of the Labour Party. The equation of membership of the unions with identification with Labour leads to illusion that when entering into debate with reformist leaders you are addressing the whole of the working class. Many working class people, inside industry and out, cannot be reached within the structures of the Labour Party and union branches. The entrism strategy so often leads to 'resolutionary socialism', divorced from the mass of the working class. The 'exposure' strategy backfires firstly because the 'exposure' is stating the obvious, and secondly, because it is done in front of a very restricted sector of the class.

While we understand why many comrades enter the Labour Party, especially for local reasons, entrism is often seen as conspiratorial by working class people. We would tactically support the elimination of right wingers and their replacement by the left if it helped the mass movement outside. But it can involve a lot of manoeuvring that is very distant from building that movement and can put power in the hands of 'left wingers' who are as frightened of the power of the working class as the people they replaced — concerned to keep initiatives in their hands alone.

In the end we think that by pushing people back towards an identification with Labour, the entrism-exposure strategy increases the dependence of the working class on those politics which constitute the power held by Labour over the class. Furthermore, it misunderstands the nature of Labour's role in capitalism today and greatly underestimates the potential of autonomous activity.

The task of revolutionaries is to break the hold of reformism by building an alternative working class power. That is why we pose the fundamental question of *mass politics* at the heart of our political activity.

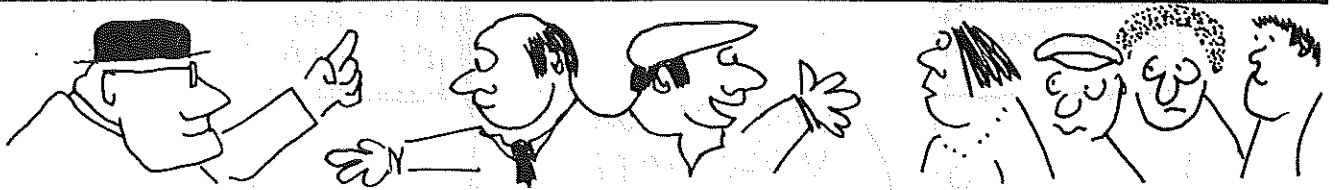
By mass politics we mean: —

- a) Independent self-organisation of the working class. Organisations built in the heart of struggle that can carry the fight beyond what the traditional structures are willing to do.
- b) Full involvement of all sections in leading their own struggles. Too often lack of involvement leads to defeat, as leaders get isolated or struggles in a factory are not spread to the community or vice-versa.
- c) Clear anti-capitalist politics based on the needs of the mass of the people, not outworn formulas developed outside the unfolding of class struggle and consciousness.

What we are saying is not new. On these principles the movement grew to develop popular power both in Chile and Portugal.

A movement which grew inside most of the oppressed strata of the population and saw the active involvement of the majority of the people. Mass organisms, which in form and content went beyond and against reformism. They openly challenged the power of the ruling class in society, and started to develop the power of the working class — a working class point of view over every sphere of society. Even if they did not actually go as far as solving the question of how to seize power. We are committed to building a similar movement for popular power in Britain.

In relation to the unions, it is necessary to distinguish between combatting the limitations of trade unionism and the



# TRADE UNIONS AND THE AUTONOMY OF THE WORKING CLASS

The working class has two sides — a 'dual and contradictory nature'. The working class under capitalism is the *labour power* that the system lives on. The working class is the class that enters constant negotiations, bargains, compromises with the bourgeoisie over the sale of that labour power.

But the working class is also the class that will bury capitalism. The historical enemy that is forced by its position in society to be an *antagonistic class* against capital. The class that carries forward the struggle for communism.

Trade unionism is all about the first side of the working class — the working class as labour power. For that reason the trade unions should not be confused with the working class. For a start, the trade unions do not include anything like the whole of the working class. But even then, the point is: trade unionism is the organisational form of the reformist side of the working class, *inside* capital. The working class is much more than that.

This general theoretical principle is becoming clearer today, with the progressive integration of the union apparatus into the state. The very development of capitalism since the war has seen the tendency to transform the unions into powerful institutions for the management of capitalism.

At the same time, since the war there has been the development of a working class which fights more and more autonomously from capitalist development and therefore from the union directives.

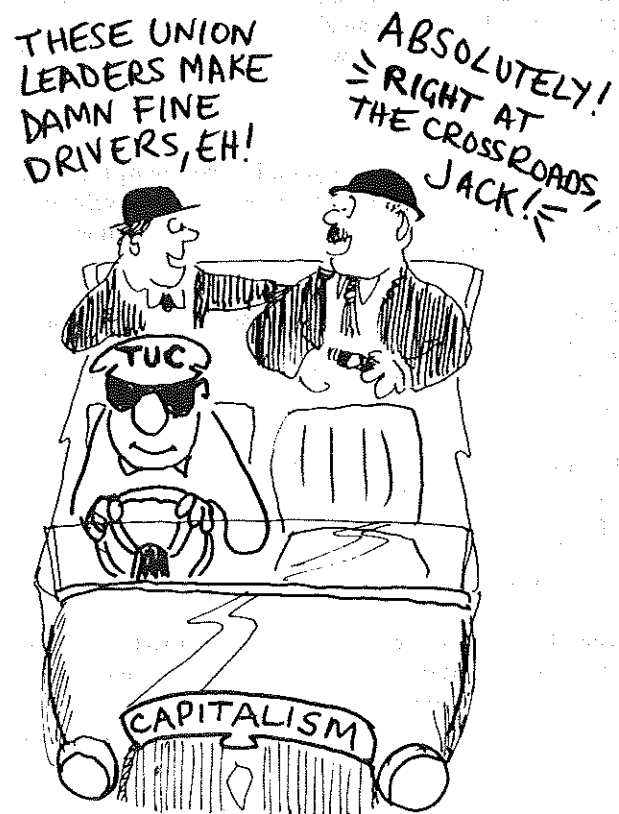
The struggle for communism is not only the struggle of the working class against capitalism, it is also the struggle of the working class against itself — the struggle of the contradictory sides of the working class, one against the other.

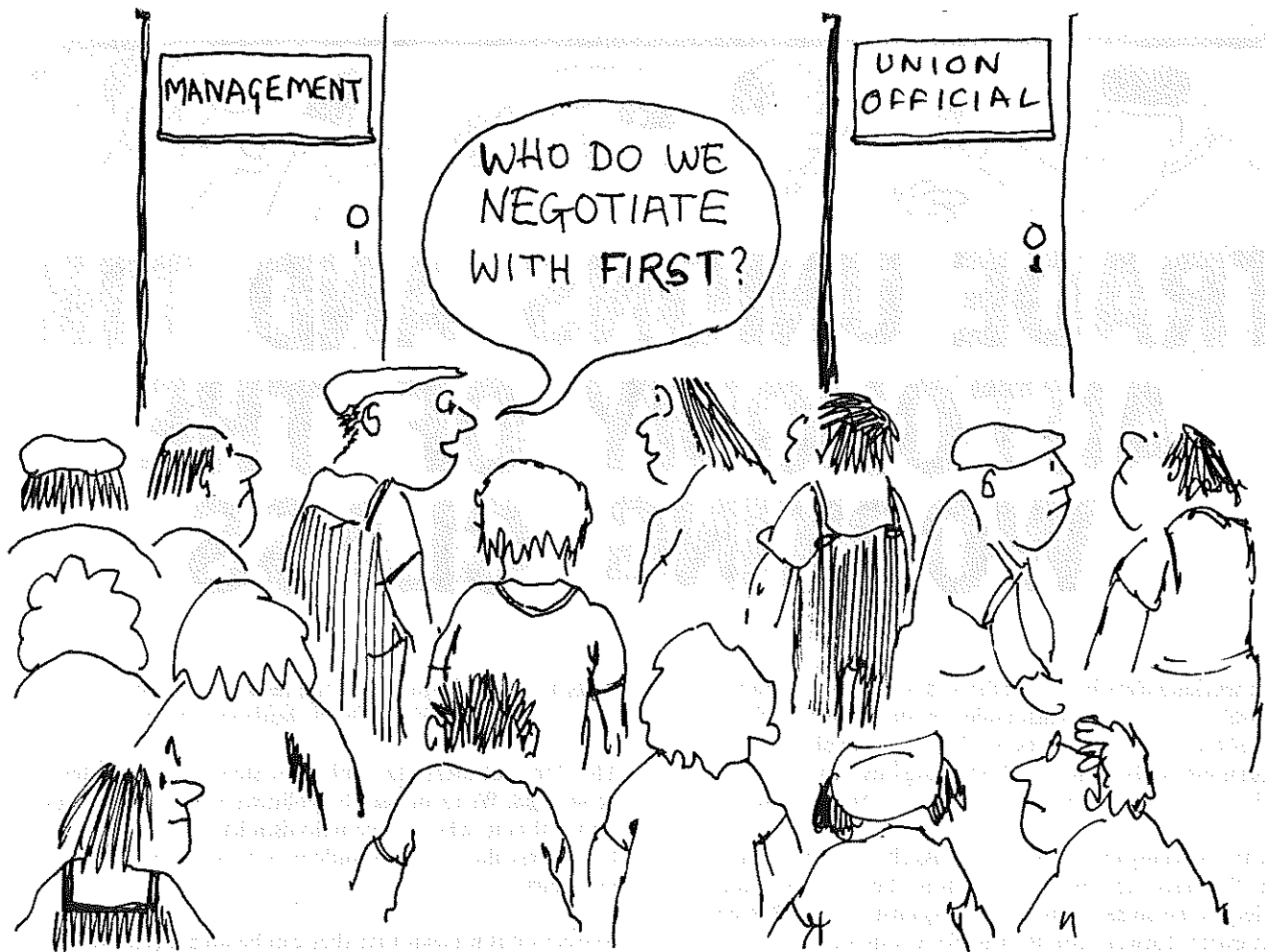
What does this mean concretely for revolutionary strategy? Basically it means that we have to be aware of the political and organisational ways that the working class does show its revolutionary side through daily struggle. For instance in the struggle over lay-offs, when the working class demands guaranteed pay — work or no work, there we see the class instinct, expressed at a mass level, for going beyond capitalism; for being more than labour power, more than a comm-

modity to be negotiated. It is the revolutionary instinct of the class, which is not just militant trade unionism.

This does not mean that unions or stewards committees can be ignored. We recognise the political, ideological and organisational hold which trade unionism has in the working class. In fact, revolutionaries should be very active in the trade union arena.

Neither does it mean that there can be no progressive work done inside the unions. Quite the opposite as we explain below. There is always a very important conflict between the 'trade unionism' of the rank and file, and the 'trade unionism' of the union apparatus and leadership.





In relation to the strategy outlined above, we must criticise 'rank and filism', even if we tactically support a lot of rank and file organisations. By rank and filism we mean the political strategy based on pressurising the unions from below, without ever trying to pose an alternative. A strategy based on the unions and not on the working class. A strategy which sees workplace struggles as merely economic and doesn't want to mix with 'politics'.

We think that rank and filism is good in challenging the trade union apparatus, but never tries to pose at a mass level the alternative to trade unionism, ie. it does not pose the question of power and its relation to revolutionary politics.

Furthermore, in a period of relative class retreat without a clear, conscious mass struggle, rank and filism can be confusing, giving the impression that the objective is to create splinter groups or breakaway unions.

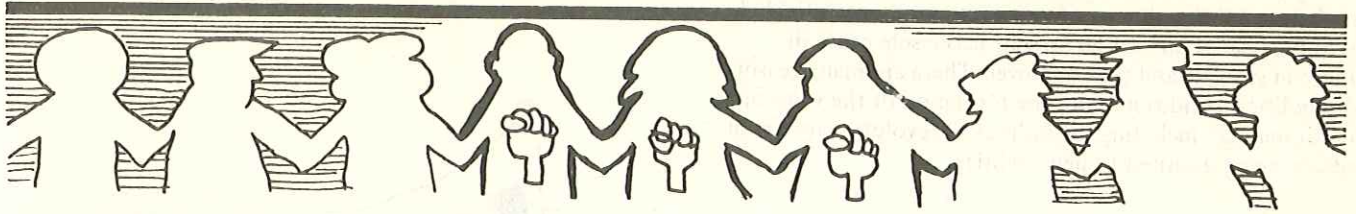
On the other hand, we must support and take part in those genuine rank and file experiences which represent the attempt by sectors of the class to organise on certain issues, or in certain areas.

Within this broad strategic and tactical approach, we place a great deal of importance on working inside the union structures at the rank and file level, to try to make them democratic, so that they reflect the struggles of the rank and file.

This is particularly true and relevant in public sector unions or small workplaces or weak sectors or non-unionised or newly-unionised workplaces. A particular tactical approach must be given to 'craft' unions, in particular the AUEW, which is still dominated by the skilled members. In it we must make the effort, as everywhere else, to help the struggles out of sectorial boundaries, towards the unification of the class.

Given this analysis we reject the view that the solution of the relation of the trade unions to the working class is to replace the existing leaders by more left wing ones. While this can be supported tactically, it does not confront the real problem of the limitations of trade unionism itself. The behaviour of Jones, Scanlon, Daley and even Reg Birch is a tragic, but predictable confirmation of this. The 'replace the leaders' strategy alongside rank and filism and strategies to build left caucuses in unions without posing a political alternative, mystify the nature of the unions and underestimate the capacity of the class to struggle autonomously.

In the next section we consider the question of the party. Although this manifesto concentrates on the Labour Party, the trade unions and the revolutionary party, it should be clear from our analysis that we emphasise the importance of the daily, often hidden, struggles of the class. We are also concerned with the permanent mass organisations of the class — sometimes called soviets etc. But at this stage of class struggle in Britain we have to deal with the immediate questions facing revolutionaries. At a time when some groups are calling themselves the revolutionary party, we have to clarify this important question.



# PARTY AND CLASS

1. Our document has so far left out the question of the *vanguard organisation* and its relationship with the class. We think that this is a very complex question which influences deeply the main organisational project, outlined at the end of this document. But before seeing how to go about it, let's re-affirm a few principles.

2. A vanguard organisation that collectively intervenes to direct and develop class struggle is necessary. That necessity arises out of consciousness, experience and struggle in the working class. It needs to be a *vanguard* because the function of a revolutionary organisation is to earn the right to lead by being rooted in the working class and its struggles. This enables it to systematically express the needs of the class through demands, programmes and actions. Such an organisation is based on bringing together conscious and active militants as *cadres*, with the education and training to act as members of a combat organisation.

At a further stage, when the struggle and the vanguard have reached a certain level of maturity, the party will also be necessary. Its main role is in arming and leading the proletariat to seize power. Seizing power against the modern and complex bourgeois state is not as straightforward as in Russia in 1917. But this only amplifies the need for the party. The existence of autonomous working class organs of popular power (Soviets, People's Councils etc.) is the most important aspect of the revolutionary process; but they do not guarantee victory. They do not dissolve differences of interest and ideology overnight, solving all tactical and strategic problems.

Not can they carry the main weight in combatting the strategies put forward by the reformist forces. The recent events in Chile and Portugal emphasise clearly that the centralisation of the revolutionary vanguard in the party to 'seize the time' is still necessary. This is not to underestimate the complexity of the problems, not to reduce everything to the existence of the party. But the crisis and the struggle for power reach crucial moments when decisive action is needed. This action, conditioned as it is by highly complex military and political and ideological considerations is beyond the capacity of the organs of popular power.

The party is also vital in consolidating victory through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and ensuring that the revolutionary victory is sustained. In that period, with enemies inside and outside, harrasing the new workers' state, with 57 varieties of opportunists jumping on the revolutionary bandwagon — then inside the mass democracy of the socialist state, there needs to be an organisation of proven, dedicated militants. Any organisation that seeks to be effective in the struggle must also seek to centralise its own leadership, resources and strategies: while organising discussion and implementation in the most democratic way possible.

It must be recognised, however, that the degree of centralisation must serve the needs of the situation. An ossified and bureaucratic leadership is the inevitable result of centralisation which arises from a purely abstract principle: applied without reference to the level of development of class struggle.

3. As important as any of these organisational principles are, they are a long way from telling us everything about the relationship between party and class. There are no universal formulas that can be applied to every situation, nor does any structure — democratic centralist or otherwise — guarantee being in touch with the needs of the class struggle. Formal principles must take second place to an understanding of the content of the specific conditions of those struggles.

Organisations must flow from and meet the needs of the conditions or it is a bureaucratic imposition from above. Conditions change; capitalism, the state and the working class are very different from what they were in the pre-war period. Whenever consciousness, organisation and capacity for struggle are regarded as unchanging things or when objective conditions are always regarded as ripe but the subjective factor of leadership missing: disastrous political mistakes are made.

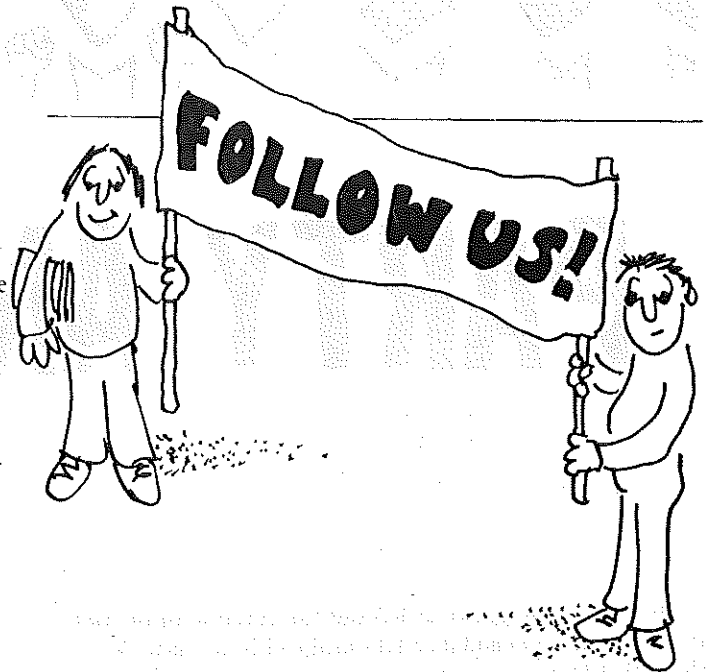
4. The idea of revolutionary organisation has been de-valued by repetitive and unimaginative formulas being put forward no matter what changes on conditions. There has been an over-

emphasis on the problem of leadership. An exaggerated belief in the lack of correct leadership as the sole cause of failure in struggle and seizing power. There are many reasons why political conditions, and the formation of the vanguard do not mature: including the politics of revolutionary organisations being unsuited to new realities.

But the over-emphasis on leadership leads to a belief that it can be transplanted on top of the class struggle. Parallel to this is the sectarianism that often characterises the left. So many organisations have failed – because they have put building themselves above building the struggle. The problem of leadership is, as one Italian comrade put it, 'not to *put* yourself at the head of the masses, but to *be* the head of the masses. This is only possible when revolutionary politics comes from *inside* the development of the struggle. If politics is seen as something coming solely from 'outside' and programmes are worked out by application of external formulas derived from the 1930s, the left can never end its isolation.

The seeds of communism are often present within the daily battles that people wage: it is for us to organise, develop and make them conscious. We must be prepared to *learn as well as teach*. It is also worth saying that elitist attitudes on leadership are part of the reasons why there has so often been authoritarian relations between party and class and degenerations of revolutionary processes.

5. Need and desire are not sufficient conditions for the formation of the party. The revolutionary party cannot be 'announced' when an organisation reaches a magic figure of members. The party must be the summit of the growth of the aut-



onomy of the working class movement. It must be a product of a real development of the mass struggle and the needs of the vanguards that lead and emerge from that situation. No organisation in Britain today has earned the right to call itself 'the revolutionary party'. Nor could they. The maturity of political conditions has not been reached. The role of the revolutionary organisation in this period is to stimulate the kinds of mass struggle that can make a decisive break with reformism and sectionalism. We shall return to this in the final section.





# INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

As the international links of capital grow stronger between states and companies, the pressure is on for the class struggle to develop an international dimension and for revolutionary organisations to link up. But neither process is easy. It is not helped by abstract calls for impossible links, nor by attempts to set up Internationals that have no mass base in any country. More than anything else, international perspectives need to be guided by a sense of reality, by an understanding of the concrete ways that the process of building socialism is happening in different countries.

This means firstly that international work, though primarily solidarity activity with the struggles of other countries – Portugal, Ireland etc. – must be made relevant to the situation here. We must find ways of relating revolutionary processes elsewhere to what people are actually experiencing in their own country – like women in Ireland speaking directly to women activists in the community here, about the similarities and realities of the national liberation struggle. Secondly, that priorities must be given to solidarity work that most clearly connects to the experience of sectors of the class in Britain. This particularly means work around South Africa, the Caribbean and Ireland to give weight to the struggle against racism and imperialism felt by the black and Irish communities. So our perspective is that we learn from, and are inspired by, the revolutionary struggles in other countries, and that we best help them by applying their methods, when relevant, to the task of building revolutionary politics in Britain.

Most importantly, international perspectives must be guided by understanding the specific situation of the struggle in different countries. The world-wide struggle is not exactly the same everywhere. It is uneven, because, although imperialism unites the world into a single market, it still leaves the world in a combination of different forms of political and economic development.

Because of this there are no universal formulas for advancing the revolution. There are lessons, experiences, that can be shared between countries. But too often we have seen organisations in one country laying down the line to those elsewhere. Without any understanding of the real dynamic of that other situation.

Our method of analysis must start from seeing who is *actually* the motive force of anti-capitalist or anti-imperialist struggle: what forces have a mass base and are capable of mobilising and involving the masses in struggle. This may not always be the organisation that is most correct ideologically. In Portugal, for instance, it was important to recognise the effect that the Armed Forces Movement has in building working class power in the early stages; while being fully aware of the dangers of military elitism. And later to support the presidential campaign of Othelo, despite his imperfect programme and the cult of his personality. The campaign was a vital way that the autonomous organs of popular power re-created their unity and purpose, thus partially reversing the retreat of the working class and revolutionary forces.

The unevenness of the international situation is added to by the fact that some countries still do not enjoy national freedom and political self-determination. This is true for instance in Ireland. And it was true up until recently in Vietnam, and in the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau.

In these situations, the immediate goal is self-determination. And in fighting for this, the working class and poor peasants will find themselves fighting alongside some local middle class and bourgeois forces; forces certainly opposed to any longer term struggle for socialism.

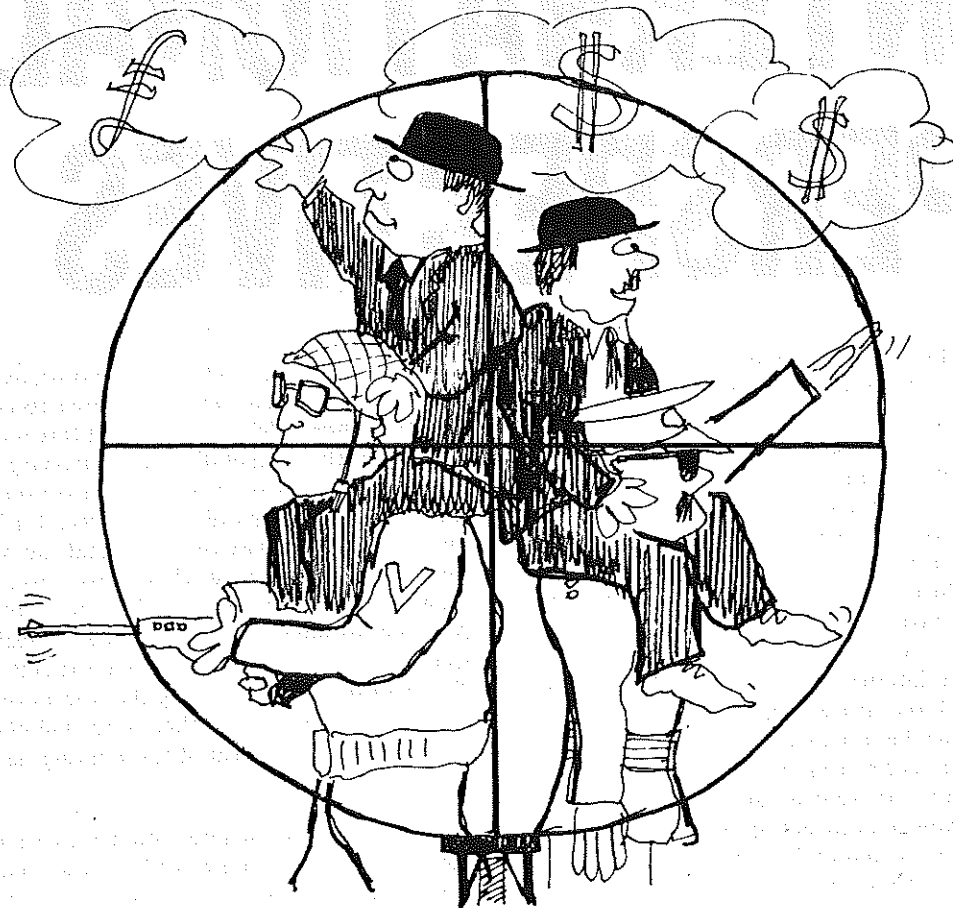
However, the goal of national liberation can only be won if the struggle is put in the hands of the workers and peasants, and made part of the struggle for socialism.

Only socialist perspectives are broad enough to mobilise the masses behind a struggle for national liberation. But the struggle must actually be in the hands of the workers and peasants, not any elite in their name. This perspective implies the rejection of the theory of revolution by completely separate stages – first bourgeois democracy, then socialism – and those theories that see any national liberation struggle, only supporting those struggles and organisations they see as 'pure' socialist, no matter how irrelevant they are to the real situation.

We must clearly recognise in this context that the anti-imperialist struggles of such movements as the MPLA and FRELIMO show that revolutionary forces have learned many of the bitter lessons of previous phases of national liberation battles. They have defeated imperialism, but now face the task of building towards socialism in conditions of backwardness and a capitalist dominated world. They are not helped by the metropolitan arrogance of those on the left who tell them they can do nothing until the Western working class have made revolution and that their own revolutionary processes will inevitably degenerate in the context of world capitalism.

This will be the basis for a movement towards communism and the abolition of wage labour, classes and the state, the full socialist development of the productive forces and the instatement of the principle 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their need'. Communism is only possible on a world scale and even the full completion of socialism is not possible within one country. But the process of building socialism can be started (and has already started) within individual countries.

Each country and its transitional processes must be examined in terms of its own specific development, to see whether or not it is advancing towards socialism.



4. There will be no combined, instantaneous world revolution. Capitalism will be defeated first in specific countries, which will face the problem of building socialism in conditions they did not choose, but which all revolutionaries must realise are the real situation facing millions of people.

At this stage we must say what we think building socialism means. The abolition of the private ownership of the means of production in any post-revolutionary society is only a precondition for socialism, not socialism itself. A transition to socialism must involve the total transformation of the social relations of production and society. This involves movement towards:— i) Workers' and peoples' management of the economy and society, and freedom of association and criticism. ii) Elimination of the inequalities between manual and mental labour, town and country, between the sexes and between the races. iii) The egalitarian distribution of rewards and knowledge. iv) Elimination of competition and production according to exchange value in the economy and its replacement by democratic planning and production for use. v) Elimination of the power of the old classes and struggle against the growth of new elites in the party and state structures. vi) Revolutionising the mode of work; who produces what and how.

With the above criteria in mind, the USSR (and similar societies in Eastern Europe) is neither socialist nor on the way to socialism. The planned economy is a left-over achievement of the 1917 revolution, but in all other ways the social relations of production have not been changed or revolutionised. (That is, the way production is organised, decided and carried out.) And throughout that society there is a system based on new patterns of class domination which deny all power and independence to the working class.

China, however, has embarked on some major aspects of transforming social relations and therefore building socialism. This includes important struggles against the emergence of new classes and elites. The transitional process is, however, still in balance, because of the existence of powerful forces wanting to build a new class system, and because mass proletarian power and control has not fully reached the party and state structures. These negative elements are re-inforced by a foreign policy that is based on a totally incorrect principle. The dynamic of class struggle will determine whether China will build socialism or not.



# OUTLINE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

Since we are arguing for a new organisation, it would be inappropriate for us to lay down a detailed strategy. That is the task of all comrades in the new organisation. But we want to suggest some ideas arising from our analysis for discussion.

For a start, we must understand the main characteristics of the capitalist offensive in the present period. In this respect the slogan 'back to the thirties', even if charged with emotional meaning and agitational effect, does not explain the *new* measures aimed at making the system safe for the eighties. Capitalism is not trying to turn the clock, but to renew itself, restructure itself for the future.

There are a number of basic features to the re-structuring process. The first is an attack on shop floor strength through changing the organisation of production and de-composition of the workforce. Decomposition means changing the face and structure of the workforce. The key aspects of this are cuts in manning levels, increased labour mobility and casualisation of employment (through constant lay-offs etc.) These moves are held together by the kind of blackmail over jobs that we've recently seen at Leylands, and the further incorporation of the trade union leadership into state management of the economy.

Secondly, and linked to this, is the creation of a higher level of unemployment. Not a reserve army of labour as in the 1930s, to be employed again during a boom. But permanent, structural unemployment that is the product both of the decrease in manning levels and the increase in capital intensive investment — investment in new, more sophisticated machinery which itself cuts the number of jobs.

The evidence is becoming clear that so-called temporary schemes of job creation and other phoney means of employment will of necessity become regular features of state policy. A fact that the left must rapidly come to terms with, and which adds to our criticisms of the limitations of the 'right to work' perspective. In a context where 'work' in

many sectors is being eroded in a long term sense, we have to turn our attention to the demands for a guaranteed living income for all unemployed. And at the same time we have to begin to work out strategies in relation to job creation schemes.

Thirdly, long term cuts in public spending. These create, not only a permanently lower level of service, but also a complete transformation of the way in which the service is provided in education, welfare, health and housing. For the middle class, a growing range of private, fee-paying services will become available, outside the state sector. For the working class in these sectors it will mean more work and worse conditions. For the working class users of these services, it will mean increased financial hardship and more work — especially for housewives who will have to spend even more time looking after children, nursing them and teaching them, and who will put even more energy and worry into 'making ends meet'.

The fact that the capitalist state has extended itself into every aspect of our existence, from the workplace to the community to personal life means that we have to extend the range of the struggle against capitalism. We will see a more vanguard role being played by traditionally less organised 'weak' sectors: public sector workers, women, blacks. The examples of the demonstration against the cuts in November 1976 (the largest since the demonstration against the Industrial Relations Act) and the Trico victory over equal pay are significant.

In relation to Trico we say that the victory there, after a long strike, means that a long phase of struggle for women's rights has finished and a new one begun. This last phase of the fight began in 1968 with the Ford Dagenham workers demanding equal pay and now it's finished with a splendid victory. Trico marks the fact that now equal pay and the struggle for it have become a permanent heritage for the working class.

The struggle of women at work is paralleled by their important role in the community. Although the rent strikes of the early 1970s were not wholly successful, they proved the combativity of tenants. As the welfare state is increasingly cut and restructured, the people in the community most directly affected — housewives, schoolstudents, pat-

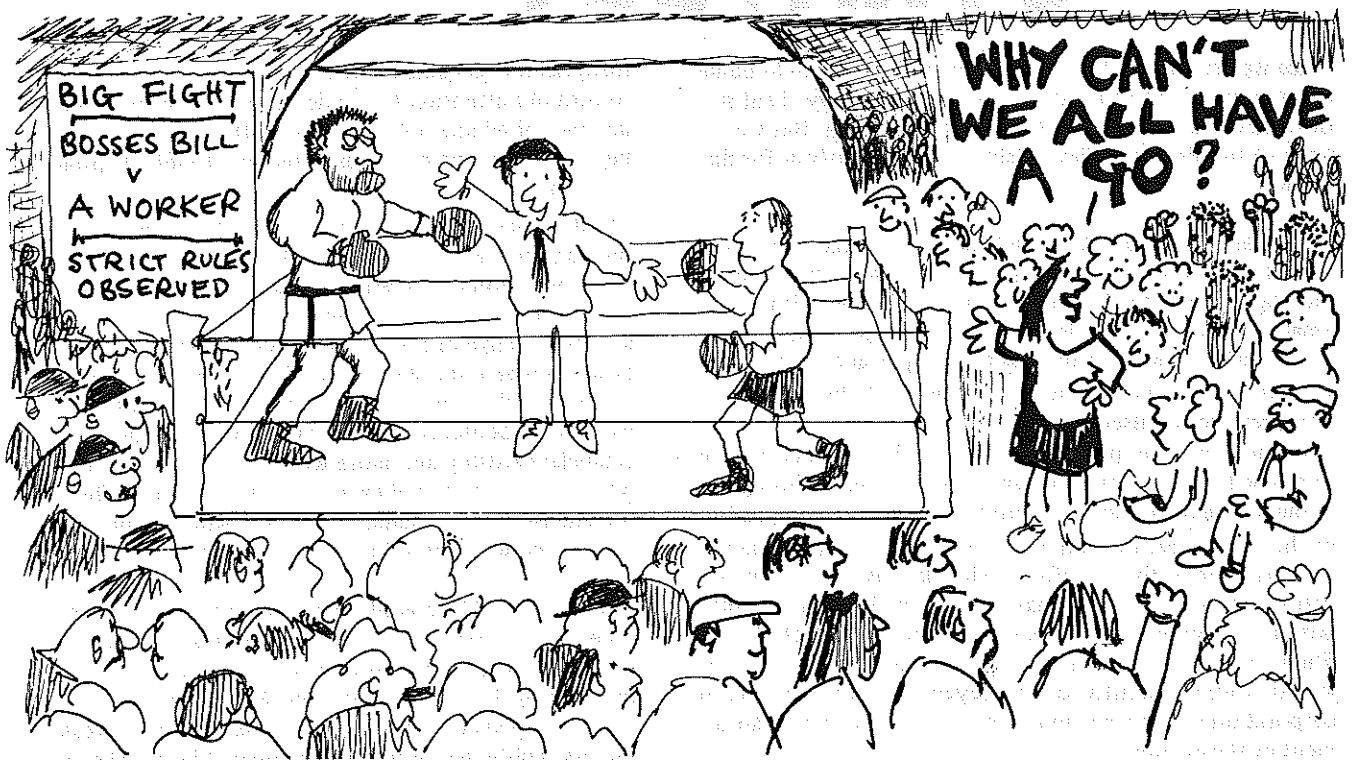
ients, claimants — will increasingly be looking for ways to fight back. Revolutionaries must be inside these struggles, generalising their communist content.

Recognising the way family and personal life is made ever more intolerable, we have to show that the underlying cause of personal crises lies in the alienated, de-humanised and oppressive system we live under. Slogans and demands, however correct, will not alone prove to people that 'socialism is the answer'. Our politics, both in content and the way we put them over, must relate to people's personal hopes and fears. We have to make the struggle for socialism meaningful, worthwhile and enjoyable. This is why we emphasise the importance of socialist culture — people participating in film, theatre and writing, expressing our common struggle for a new world is one of the ways that socialism can come alive.

At the same time, this slogan has been quite useful in fighting redundancies and closures. But to fight for less workload is much more complete — and does come out of the experience and need of working class people, both employed and unemployed.

Within this perspective we see in this political phase that the demand for a shorter working week with no loss of pay is vital. This means for most people, a 35 hour week, paid 40.

We also think it's a mistake to separate the question of jobs from that of wages — a mistake common to most of the left. We reject this separation because wage restraint is the major plank in capitalism's present strategy. Also, low wages will facilitate the attitude of not caring about defending the job or fighting against redundancies. But most of all,



In relation to the fight for jobs we put forward the strategic perspective explained in the slogan 'Less workload for the employed — more jobs for the unemployed'.

In the context of a protracted capitalist crisis, like the one we are living through now, the above slogan represents the autonomous struggle of the working class. Autonomous from the needs of capital to make the workers pay for the crisis, autonomous from the reformist idea that we are all in the same boat and must tighten our belts. It is an attacking perspective which starts from the point of view of the working class in wanting to work less. It puts forward a working class solution to unemployment.

We support this slogan in preference to 'The right to work', because the latter does not challenge the conditions we work under. It does not openly recognise the necessity to fight against increased exploitation at work. It does not take into account the need to work less under capitalism.

low basic wages will push people to work overtime, or to accept productivity deals eventually. In both cases this will in fact go against a working class solution to unemployment, increasing the working week and the workload per worker.

These are the areas of struggle which we think are important. There is no doubt that recently the class has been in retreat and there has been a downturn in struggle in all areas. The Trico victory, the struggles at Dagenham, Notting Hill and Hull Prison, the Hemel Hemstead hospital demonstration may well be signs of recovery. Our role is to generalise the most advanced contents of these struggles, and for that we need organisation. The period of retreat has seen many organisational traumas on the left. We do not believe that organisational change alone can make up for inadequate analysis or unfavourable material conditions. But we do think it essential that the sections of the left which broadly agree with the analysis of this manifesto must unify themselves into a new organisation and prepare themselves to be inside every struggle of the working class

# CONCLUSION

We have not tried in this document to give all the answers; on the contrary our aim has been to raise some questions.

If any one concept characterises the period we are living through, it is unevenness. Unevenness is capitalist development and repression, and unevenness in the political response of the working class. At the moment, the British ruling class continues to attempt to softly, softly involve the trade union leadership in government while continuing to use brutal and naked repression in an attempt to check the just struggle of the Irish people for independence. And a short while ago, the Leyland toolroom workers, whose shop-floor power of organisation brought on a government crisis, insisted that their strike was in no way opposed to the social contract.

For revolutionaries, the unevenness of the ruling-class is not a primary concern, but the unevenness and lack of unity of the working class is.

## WORKING CLASS UNEVENNESS AND THE CRISIS OF REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

It should be clear that the current crisis of revolutionary organisation is a symptom of this unevenness. In Lenin's days, things were much simpler; working class struggle was led by a revolutionary party that had the support of the leading sector of the working class, the industrial workers.

But today, two sets of factors make such a straight forward solution impossible. Firstly the changing nature of the modern capitalist state, and secondly the obvious limitations of the revolutionary experience in the USSR and other countries.

Revolutionary movements in modern capitalist states are wider and richer than they have been before — but also more diffuse. At the same time,

capitalism is organising nationally and internationally on an unprecedented scale — developing a powerful mixture of 'hard' and 'soft' techniques. It will not collapse of its own accord. It will be smashed only by an organisation that has the hardness of steel and the tenderness of love which leads the masses to the seizure of power.

## THE CHALLENGE

The challenge facing many of us in the revolutionary left is clear. Can we build an organisation that is a useful instrument in the struggle and at the same time does not manipulate its members and the class vanguards it works with. The new organisation we want to build must also contain within it the conditions for the development of the new woman and the new man.

A difficult challenge! Of course, but an exciting one that respects the tremendous commitment of all of us who are part of the revolutionary movement.

We hope the response to this manifesto will be an active one. We hope that it will stimulate discussion and criticism. There are many comrades who for one good reason or another are doubtful about the possibility of revolutionary change in this country — we hope to make them think again. One of the great powers of the system we live under is to make us doubt our ability to change the world. But people in struggle all over the world are showing us that it can be done.

Revolutionary change has been put on the agenda, it is up to us to make sure that it happens in this country.

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