

Enemies within the Working Class movement...

number two

**SOCIAL DEMOCRACY -  
THE LABOUR PARTY**



COMMUNIST UNITY ASSOCIATION MARXIST LENINIST

# WHAT IS SOCIAL DEMOCRACY?

Social democracy is the political viewpoint of parties like the Labour Party, which claim that socialism can come about gradually through a series of reforms. They **oppose** revolution, and spread the illusion that real change can be made through parliament and parliamentary elections.

The Labour Party always works to restrict workers' struggles in the trades unions, in tenants' associations and in any form of mass struggle to legal, parliamentary forms. It opposes any action directly mobilising the united strength of workers to oppose capitalism, and calls for workers to 'wait' and vote Labour. When they do get elected, they act just like any capitalist government!

# ARE COMMUNISTS AGAINST REFORMS?

No! Communists are the most consistent fighters for reforms. Sometimes capitalism is forced to grant reforms because it fears workers' struggles. But these are always only partial and temporary gains because real economic and political power remains in the hands of the capitalist class, and the exploitation of workers continues. Only the complete ending of all capitalist exploitation and the transfer of political power to the working class can make a real difference. This is the only way socialism can come about, not through gradual reforms.

# BUT ISN'T PARLIAMEN- TARY CHANGE THE ONLY DEMOCRATIC WAY?

The capitalist class has always been able to use its wealth to control all big political parties and the means of propaganda such as newspapers. Therefore they have always controlled parliament, and have made their class dictatorship stronger by making it appear 'democratic'.

Even if a government was elected which tried to bring in real socialist measures, capitalism would not allow it. The capitalists control the army, police and all state forces. They would use direct military force if necessary to save capitalism. This is what recently happened in Chile, to the democratically elected Allende government, and it has often happened in other countries in the past. Bourgeois democracy will last only as long as it helps to preserve capitalism. If economic and political crisis makes the parliamentary fraud unworkable, the capitalist class will introduce a fascist dictatorship.

Parties like Labour, which pretend that the workers' real interests can be served by bourgeois parliaments and law courts, are acting only to disarm the working class and keep the capitalist system going.

ISN'T THE DIFFERENCE  
THAT SOCIAL DEMOC-  
RATS ARE MODERATE  
WHILST COMMUNISTS  
ADVOCATE VIOLENCE?

Social democrats oppose violence by the working class, but support the 'legal' violence of the ruling class. For example, the Labour Party sent the army to Northern Ireland to perform acts of violence in defence of British imperialism, but it reacts with horror if workers arm to defend themselves.

Communists say that the working class has in the end only the choice of being crushed by the capitalist forces of violence or of meeting force with force.

Where revolutionary situations have developed, as in the Russian

revolution or in Germany after the First World War, social democrats have usually been all in favour of violence to support capitalism, and communists in favour of workers' violence to defend themselves. The question is not one of moderation or violence, but of which class to support.

## BUT DOESN'T LABOUR REPRESENT THE WORKING CLASS ?

Not at all! In office, Labour governments have always attacked workers' interests and defended the capitalist system. They brought in wage freezes, raised rents, used the power of the state to smash strikes and passed racist immigration laws, just like any bourgeois government.

When not in power, they pretend to oppose the same sort of measures when the Tories use them. They hope to build support among workers in this way. Wherever workers organise, so do these social democrats, but not for the same reasons.

Labour represents the interests of the monopoly capitalist class in Britain. However, this class, which holds all the power and wealth in its hands, is numerically very small, and a united and revolutionary working class would bring about its downfall. To try to hinder this, the capitalists use a small part of their huge profits gained at home and abroad to buy off a small section of workers and working class leaders with money and positions. This 'labour aristocracy' is the main support of the Labour Party among the working class.

## HASN'T LABOUR BROUGHT IN SOME SOCIALIST MEASURES ?

The nationalisation of industries such as coal or the railways is not socialist. These industries are run by the state in the int-

erests of the capitalist class, since they are no longer profitable for individual capitalists. The merging of huge monopoly capitalist industry with the state is typical of all big capitalist countries today. Also typical of monopoly capitalist countries is the 'welfare state', the health service, unemployment and social security benefits and so on. It is useful for the capitalists to provide these things to preserve a working class to exploit and to be able to manipulate the economy in certain ways. Such measures are not socialist.

Socialism means the ending of all capitalist exploitation, the ownership and control of all industry and of the state by the working class. It means running the whole economy and all public services in the interests of the people, not of profits. All the social-democratic measures brought about by Labour governments are aimed at making capitalism continue, not at bringing about socialism.

## DOESN'T LABOUR OPPOSE REACTIONARY GOVERNMENTS ABROAD?

Britain is an imperialist nation. Our monopoly capitalist bosses gain huge profits from exploiting countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the West Indies. The Labour Party fully supports the interests of imperialism in its foreign policy. Labour maintains all the imperialist military and economic treaties and alliances.

The present minority government has tried to make a show of its support for democracy by cancelling certain arrangements with the fascist government of Chile. At the same time, it showed its true policy by speaking of the importance of friendship with the U.S. imperialists, the real backers of the Chile coup. Throughout the whole Vietnam war, to give another example, the U.S. aggressor's most faithful supporter in the world was the Wilson government in Britain.

## BUT DON'T SOCIAL DEMOCRATS OPPOSE

# FASCISM AND RE- ACTION ?

Certainly all ordinary supporters of social democracy oppose fascism. Whatever their intentions, however, the policies of social democracy help to prepare the way for fascism. They promote illusions about parliament, leaving workers defenceless against fascism. They strongly attack communists and working class militants. They introduce reactionary, anti-working class measures themselves. They are very weak in opposing racist ideas and even bring in racist governmental measures. Also, just like the fascists themselves, they spread the idea that workers and capitalists have a common 'national interest'.

Today, capitalism in Britain and throughout the world is in deep and growing economic crisis. This makes the danger of fascism very real. Successive governments, Labour and Tory, have introduced more repressive laws. Unless the working class can throw off the illusions spread by social democracy, it has no defence against fascism.

# ISN'T LABOUR THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO THE TORIES ?

Labour and Tory both represent the same class, the monopoly capitalists. The political 'struggle' between these two parties is intended only to fool workers into believing that their votes make a difference. Both parties will introduce any kind of repressive measure to maintain capitalism. Meanwhile, they work as a team in presenting the political ideas of capitalism to the British people.

The idea that parliamentary elections can bring decisive changes, and that the Labour Party, or the 'left' wing of the Labour Party, can really represent workers' interests, is the most important **single** prop of capitalism.

Only when a strong revolutionary workers' party comes into being, and workers unite to overthrow capitalism, will socialism become possible.

# WHY WOULD COMMUNISTS BE ANY BETTER THAN LABOUR POLITICIANS ?

Some so-called 'communists' like the revisionist Communist Party of Great Britain, are no better. (See our pamphlet, 'Enemies in the Working Class Movement, No.3 on Revisionism') Real communists have the aim of bringing the masses of workers into control of the state, of the economy and over all aspects of their own lives and conditions. They do not ask for positions in parliaments or governments in order to 'do things for' workers. They ask workers themselves to get involved in the struggle for political power. The communist party must fill the role of leading the masses in this struggle. Its close contact with, and supervision by, the masses is the best guarantee that it will represent workers' interests.

# BUT YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT HUMAN NATURE.

It is curious that this claim is usually made by those who also insist that 'everybody is different' or that everyone has a different human nature. The fact is that all human nature is determined by class, conditions of life, education and experience. Who would claim that a factory worker fights for and believes in the same things as a company director or an army general? The worker's human nature strives for socialism and the capitalist's human nature strives for profit. It may seem that the only human nature in present society is capitalist, but that is because the capitalists impose their views on everybody.

The theory of human nature is one spread by the capitalists to make the working class cynical about socialism and communism. They preach self-interest to oppose working class solidarity. In the

Soviet Union, the capitalists have succeeded in making a come-back by corrupting communists with ideas of seeking fame and position. In China, too, ideas of self-interest have threatened to reverse the power of the workers, but this has been countered by ideas of selflessness and serving the people. This is the main issue at stake in the Chinese cultural revolution. In other words, capitalism or socialism, communists in Britain and throughout the world must practise fighting self-interest and serve the working class in the struggle against capitalism and capitalist ideas. Only this will prevent capitalist human nature winning out over working class socialist human nature.

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