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**THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION IN BRITAIN TODAY**

**LIVERPOOL - MILITANT AND MARXISM**

**THE FOUNDING OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

**LEON TROTSKY ON SOUTH AFRICA**

**LATIN AMERICAN CONFERENCE**

**A TRIBUTE TO A SOVIET COMRADE**

**RAIL IN DECLINE**

**INTERNATIONAL NOTES**

# **FOURTH INTERNATIONALIST**

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## EDITORIAL

# Miners' Breakaway

Those who welcome the emergence of the so-called Union of Democratic Miners, like Margaret Thatcher and Fleet Street, claim it is all about democracy. The democratic right of trade unionists to choose which union to belong to, and to control what the union does, including whether to hold a ballot.

This can be exposed as a monumental fraud. Firstly by looking at Roy Lynk's allies. These include the AUEW and EEUPTU bureaucrats. The latter's commitment to democracy can be measured by their suspension of entire branches for the crime of political opposition to Frank Chapple. Then there was the case of the Fleet Street Electricians branch - the TUC used its entire weight to stop them escaping Chapple's regime by joining the NGA. Secondly, the only result of the breakaway, far from increasing workers' rights, has been the NCB withdrawing recognition from the representatives of 7,000 Notts miners still in the NUM.

The question remains - why this breakaway? It is not an isolated incident, but the most extreme example so far of what we can expect in a radically changed political situation. The British ruling class is forced to embark on a fundamental attack on the working class and its organisations. It is the reaction of the union and Labour Party bosses to this attack that has opened up a period of splits, divisions and realignments.

So far these have included the SDP breakaway from Labour; the sabotage of the coal strike by steel and electricians leaders; and the growth of a layer around Kinnock preparing a witch-hunt of the left. In their craven willingness to accommodate the needs of the ruling class, Laird and others are even prepared to countenance a split in the TUC.

It will be said, even by many who oppose these developments, that all this is inevitable because British workers have moved sharply to the right. This is dangerous and wrong. A majority of Notts miners, and they are not alone in the working class, are being encouraged in the mistaken hope that it is possible to avoid decisive and bloody battles with capitalism. But a twelve month strike could not have been sustained without the backing of millions, and 19 unions do not get massive majorities for retaining their link with the Labour Party from workers who are hopelessly conservative.

The depths of the union leaders' betrayal arises not from the fact that the working class is passive but from the fear of the union leaders that those who took part in the miners' fight, particularly the youth, know we must go all the way against capitalism.

In the context of a sharp polarisation between the two main classes, the ruling class have been increasing their efforts to foster divisions in the workers ranks. In Notts, the relative higher wages of many miners together with the fact, that unlike other areas, they are facing few immediate closures; has enabled the right wing regional leaders to convince many miners that it is in their material interests to go down the path of the breakaway union. The treacherous role of Lynk and others has been crucial in developing the growth of the short-sighted 'Yellow Unionism' in the coal industry.

There is indeed an historic fight on to control what union leaders do, to reconquer the workers' organisations, to make them useful weapons of defence rather than betrayal. This is what the NUM resolution at the TUC and Labour Party conferences was all about - something that Thatcher did not welcome at all. It is through the fight to put that resolution into practice that Lynk and all those who allowed the NUM to suffer defeat must be swept out of office.

# The Pre-Revolutionary Situation in Britain Today



EVENTS during September 1985 were a powerful confirmation of the SLG's analysis that there is a pre-revolutionary situation in Britain today. The nature of pre-revolutionary situations is often misunderstood. It is not a period in which the working class scores an unending series of victories in an ever leftward and automatic movement towards revolution.

On the contrary, pre-revolutionary situations are marked by contradictory and convulsive events which swing to and fro, for and against the working class. It is a period in which although the ruling class maintains its overall domination, massive and quick changes occur which affect state forms and more profoundly affect the organisations of the working class.

The pre-revolutionary situation in Britain was opened by the miners' strike. Events since the end of that strike confirm that although the miners were forced back to work after 12 months of struggle, the impact and consequences of that strike continue to

dominate political life in Britain. In analysing the miners' defeat organisations like the SWP see only the defeat of the strike and are unable to identify the long term political consequences of the strike which shape the political period we have now entered. It is characteristic of this period that despite defeating the miners the Tory government have not resolved any of its fundamental problems and indeed is weaker today than it was prior to the strike.

However, we should not underestimate the immediate consequence of the miners' defeat. Clearly the offensive of the British bourgeoisie, which really began with the defeat of the Irish hunger strikers in 1981, has continued since the miners' strike. It has done so with some extremely important modifications to their forms of state.

The abolition of the metropolitan authorities and the severe rate-capping restrictions on Borough Councils demonstrate how the Tories have destroyed a layer of the bourgeois-democratic state and reversed one of the gains of the working class which was a degree of democracy at local level which, to a certain extent, the workers' movement could use to its advantage.

The programme of privatisation is a peculiar form of economic self-mutilation which threatens many gains made by the working class, especially in the Health Service. But it also demonstrates a desperate search for quick profits in a vain attempt to improve Britain's chronic lack of profitability. This denationalisation is in fact leading to chaos, which is an important element in the developing disorder of the ruling class.

Changes in the policing of the country also indicate the bourgeoisie's preparations for an even larger confrontation than the experience of the miners' strike. The state's response to the miners' strike was to construct a de facto national police force through the national reporting centre which will no doubt come into play on every occasion that the workers' movement launches a serious assault on the interests of the ruling class.

## CRISIS OF THE BOURGEOISIE

A number of precedents were set during the miners' strike which have now become permanent features of bourgeois rule in Britain:

1. The systematic jailing and sacking of workers in struggle - miners, Camell Lairds workers, NUR members.
2. Massive fines imposed on unions in struggle.
3. Militarisation of police operations and the systematic use of firearms.

However, despite these real blows against the working class the crisis of the bourgeoisie deepens, notwithstanding its highly contradictory character. The single most important factor in preventing

this crisis from taking on even more explosive forms is the role of the Labour and Trade Union leadership.

At the Labour Party Conference, electricians' union leader Hammond said that the miners were lions led by donkeys. His abuse was aimed at Arthur Scargill, but in fact donkeys who betrayed the lions are to be found on the TUC General Council, and along with Willis and Laird, Hammond makes up the triumvirate of asses who obstructed the victory of the miners - because that movement objectively threatened the bourgeois parliamentary rule which Hammond and company depend on for their treacherous existence.

movement. The threatened split of the TUC is a clear expression of this process. If the working class was in full scale retreat, which some, like the SWP and Socialist Action suggest, then the bureaucrats could peacefully cave in before Thatcher and sew up a deal to protect their own positions.

### DEMANDS ON BUREAUCRACY

But the movement of the working class, reaching a high point in the miners' strike has not been crushed and indeed continues to press its demands on the Labour and TUC bureaucracy.

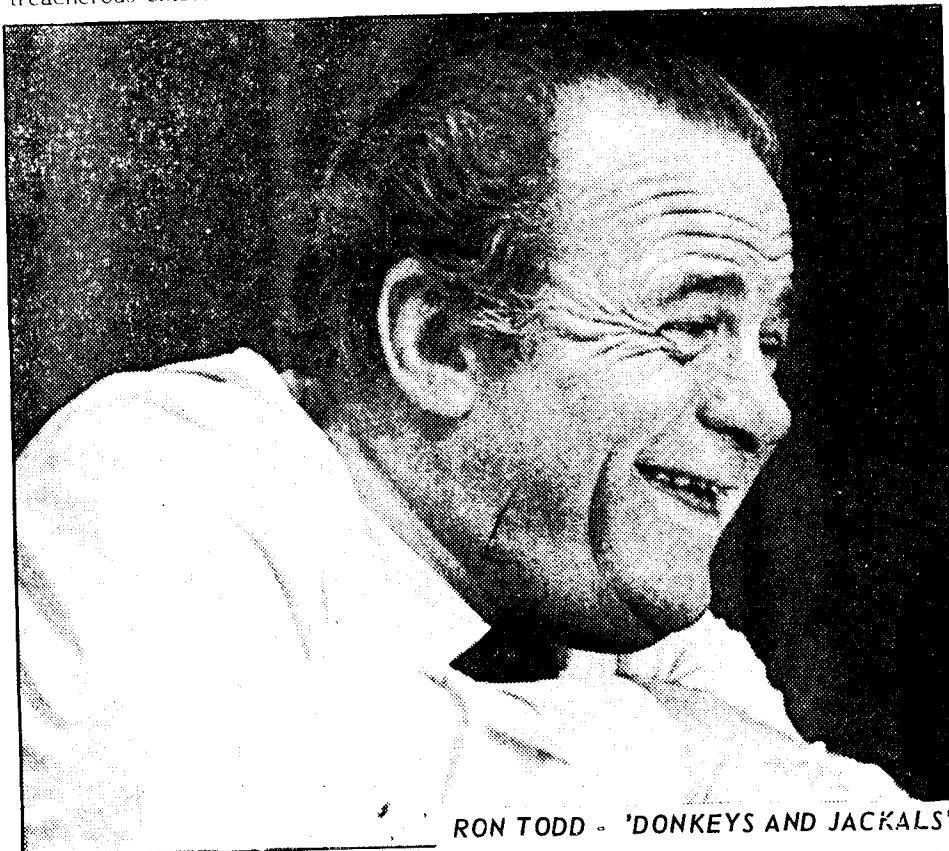
direction which leads to a confrontation with the state with revolutionary dimensions.

However, the organisational consequences of this development are very retarded. Many of the forms developed during the miners' strike remain, like Women Against Pit Closures, the transformation of Support Groups into a new radical presence within the Constituency Labour Parties, etc. However, in order to mobilise these new forces in a successful campaign to force the Labour leadership to take up the miners' review, this left wing needs firstly a leadership wider than Scargill within the TUC, but also a counterpoint within the Labour Party.

### KINNOCK AND WILLIS

Ron Todd explained at the TUC Conference that he was supporting the NUM resolution because he couldn't betray the miners. In other words those who did oppose it are betraying the miners. Why then doesn't Todd call for Willis and Kinnock to go? Why doesn't he, and for that matter Scargill too, state clearly that the left must put up candidates against Willis and Kinnock?

No doubt Todd will argue that we need unity behind Kinnock to stand a chance of winning the next election. But who is the chief obstacle to achieving that unity? It was Kinnock who denounced those who believe that those miners who lost their liberty and jobs should be defended. It was Kinnock who denounced Liverpool Council in their struggle against the Government,



RON TODD - 'DONKEYS AND JACKALS'

This division between lions and donkeys, or jackals as Ron Todd described them, is in political terms the conflict within the trade union bureaucracy about how far to go in collaboration with the state. This conflict is by no means a straight left-right confrontation. Just a few months after the miners' defeat and despite the legal minefield of the anti-union legislation, hundreds of rail guards took industrial action in defence of their jobs. This struggle was sabotaged not by Eric Hammond but by would-be TUC left, Jimmy Knapp. He frustrated attempts by guards to escalate the action by insisting they stay at work until the legal ballot took place. This subservience before the Tories' laws checked the momentum of the direct self-activity of the guards. Even then the vote was only marginally opposed to taking national strike action.

This reformist cowardice before the bourgeois state is giving rise to impossible contradictions and tensions within the labour and trade union

This is the political meaning of the resolution calling for a review of the cases of all the jailed and sacked miners, which was moved by Scargill at TUC and Labour Party Conferences and against the opposition of both the General Council and Kinnock was passed in both conferences. This immensely important political event contrasts sharply with the TUC conference which followed the defeated General Strike of 1926, where all discussion of the General Strike was suppressed.

Scargill's determination to push the issue of the miners' review is an expression of the movement of the vanguard of the class, not just miners but hundreds of thousands who supported them, to force the Labour/TUC leadership to defend the rank and file. Scargill is the unquestioned leader of this movement which is in reality a centrist development. By this we mean that Scargill and his followers are breaking with the state and a bureaucracy which props it up and are evolving in a



and, as Eric Heffer has pointed out, this attack, although in name against the Militant, was really directed against the working class of Liverpool. As Scargill has correctly pointed out, the biggest liability of Labour is to demonstrate to the workers that the Labour leadership won't defend workers drawn into conflict with the Tories.

### CHALLENGE FOR LEADERSHIP

Passing resolutions which Kinnock has stated he will refuse to carry out is insufficient. Policies in the interests of the rank and file require leaders who will implement them. Kinnock's opposition to the miners' review resolution is not, as some left Labour MPs have said, an error of judgement. His political direction is towards collaboration with the ruling class and coalition with ruling class parties. To stop this development, the left must challenge him. An uncompromising battle must be waged against the activity of the Communist Party and its journal **Marxism Today**, which provides the pseudo-intellectual justification for 'popular-frontism', the movement towards which Kinnock leads. It is also this organisation which provides the donkeys and jackals who are doing the leg work for Kinnock in the Labour Party and the unions in purging socialists who defend working class independence.

In the long run if Scargill is to survive the enormous pressure placed on him and his followers from the state, from the Labour and TUC leadership, and also from the Stalinist forces within the leadership of the NUM, he and the Campaign Group of MPs must set about organising an open left-wing, prepared to challenge for leadership, and therefore provide the working class with an instrument to

## 'depth of social crisis'

reclaim their organisations and prepare for a Workers' Government which will take the measures necessary to defend working class interests.

While this highly complicated political situation was unfolding at TUC and Labour Party Conference the youth of Handsworth, Brixton, Toxteth and Peckham once again took up the struggle against the police which dramatically exploded in 1981.

### STREET CONFRONTATIONS

The degree of violence and the scale of these street confrontations demonstrate on the one hand the depth of the social crisis in Britain but on the other the willingness of the unemployed, dispossessed and in particular the systematically oppressed black population to enter into open struggle against the state.

Despite the reinforcement of the police the state finds it very difficult to contain these upsurges. In Handsworth and Brixton the police were driven out and kept out until the combatants returned home.

It is important to note that both episodes were triggered by the police exercising their new powers and changes in rules governing the use of

firearms. The largescale disturbances that followed demonstrate that the youth in these areas do not and will not accept this particular modification of the role of the police. These events confirm the SLG's view that a pre-revolutionary situation exists in Britain. Although these anti-police disturbances have not developed a definite political character they do indicate an inclination towards revolutionary methods amongst a certain layer of youth, which mirrors the methods and willingness to do battle against the state witnessed amongst young miners during the 1984/85 strike and amongst the young Republicans in Northern Ireland.

### COMPLEX SITUATION

The massive reformist and Stalinist blockage in the British Labour movement is preventing this pre-revolutionary situation from moving quickly towards a revolutionary confrontation. It is likely that this contradictory and transitional period will be of an extended duration, passing through deepening economic, political and social crises with savage blows being struck against both ruling and working class.

The role of Trotskyists in this difficult and complex situation will be to help organise the broadest possible front of workers in struggle across the Labour Party, unions and the thousands who are as yet unorganised into a movement which can clear the bureaucratic obstacles in the workers' movement which prevent the working class from taking a qualitative political leap forward.

BY FRANK IRVINE 5/10/85



# Liverpool - Marxism and the Militant

Militant's editorial of October, 18th begins: "In the teeth of the most ferocious campaign ever levelled at a council, Liverpool City councillors are standing firm in their refusal to cut jobs and services. That fact shines out through all the vilification in the press and the misinformation and confusion deliberately created by all the enemies of this socialist council."

It is clear that the bourgeois press has joined with Thatcher in a campaign not only to vilify the Liverpool council but more essentially to try to destroy the position of Militant within it, knowing that Liverpool is the historic base of that tendency. Added to this, Neil Kinnock opened war on Militant from the Bournemouth Conference, not at this stage through a generalised national witch-hunt, but through a clever attack on their methods in Liverpool.

Both strains - the Tory blue and the Labour yellow - are varieties of ruling class politics. Their aim is to add Liverpool to the miners as a lesson to workers on what happens if they follow left wing leaders into struggle.

The offensive against Liverpool is part of the preparations for the next election, so far as Kinnock is concerned.

## STANDING ALONE

Militant answer these attacks by pointing to the creation of 2,000 jobs, 5,000 houses started and school clothing allowances rising from £18 to £40. These are real achievements. But they are presented in a localist way. Militant says "no other council can claim" them, since "cutbacks and redundancies are being implemented by other councils". This poses the struggle not only in terms of Liverpool standing alone against the Tories - but also against all the other Labour authorities.

In fact the real achievements which Militant refer to were gained through one round of concessions from the Tories over the past two years. Some of the money to pay for these concessions was diverted by the Government from a fund available to other working class cities. These concessions were made during the miners strike and in the aftermath of the first upsurge in Toxteth, and represented a move by Heseltine to gain time for a confrontation with the Militant led council on ground more favourable for the Tories. Readers will remember that

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Thatcher made concessions to the miners in 1981 when a pit strike emanating from Wales threatened to become a national strike - concessions in order to prepare the ground for all-out war on the miners in 1984. Thatcher does not concede twice.

And yet ... Militant have effectively built their campaign over the past two years on the basis that Liverpool could go it alone and win concessions twice. This may accord with the needs of building the Militant but is out of line with the march of the class struggle. A certain amount of mythology has been encrusted around the real course of events. Two years ago Militant were behind organising a conference in Liverpool, ostensibly designed to put together a national local authorities

battle against Tory cuts. Many local authority Labour leaders were present. They, and the rank and file that attended, were treated to hours of Militant rhetoric and no steps forward in common action were made. Blunkett, soon to start his political moves towards Kinnock, was able to point to the difficulties of working with the Militant.

## LINKS WITH MINERS

Equally significant, Peter Heathfield spoke there. At that time the possibility of linking the miners' fight with that of Labour councils was immediate. At no time after that did Derek Hatton or Militant bring out Liverpool City

workers in significant strike action with the miners. There are pits nearby in Lancashire. Militant could have led a whole series of mass pickets, involving thousands of workers from Liverpool. This was never done.

### MANOEUVRES

Instead a whole series of manoeuvres and talks were held with Tory local government bosses were started. Of course, it was necessary to negotiate with Jenkin, but in the absence of developing the link with the miners in struggle this became remote from the council employees in Liverpool.

Lately Militant have spoken of the national campaign they waged to win support for Liverpool. True, there have been a whole series of meetings under the auspices of Militant itself, but this is hardly synonymous with generating a movement to overcome the setbacks caused by the sell-outs of Ken Livingstone or the stab in the back from Kinnock.

Now Militant says: "It is up to the labour movement nationally to guarantee that they are joined in a massive campaign. The Tories must be forced to back down and the Labour leadership must implement the resolution passed at conference giving full backing to the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors and pledging reimbursement of surcharges and fines and the removal of any disqualifications."

Coming after Bournemouth this is extraordinary and reveals in full the bankruptcy of rhetoric when Marxist analysis is required.

### WHAT CAMPAIGN?

Firstly, to say at this stage "It is up to the labour movement" to back Liverpool places all the onus on the rank and file to rescue Militant. In the same issue as the editorial mentioned above, there are no less than six letters attacking Neil Kinnock. It was indeed Kinnock who instigated the GLC retreat and the compromises of other Labour councils over rate-capping. Yet there is not one mention of this in Militant's editorial. It seems that the instincts of the Militant rank and filers are closer to Marxism than its editorial writers on this question. To use a term like "labour movement" in the abstract at this stage, is to evade realities. What does Militant say to local government shop stewards, labour councillors and activists up and down Britain? What precise "campaign" is being proposed? Readers look in vain on the front page or columns of Militant for an answer to this question. As Trotsky said, the question to answer for Marxists when addressing the mass movement is always - what next?

Indeed, Ben Eastop, writing on the front page of the October 18th issue says: "I'm confident workers will see the need for united struggle once it is clearly explained by all the union leaders." Two things follow from this. Firstly, that Eastop does not believe that workers currently see any need for "united struggle" because the leaders haven't explained it, so in some way it could be the workers and not the leaders who are to blame for not backing Liverpool's "socialist council". Secondly, Eastop nowhere tackles the problem that union leaders are not talking about "united struggle" but are uniformly backing Kinnock's retreat. What precise campaign is Militant mounting to force the union leaders into "united struggle"? This question must be high on the agenda for Liverpool City Council employees.

### ULTRA LEFTISM

As to the reimbursement of surcharges and fines, hasn't Kinnock made his position crystal clear? Isn't he the leader of the Labour Party, isn't he backed by Hattersley and the whole Shadow Cabinet? Calling on the labour movement to do something that must be carried out by the Labour leadership is an evasion. Is Militant now in favour or not of fighting to remove Kinnock and Hattersley from office, since this is the only road to reimbursement? This is the world of real politics, not rhetoric. Will Terry Fields MP and Dave Nellist MP now call for this within the Campaign Group of Labour MP's?

To return to the issue of the campaign itself. Several weeks ago, addressing a rally of tens of thousands of Liverpool workers in front of City

Hall, Derek Hatton said: "This is magnificent. If we stand together we can win." This is politically wrong. There was never any chance for Liverpool to win on its own after the defeat of the miners. This is to turn Marxism into voluntarism. Indeed, to borrow one of Militant's favourite epithets when attacking what they call the 'sects', it is a form of ultra-leftism.



DEREK HATTON

But what specific tactic has Militant advanced as the agency for victory? It has been the call for a 24 hour General Strike, advanced for months on end, indeed all through the





miners' strike and into recent weeks. Exactly who is to call this strike and who has to take this action has varied.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with a 24 hour General Strike if conditions are right. In effect such an action amounts to a prolonged and definite demonstration of resolve. However, a 24 hour General Strike by Liverpool workers or even the North Western TUC area will **never** make Thatcher concede to Liverpool council. This is an example of the super-formalist logic of Militant's older leaders being foisted on a mass movement. It is not surprising that the masses have been slow to seize the slogan. Would the Liverpool workers not have understood a clear call to join with the miners on indefinite strike? Was there not a whole year to prepare and implement this perspective? If the widening gulf between trade unionists and Militant councillors in Liverpool leads the latter to denounce workers for not taking 24 hour strike action, Militant will do the cause a grave disservice. A proposal for action has to match the objective it is designed to achieve.

#### ISOLATION OF LIVERPOOL

Another angle which needs examination is the isolation of

Liverpool. How has it come about? Readers of the October 18th Militant might think that a national campaign has been mounted but ignored by everyone else. We think not.

Certainly a national campaign could have been waged, starting from the conference mentioned above, when the standing of Liverpool was high and the miners strike young. What actually happened? There appear to have been meetings with other council leaders, mostly of a diplomatic nature. Why is it for instance, that the links with the other council - Lambeth - where councillors also face surcharge are so tenuous? There have been discussions with emissaries from the labour leadership and, recently, Kinnock himself. Only one ingredient seems to have been left out - the building of a mass campaign aimed at local authority workers and all those councillors prepared to break with the retreat of their own authorities and confront the Tories.

There is currently a controversy raging over the amounts of Derek Hatton's expenses, which together total £10,302 a year. Of this, £1,236 went on travel. That's about 35 second class returns to London, for example. How many of these trips were used to call together councillors from other authorities in a national campaign? How many shop steward

committees were convinced to go further than a paper resolution to take up Liverpool's stand? These are pointed questions, but it is no good Militant appealing to the "labour movement" so late in the day if it cannot answer why the fight was not carried out from Liverpool earlier. In fact the answer must be political. "The Marxist ideas of Militant" are deficient on a key point of Marxism - the question of the United Front Tactic.

#### UNITED FRONT

In his article 'On the United Front' written in March 1922, Trotsky wrote "In clashes with industrialists - insofar as they involve the vital interests of the entire working class, or its majority, or this or that section - the working masses sense the need for unity in action, of unity in resisting capitalism or unity in taking the offensive against it. Any party which mechanically counterposes itself to this need of the working class for unity in action will unfailingly be condemned in the minds of the workers."

"Consequently the question of the united front tactic is not at all, either in point of origin or substance, a question of the reciprocal relations between the Communist parliamentary fraction and that of the socialists, or





between the Central Committees of the two parties ... The problem of the united front - despite the fact that a split is inevitable in this epoch between the various organisations basing themselves on the working class - grows out of the urgent need to secure for the working class the possibility of a united front in the struggle against capitalism.

"For those who do not understand this task, the party is only a propaganda society and not an organisation for mass action."

## REDUNDANCY NOTICES

The substance of this so far as Militant is concerned, is that manoeuvres with Blunkett, Ted Knight or whoever, do not **in themselves** constitute the Marxist united front tactic. If a united national campaign is not generated they express the "relations between Central Committees" method Trotsky attacks above.

There is a second aspect to this. Without having to renounce its unique political line, Militant could have built a campaign with a definite platform with many trade unionists and left reformists, who genuinely want to see Thatcher beaten. Instead the politics of the Militant are constantly raised as a barrier to this unity - as a form of ultimatum to those who want to give support to Liverpool.

Then there is a third component - the growing gap between the politics of Militant as exemplified on the pages of their paper and what they actually do in power in Liverpool. This is a serious matter.

For instance, Militant says: "The workers recognise that their jobs will have been saved. Not one is to be made redundant; there is to be no cutback on the housing programme." This is incredible. Were the redundancy notices to all Liverpool workers not then a reality? Were these not the basis on which Kinnock was able to make his "scurrying around in taxis" attack on Militant?

We can argue about the reasoning behind issuing the redundancy notices to all Liverpool workers. According to Militant it was to buy time "for a massive united campaign to compel the Tories to give back the money stolen from the council's grant." This is pure voluntarism - and at the expense of the working class in Liverpool.

## LEGAL OPTIONS

Militant now conceive of all the options in Liverpool in legal, book balancing terms. So, instead of redundancies they came up with another 'Marxist' innovation - laying off the entire workforce for four weeks without pay, and asking some of them to work for nothing during this time. This is creative accounting gone

mad.

Then what is the substance of the Blunkett-Hatton deal made at Labour Party Conference? Behind all the theatricality, what concessions are Militant making to Blunkett and Kinnock? It will be a crime if Kinnock's visit to Liverpool is dressed up as support. He went not to praise the council but to bury the Militant.

## 'SOFT LEFT'

Kinnock needs to remove Militant from its dominant position in Liverpool Labour Party. Moves are already underway. Firstly, the union bosses nationally have been able to use the problems caused by the issuing of redundancy notices to intervene in the unions in Liverpool. This is Militant's weak point. Trade union delegates could be used to pack Constituency Labour Parties and oust Militant office holders. Secondly Kinnock and his Stalinist allies are trying to set up an organised 'soft left' in Liverpool, around the Tribune newspaper, which is now closely tied to Kinnock. Secret meetings involving some councillors have already been called and a public campaign is to be waged, aimed at winning figures like the titular council leader John Hamilton away from their alliance with the Militant. Thirdly, some sort of NEC investigation into the affairs of the Liverpool Labour Party is possible, starting with Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn, leading Militant supporters who have already been identified by AUEW boss Ken Cure.

## RIGHT WING OFFENSIVE

Against this type of right wing offensive the current low key approach of Militant cannot carry the day. It will end in expulsions in Liverpool as is happening in other areas. One of the consequences of generating a mass movement that does not succeed - against not only the Tories but also the Labour leaders - is that a price will have to be paid. It will not only be Militant but the working class of Liverpool who will be made to pay. In this full sense Militant have to be defended all the way against this attack. It is not in the interests of left wing organisation to see Militant beaten in Liverpool. But, at this stage, it is not possible to give uncritical support to Militant, which is committing major errors in the name of Marxism. Marxism and the interests of the working class demand that these things should be debated.

There is a thin line between debating the mistakes of Militant and actually joining in a witch-hunt against them. Unlike Socialist Action and the degenerate national groupings like Socialist Organiser, we are not gloating over the problems Militant

faces. We do not believe Kinnock must not be challenged and that he must lead Labour into the next election. Supporters of Socialist Action have not only been arguing against a challenge to the Kinnock leadership but they are now, in Labour Party meetings, speaking and voting even against resolutions that 'condemn' Kinnock for his attacks on Liverpool Council and the NUM.

For many years Militant has harboured a weakness in its attitude to Stalinism. Now it faces Stalinism as a front line enemy, not just in its influence on the team around Kinnock, but in the unions and in Liverpool Labour Party. As far as the Stalinists are concerned, Militant is a Trotskyist organisation and therefore an enemy. The hand of Stalinism, along with allies on the labour right, the SDP and the Liberals, could be seen in the Liverpool Against Militant demo which brought 5,000 people out onto the streets of that city. This method is in line with the Communist Party's push towards a Popular Front government headed by Kinnock. They understand that organisations like Militant must be purged from the Labour Party as part of this process. It is noticeable that both the 'Euro' CPGB majority and the 'tankie' Morning Star minority are united in their opposition to Militant. It is the historic role of Stalinism to attack any manifestation of what they regard as Trotskyism.

## CONCLUSION

The issues which have been raised in Liverpool now run far deeper than the battle over local authority spending. It is not an underestimation to say that the whole future of Militant is in the balance, and with that, the composition and shape of the Labour left over the next period.

Militant are making three fundamental errors which we summate as: 1. posing the battle as Liverpool City against a national government; 2. refusing to hammer out a United Front strategy with other trade unionists and Labour lefts; 3. trying to find a compromise with Kinnock by keeping the struggle within a legal 'book balancing' framework.

The Socialist Labour Group rejects any attempts to withdraw support for Militant against Kinnock. Whatever our differences with Militant, it is unprincipled to remain on the sidelines while they battle with Kinnock and Stalinism. Militant must draw the lessons of their own mistakes, on the basis of the ideas of Marxism, but for this to be most useful to the working class the attacks of the Tories and of Kinnock must be beaten off.

BY GEORGE WHITE 19/10/85

# THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF THE **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

## THESES NUMBER 2

Our international was founded in 1938. It was based on a series of analyses and general principles, fundamentals which have been fully confirmed by the experience of our entire epoch from World War One to the present, which is the period of the world proletarian revolution.

Let us briefly outline these principles one by one:

1. The productive forces of humanity have ceased to grow under the rule of imperialism. Consequently, every advance in technology, far from helping to raise the standard of living of the masses, leads instead to growing poverty and new wars. The productive forces have come into contradiction not only with capitalist private property but also with the existence of nation-states.

2. These contradictions have resulted in a historic period of wars, crises and revolutions, starting in 1914.

3. The class struggle and the revolution have taken on world-wide dimensions. Concretely, this means we have entered the most revolutionary period of history, a period in which everything that happens must be evaluated from the standpoint of world-wide revolution and counter-revolution, and not from the standpoint of nation-states or any other standpoint at the level of national structure or superstructure.

4. The crisis of humanity is the consequence of the crisis of proletarian leadership. As long as the proletariat has not resolved this crisis of leadership, mankind will stumble from one crisis to another, each deeper than those which preceded it. This does not mean, however, that the struggle of the oppressed and the exploited cannot win partial successes and conquer new positions for the whole revolution. But these successes and conquests remain precarious. They deepen the crisis of imperialism, but they also strengthen the counter-revolutionary resolution of the world bourgeoisie in its state of deadlock.

5. The crisis of leadership of the world proletariat is not an abstract, subjective

phenomenon, caused by the low level of consciousness of the proletariat. It is objective and concrete, due to the existence of the bureaucratic apparatuses which are the recognised leaderships of the workers' movement and of the masses, particularly of Social-Democracy and Stalinism, which has definitely gone over to the side of bourgeois order. Historically speaking, all the bureaucratic or petty-bourgeois leaderships (nationalists, ultra-lefts, Social-Democrats or Stalinists) are directly or indirectly servants of the imperialist counter-revolution.

6. The causes of the treacherous role of these leaderships are social. They are located in the aristocracy of labour, which is at the origin of the bureaucratisation of the workers' organisations, as well as in the formation of the bureaucratic caste which is parasitic on the conquests of the October Revolution. The petty bourgeois leaderships, which include the Stalinists, cannot be won to the revolution. The principal role among the counter-revolutionary apparatuses is played by Stalinism, because Stalinism has the monopoly of control of the principal workers states, which affords it immense advantages.

7. The ideology of all the petty bourgeois and bureaucratic currents-especially that of Stalinism-is that of "Socialism in One Country" and of peaceful existence with imperialism. This ideology is what they call their 'theory'. These are the weapons with which the bureaucracy struggles to defeat the world revolution.

8. The only theory, the only programme which consistently opposes the Stalinist and Social Democratic 'theory' of "Socialism in One Country" and of peaceful coexistence, and which opposes their practice of collaboration with the various bourgeoisies and with imperialism, is the theory of the Permanent Revolution. The first formulation of the theory of the Permanent Revolution - before the Russian Revolution of 1917 - deals with the combination of democratic and socialist tasks and with the role of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only force capable of carrying through the tasks of the democratic revolution in backward countries. The second



**LEON  
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PAGES 2 AND 8 OF THE THESES.

formulation - that of 1928 - was for the purpose of replying to the Stalinist 'theory' of the construction of "Socialism in One Country" and of setting out the tasks which arise after the seizure of power, not only in the backward countries, but in any country. Its central theme is the dynamic of the international socialist revolution, of the permanent mobilisation of the working class and its allies to take power, to set up a revolutionary dictatorship, to defeat imperialism throughout the world, to put an end to nation-states by means of revolution and to set up the World Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics, so as to undertake the building of Socialism on the world scale.

9. The objectives by means of which Socialism will be brought about are the abolition of private property in the means of production, the abolition of the employing class and of wage-labour, the withering away of the State and of classes. In order to put an end to the rule of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat will have to expropriate those sectors of capitalist production which have reached a monopolistic stage, that is, to expropriate finance-capital which is connected to the international finance-capital controlling the world market. The question of how far the expropriations should go is a tactical one, to be decided by the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. In any case, neither the expropriation of the finance-capital nor that of the national bourgeoisie or of the landed proprietors in themselves exhaust the tasks of the revolution. The great strategic object is to extend the socialist revolution throughout the region and then to the whole world, to get rid of imperialism and of national frontiers, in order to introduce Socialism across the whole planet.

10. In order to overcome the crisis of leadership of the proletariat, the principal task is to construct Trotskyist parties with mass influence in every country in the world, and to construct the world party of the socialist revolution, the Fourth International. Such Trotskyist parties, with mass influence, can be built only by waging an implacable struggle to the end in the heart of the mass movement, against all the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois

leaderships. This is not affected by the fact that these leaderships can be forced to lead certain progressive or revolutionary struggles in particular circumstances under the pressure of the mass movement, and that these struggles can even force them to break with the bourgeoisie, in an exceptional combination of circumstances, and introduce a Workers' and Peasants' Government, as the Transitional Programme envisaged.

11. Nothing reveals the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism more clearly than the role which it plays as a Bonapartist government in the USSR itself. That government is leading to an inevitable crisis of the economy, society, politics and culture which is becoming ever more serious. Day by day the bureaucracy and its regime undermine the foundations of the first workers' state in history. Only a political revolution, led by a Trotskyist party, will be able to resolve the historic crisis of the workers' state which is involved in a process of profound degeneration. The purpose of the political revolution is to re-establish a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat on the model of Lenin and Trotsky.

12. The political revolution against the ruling bureaucratic caste, which is necessary in the USSR and in the other bureaucratic workers' states, is part and parcel of the world proletariat revolution, as well as of the world-wide struggle to drive out of the leadership of the mass movement all the Stalinist, Social-Democratic and petty bourgeois apparatuses which dominate it today.

13. All the foregoing points were summarised in the words and methods of the Transitional Programme, which is the programme for the mobilisation of the proletariat for the seizure of power and the introduction of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. The programme starts from the objective conditions and the varying levels of consciousness of the masses. It mobilises them and ensures that this mobilisation is maintained and continues to develop, as a basis on which are built the only revolutionary leadership which can consciously express this process, the Trotskyist parties and the Fourth International.



# THE FORMATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

## THESIS NUMBER 8

Today our International is weak. The revolutions which have been victorious under the pressure of mass activity have been led by the bureaucracy, which has succeeded in controlling their course up until now. These facts have led revisionists to ask the following question: Was it correct to found the Fourth International, since it has been possible to expropriate the bourgeoisie over one-third of our planet without its intervention? Deutscher and other intellectuals of his type have categorically replied to this question that founding the Fourth International was a grave error on Trotsky's part.

We firmly believe the opposite. Founding the Fourth International was the most important achievement of Trotsky and our international movement! Our International was founded at the lowest point to which the workers' movement was driven back, but it met an absolute necessity, that of pursuing the organised struggle to extend the world revolution, a struggle which cannot be separated from defending the gains of the October Revolution. It was necessary to unite all the revolutionary Marxists firmly round a programme which would concentrate all the lessons of the international workers' movement since the **Communist Manifesto** and, in particular, since the Russian Revolution. It was necessary to defend these conquests of Marxism - the conscious expression of the unconscious process, concentrated in Trotskyism and its programme - against the attacks of Stalinism and of the other counter-revolutionaries, which tried with all their might to wipe out the international proletarian revolution from the historic memory of the workers and of the vanguard. It was therefore indispensable to construct a solid international organisation united round a programme, the **Transitional Programme** of the Fourth International.

Without the dimension of the Fourth International, the vanguard in each country would have been at the mercy  
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of national circumstances. It would have lost sight of the historic dimension of the struggle of the world proletariat, that is, of the world revolution. It would not have been able to resist the revisionist, bureaucratic onslaught of Stalinism and Social-Democracy. It is only by founding the Fourth International that Trotskyism could take hold of the legacy of Marxism and of Bolshevism, in the struggle against the theory of 'Socialism in one Country' and the Stalinist policy of Popular Fronts.

Furthermore, the founding of the Fourth International had an aggressive object, that of preparing a common framework for the revolutionary Marxists of the whole world, in preparation for the inevitable revolutionary upsurge which was soon to begin and which would be diverted or betrayed by all the petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships of the mass movement, in the absence of a revolutionary vanguard. The foundation of the Fourth International was the only way by which this double requirement, defensive and offensive, could be met.

In the end, the only fairly serious

comment of the theoreticians who wanted to be 'Trotskyists' and who expressed scepticism about the role and the necessity of the Fourth International, that an International can only arise from great victories of the workers' movement. But there is no rule that says this. The only International to have been founded in the wake of a gigantic victory of the revolution was the Third International. The First International was founded at the beginning of the formation of the proletariat as a class. The Second International was founded in order to demonstrate that the workers' movement had come into existence, neither one case nor the other was the foundation preceded by a victory of the revolution.

The Fourth International was founded on the basis of the gains of the October Revolution, aiming at the world revolution, at the very time when the elements of a new revolutionary upsurge were being formed in the period of defeats, in its depths.

The fact that it could be founded and that it could provide a programme and an organisation for the new world-wide revolutionary upsurge, despite the treachery of the traditional leaderships, bears witness to the degree of maturity of the conscious factor in the Trotskyist ranks. The programme is not a system of ideas. It is the generalisation into principles of the unity between theory and practice. Without which there can be no question of constructing the revolutionary organisation of the proletariat. When we founded the Fourth International, we were, therefore, preparing the organisation and programme which are necessary to tear the mass movement away from the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and in this way to overcome the crisis of leadership which the revolutionary upsurge would confront.

It was indispensable in 1938 to found the Fourth International and to prepare to defend the USSR in the counter-revolutionary war which threatened it. This was demonstrated almost immediately after its foundation when it had to resist a first attack of revisionism in one of the strongest parties in our movement, the SWP in the United States. A revisionist tendency, hostile to the defence of the USSR, appeared in our International. This was a sophisticated expression of the progress of the counter-revolution in the world. This tendency could have broken up the Trotskyist ranks throughout the world, if it had not been within the common framework of the newly-founded international, with Trotsky himself. Thanks, however, to the fact that the Fourth International had been founded, we are in a position to defend the integrity of the programme of the world revolution, to foil the first large revisionist current to appear in our ranks and in this way to ensure the defence of the two major conquests of this century: the USSR and Bolshevism, of which Trotskyism is the only heir.

# Rail in Decline

BY GEORGE WHITE



Eight decades ago Lenin wrote that the degree of industrial development of a country could be estimated from the miles of railway track it possessed. From this point of view Britain and France were high on the list. Britain was the cradle of rail technology in the nineteenth century and it was the coming of railways which helped open up rural France to industrial influences.

Of course the coming of the internal combustion engine and air travel have greatly modified the place of rail since the early twentieth century. But rail still occupies a special place in the infrastructure of both Britain and France.

In both cases the run-down of traditional industry is hitting railways. The recent battles in Britain over one person-operated trains occurred in France some years ago. There the unions lost. In both cases 'cost-cutting' exercises are rife, which means cuts in the workforce and the lowering of investment.

One of the main arguments advanced by the rail unions against driver-only trains is the absence of a safety factor. The pressure to increase speeds combines with a lowering of morale among rail workers because their industry is being given ever lower priority by government after government to create a situation where accidents are becoming more frequent. This is in no way the fault of rail workers.

The closure of rail workshops by British Rail has to be weighed in any balance of safety. This is put across as modernisation, but the plain fact is that engines and rolling stock will be serviced less regularly. We are currently witnessing a crossover period in which new technology, such as long distance electronic signalling, new braking and coupling methods and partial retracking at junctions, is obscuring the real overall run-down of investment. If the cuts in Britain continue at current rates, in a few years the material effects of investment starvation will

translate into closures

In France the introduction of TGV (high speed train) technology on certain prime routes should not obscure the increased pressure which railworkers are facing in most areas. Overall the French railways are also suffering a starvation of investment, even if less spectacular than in Britain.

A recent series of rail accidents in France led to a letter being issued to drivers saying that the accidents were 'directly caused by human errors'. This was correctly seen by French railworkers as an insult to professional skills. In effect they are being asked to undergo an examination of their competence, even if they have been driving trains for over twenty years.

This move was nothing more than a cover-up for the real cause of most accidents - a running down of investment and manning levels. The plain fact is that in Britain and France, whilst being an important social amenity, the railways cost millions in state subsidies. Under the guise of 'modernisation' Thatcher and Mitterrand are introducing austerity.

The industrial decline of these two old imperialist nations cannot help but be translated into a decline of railways, a fact which is not passively accepted by railworkers.

For some years British railworkers have been seeking the means to fight cuts and closures. In the 1960s a whole series of routes were axed by Beeching - once more under the guise of 'modernisation'. This the right wing leaders of the NUR virtually accepted. Since then the very new technology which management promised would improve working conditions has been used to cut tens of thousands of jobs - drivers, guards, station staff, cleaners, porters, track workers, clerical grades and engineering staff; no-one has been immune.

The NUR and ASLEF are now led by leaders who claim some links with the left. Whereas Sidney Weighell would accept rationalisation as inevitable,

Jimmy Knapp postures and threatens industrial action. But Knapp's real political contours were revealed during the miners' strike when he managed to avoid direct calls for railworkers to take all-out strike action under the leadership of the NUR. Ray Buckton of ASLEF consistently retreats behind a line of 'drivers first' craft mentality which acts as a blockage to the united fight against cuts which alone could stop them.

Morale on British Rail is very low. Workers know their industry is being run-down and it's difficult to keep up pride in a job which government after government has degraded. Meanwhile Labour and union leaders continue to prattle on about integrated transport policies and future electrification. Not a word is being said to mobilise workers to fight back against job losses.

In spite of this craven attitude on the part of the rail leaders it was significant that a little under half of the guards voted in September for indefinite strike action to defend their jobs. Many took strike action and hundreds were victimised as a result. In the rail workshops, chances of national unity in defence of traditions of skills which go back over a hundred years in places like Swindon, Horwich, Springburn and Shildon have been squandered by leaders who have let workshop be pitted against workshop. If jobs in Crewe and Derby are safe now it will not be the case in five years, since the run-down of investment will continue.

In France the attempts to blame workers for rail accidents has brought forth an even more direct response. An all-out strike on rail built up from the 28th September as workers walked out until the SNCF withdrew their letter.

Public opinion in France has been clearly behind SNCF workers. People do not believe 'human errors' are the main cause of accidents. It is widely believed that more investment and jobs is the only key to safety.

The Stalinist led union federation, the CGT, called for a 24 hour strike, but the workers came out for an indefinite period, knowing that 24 hours could not win their demands.

Indeed at 7pm on October 1st the management climbed down and 'accepted the withdrawal' of their letter.

In the rail industry, as in ship-building, coal mining and steel, state subsidies are being cut, leading to a fall in investment and jobs. Whilst there is no EEC plan which unites the attacks of the British and French governments, it is the same decline of the imperialist system which is the root cause. There is a need to develop the technology of railways to reflect a changing transport system. But capitalism is trying to make rail workers pay for these changes. To paraphrase Lenin, the degree of industrial run-down of countries can be seen in the crisis of their railway networks.

# South Africa : A Revolution Unfolds



"FOR a revolution to break out it is usually not enough that those at the bottom no longer want to live as before, but it also means that those at the top are no longer able to continue in the old way." Lenin.

Since 1984, the repressive forces of the Pretoria regime have cold-bloodedly murdered over 700 black demonstrators...yet the strikes and demonstrations have intensified. Why? Is it, as a leading member of the South African Conservative Party said in his arrogantly racist way, 'the lack of discipline of those big children, the blacks, unable to provide for themselves and only interested in making love.'? Or is it, as we believe, a groundswell of opposition attacking the apartheid state, which brutal repression is powerless to stop.

In September 1984, the Johannesburg area was the scene of the first riots in protest at the increase in rents and the price of electricity. For two months, despite fierce repression resulting in 160 deaths, the people in the black townships demonstrated almost daily. To this day the rents have not been paid.

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On the 17th and the 18th of the same month, 40,000 miners took part in the first legal strike called by the National Union of Mineworkers, and in October 200,000 school-children boycotted their classes.

This wave of strikes, demonstrations and boycotts have helped to develop and strengthen those organisations opposed to apartheid, and since the beginning of 1985 disturbances have occurred in Port Elizabeth as well as Johannesburg.

## NO COMPROMISE

The determination of black people and their organisations to put an end to apartheid is not open to question. Last February, Mandela, the Honorary President of the ANC, imprisoned since 1963, refused the offer of conditional release made by the authorities. Less than a month ago, Desmond Tutu's daughter said : "We don't want them to make our chains easier to bear; we want them to remove the chains. We are not looking to reform the apartheid system; we want to finish with it altogether." A few days ago, the president of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, confirmed this : "Our goal is the end of the apartheid

system, and there can be no compromise on this point."

The authorities have reacted to this upsurge by declaring a state of emergency in July, by arresting thousands of militants, and by killing over 700 people in the last 12 months. But ... the demonstrations continue. The South African bourgeoisie are increasingly and more openly divided. From the extreme right through to the 'liberal' opposition, Botha is being called upon to resign.

In his speech on August 15th, Botha opposed the demand for one person one vote, but said that he was in favour of 'reforms'. The Progressive Federal Party (the 'liberal' opposition) considered that "he threw away the chance to act as a real statesman by proposing a new vision for the crisis-ridden country." At the same time the National Party attacked him for not paying "enough attention to the problem of restoring law and order."

Through their paper 'Business Day', businessmen told Botha : "It is time to go. There is no longer any doubt that Botha is part of our country's problems, but not part of the solution."

Some days later, anxious about the fall of the Rand, Raymond Parsons, Chair of the Association of Chambers of Commerce, stated : "the money crisis can be entirely attributed to political factors. It is necessary to reassure business, by putting forward a strong and imaginative declaration for political action in South Africa. This will overcome the negative political perceptions."

## REPRESSIVE APPARATUS

On September 2nd, 'Business Day' announced the drawing up of a list representing the country's major capitalists who were ready to discuss the future of the country with the ANC.

Rejected by the black majority, in conflict with its own supporters, the regime is relying on its repressive apparatus. However, the military hierarchy are beginning to find their own problems, and the judges are no longer completely pliable.

On the one hand, on September 5th a judge prevented Gencor, a mining company, from sacking several hundred miners for going on strike. On the other hand, there is a campaign for the abolition of compulsory military service, currently lasting two years. A spokesperson for the campaign recently pointed out that the South African army was experiencing a spectacular growth in the number of young people who were refusing to be called up. This is due to the fact that the army is being used together with the police for the putting down of disturbances in the black townships.

BY SARAH BENNET  
AND CARLOS ALEXIS



# Trotsky on South Africa

The 45th anniversary of the assassination of Leon Trotsky has just been commemorated. For us, as Bolshevik-Leninists, the memory of this anniversary has more than historic value. It also represents the continuity of the thinking and action of the revolutionaries of October and those fighting Stalinist reaction. The relevance of Leon Trotsky's ideas also oblige us to define in a new situation the tasks of our organisations towards the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

In 1935, Trotsky said that the tasks of national liberation in South Africa were linked to the those of the workers' revolution.

Today, this same country, which since 1961 has called itself the 'Republic of South Africa', retains a political system rooted in the colonial oppression of the Black majority. Apartheid, the basis on which the state functions, is an instrument supported by the imperialist powers. It is based on the denial of all rights to the immense majority of the population (75% of Blacks).

This lends a very contradictory character to the South African economy, a rich economy from the statistical point of view whose vast natural resources dwarf those of most African states.

This also gives a very peculiar character to relations with world imperialism, especially that of the US and the old metropolis, Great Britain. South Africa is not a classic colonial country. It is however a direct instrument for world imperialism to maintain order in Southern Africa. The only possible comparison is with the role of Israel in the Middle East.

## THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

In recent years, the decay and decomposition of the apartheid state has unceasingly accelerated. In 1982 the NUM, a Black union, was founded. Organisations against apartheid, like the ANC, UDF and AZAPO have tens of thousands of supporters.

Last year, the 'Indian' and 'Coloured' minorities took part in a massive boycott of the elections to the new fake Parliament which had been 'granted' to them by Botha. In so doing they demonstrated an intention to link their future to the Black majority.

The explosion taking place today in South Africa is causing anguish for all the counter-revolutionary forces of the world. Consensus rules no longer in the United Nations. US spokesmen mouth cynical pronouncements: "Washington has no 'model' to propose"

the White House spokesman explained, when asked if the United States was demanding universal suffrage for the Blacks in South Africa. (23rd August)

USSR leaders are making frightened statements: "All this is going to create problems just as we are in the middle of negotiations. Mandela must negotiate."

The historic, global scale of the revolution unfolding in South Africa puts a massive question-mark against the whole unstable imperialist structure in Africa as a whole. Beyond that, it is directly affecting the mood of the Black population in the USA. Political conditions in South Africa reveal in the most perfectly crystallised way the Permanent Revolution. This African country, in which the Black majority is most deprived of rights, is at the same time the one where the working class is the most concentrated.

Although the current wave is centred on democratic demands it will end up going much further than the struggle for a constituent assembly elected on the principle of one person, one vote. It involves more than the constitution of a new nation, it is by the very force of things, the constitution of a Black Republic, which to be achieved, can only be a proletarian Republic.

It was these questions which Leon Trotsky was already raising fifty years ago.

THIS article is extracted from Trotsky's 'On the South African Thesis' of April 20th, 1935. It was Trotsky's response to a document prepared by comrades in South Africa.

The South African possessions of Great Britain form a dominion only from the point of view of the white minority. From the point of view of the black majority, South Africa is a slave colony.

No social upheaval is conceivable with the retention of British imperialism in the South African dominion. The overthrow of British imperialism in South Africa is just as indispensable for the triumph of socialism in South Africa as it is for Great Britain itself.

The overthrow of the hegemony of British imperialism can come about as the result of a military defeat of Great Britain and the disintegration of the empire. In this case, the South African whites could still, for a certain period - hardly a considerable one - retain their domination over the blacks.

Three-quarters of the population of South Africa is composed of non-Europeans. A victorious revolution



is unthinkable without the awakening of the black masses.

Under these conditions, the South African republic will emerge first of all as a 'black' republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality

for the whites or brotherly relations between the two races - depending mainly on the conduct of the whites. But it is entirely obvious that the majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.

Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relations not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the social revolution in South Africa also have a national character.

We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should in words and deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.

Nevertheless, the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by its own methods.

The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the class struggle. The Comintern, beginning in 1924, transformed the programme of national liberation of colonial people into an empty democratic abstraction that is elevated above the reality of class relations. In the struggle against national oppression, different classes liberate themselves (temporarily) from

national interests and become simple 'anti-imperialist' forces.

In order that these spiritual 'forces' bravely fulfill the task assigned to them by the Comintern, they are promised, as a reward, a spiritual 'national-democratic' state - with the unavoidable reference to Lenin's formula: 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'.

The theses point out that in 1917 Lenin openly and once and for all discarded the formula of 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' as a necessary condition for the solution of the agrarian question. This is entirely correct.

But to avoid misunderstanding, it should be added : (a) Lenin always spoke about a revolutionary **bourgeois** democratic dictatorship and not about a spiritual 'peoples' state; (b) in the struggle for a bourgeois democratic dictatorship, he did not offer a block of all 'anti-czarist forces' but carried out an independent class policy of the proletariat.

An 'anti-czarist' block was the idea of the Russian Social Revolutionaries and the Left Cadets, that is, the parties of the petty and middle bourgeoisie. Against these parties the Bolsheviks always waged an irreconcilable struggle.

When the theses say that the slogan of a 'black republic' is **equally** harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a 'South Africa for the whites', then we cannot agree with the form of the statement. Whereas in the latter there is the case for supporting complete oppression, in the former there is the case of taking the first steps towards liberation.

We must accept decisively and without any reservations the complete

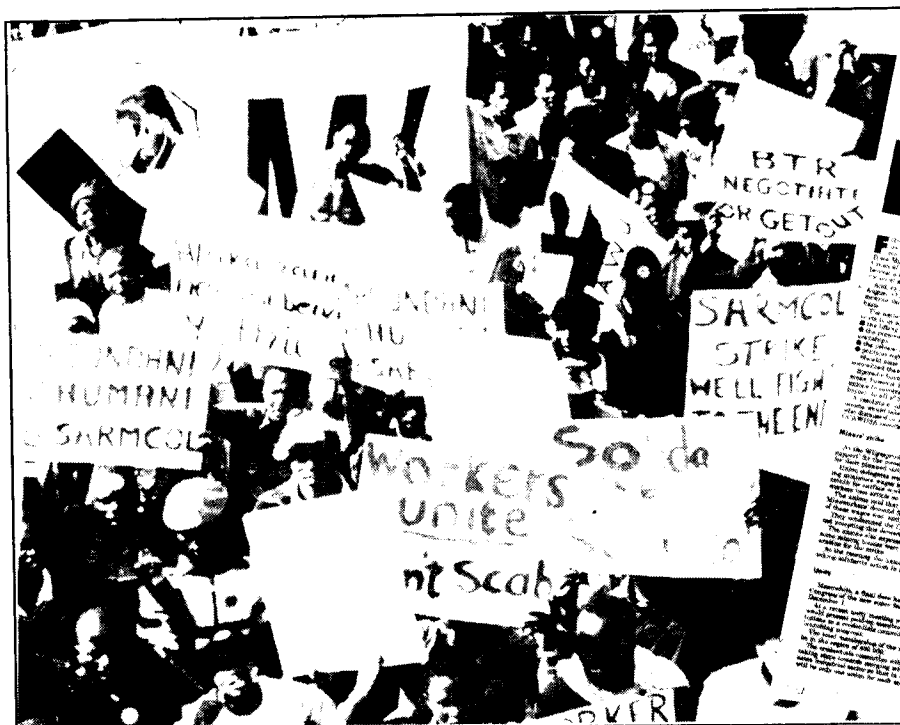


and unconditional right of the blacks to independence. Only on the basis of a mutual struggle against the domination of the white exploiters can the solidarity of black and white toilers be cultivated and strengthened.

It is possible that **after victory** the blacks will find it unnecessary to form a separate black state in South Africa. Certainly we will not **force them** to establish a separate state. But let them make this decision freely, on the basis of their own experience, and not forced by the sjambok (whip) of the white oppressors. The proletarian

revolutionaries must never forget the right of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination, including full separation, and the duty of the proletariat of the oppressing nation to defend this right with arms in hand, if necessary.

The theses quite rightly underline the fact that the solution to the national question in Russia was brought about by the October revolution. National democratic movements by themselves were powerless to cope with the national oppression of Czarism. Only because



**FOSATU**  
**WORKER NEWS**  
 Federation of South African Trade Unions  
 AUGUST 1981 No. 42

FOSATU and other unions put their muscle behind a country-wide consumer boycott

# BOYCOTT

**BOYCOTT**  
 FOSATU and other unions put their muscle behind a country-wide consumer boycott. The boycott is aimed at forcing the government to release the political prisoners and to end the state of emergency. The boycott is a call to action for all South Africans to support the struggle for freedom and democracy.





of the fact that the movement of oppressed nationalities, as well as the agrarian movement of the peasantry, gave the proletariat the possibility of seizing power and establishing its dictatorship did the national question as well as the agrarian find a bold and decisive solution.

But the very conjuncture of the national movements with the struggle of the proletariat for power was made politically possible only thanks to the fact that the Bolsheviks during the whole of their history carried on an irreconcilable struggle with the oppressors of Great Russia, supporting always and without reservation the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, including separation from Russia.

The policy of Lenin in regard to the oppressed nations did not, however, have anything in common with the policy of the epigones. The Bolshevik Party defended the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination **with the methods of proletarian class struggle**, entirely rejecting the charlatan 'anti-imperialist' blocks with the numerous petty-bourgeois 'national' parties of Czarist Russia.

The Bolsheviks have always mercilessly unmasked these parties, as well as the Russian Social Revolutionaries, their vacillations and adventurism, but especially their ideological lie of being above the class struggle. Lenin did not stop his intransigent criticism even when circumstances forced upon him this or that episodic, strictly practical, agreement with them.

There could be no question of any permanent alliance with them under the banner of 'anti-Czarism'. Only thanks to the **irreconcilable** class

policy was Bolshevism able to succeed in the time of the revolution to throw aside the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, the national petty-bourgeois parties and gather around the proletariat the masses of the peasantry and the oppressed nationalities.

"We must not", say the theses, "compete with the African National Congress in nationalist slogans in order to win the black masses." The idea is in itself correct, but it requires concrete amplification. Being insufficiently acquainted with the activities of the ANC, I can only outline our policy towards it on the basis of analogies, stating beforehand my readiness to supplement my recommendations with all the necessary modifications.

1. The Bolshevik-Leninists put themselves in defence of the ANC, as it is, in all cases when it is being attacked by the white oppressors and their chauvinistic agents in the ranks of the workers' organisations.

2. The Bolshevik-Leninists place the progressive over the reactionary tendencies in the programme of the ANC.

3. The Bolshevik-Leninists unmask before the black masses the inability of the ANC to achieve the realisation of even its own demands, because of its superficial, conciliatory policy. In contradistinction to the ANC, the Bolshevik-Leninists develop a programme of revolutionary class struggle.

4. Separate episodic agreements with the ANC, if they are forced by circumstances, are permissible only within the framework of strictly defined practical tasks, with the retention of full and complete

independence of our own organisation and freedom of political criticism.

The theses bring out as the main political slogan not a 'national democratic state' but a South African 'October'. The theses prove, and prove convincingly, :

a. that the national and agrarian questions in South Africa coincide in their bases;

b. that both these questions can be solved only in a revolutionary way;

c. that the revolutionary solution of these questions leads inevitably to the dictatorship of the proletariat, which guides the masses, and

d. that the dictatorship of the proletariat will open an era of a soviet regime and socialist reconstruction. This conclusion is the cornerstone of the whole structure of the programme. Here we are in complete agreement.

But the masses must be brought to this general 'strategic' formula through the medium of a series of tactical slogans. It is possible to work out these slogans, at every given stage, only on the basis of an analysis of the concrete circumstances of the life and struggle of the proletariat and the peasantry and the whole internal and international situation.

In any case, the worst crime on the part of the revolutionaries would be to give the smallest concessions to the privileges and prejudices of the whites. Whoever gives his little finger to the devil of chauvinism is lost.

The revolutionary party must put before every white worker the following alternative : either with British imperialism and with the white bourgeoisie of South Africa or with the black workers and peasants against the white feudalists and slave owners and their agents in the ranks of the working class.



# Tribute to a Soviet Trotskyist

## STATEMENT FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL (INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF RECONSTRUCTION)

The news of the death of our comrade I, suspected for some days, has just reached us.

We publish below, the statement of the Trotskyist group in the USSR, the Soviet section of our international organisation of the Fourth International, which pays tribute to Comrade I, one of the founders and leaders of the group.

It was with great sadness we received this statement, conscious of the cruel blow Comrade I's death means for our whole movement and in particular for our comrades in the Soviet Union. But it is also with great pride that we belong to a movement which counts among its ranks, fighters like Comrade I and those like him who, in the most difficult conditions struggle for a 'future where there is no exploitation and no oppression.'

"The best tribute we can give to him is in the way we remember him. We believe firmly in the unity of words and actions and in our victory."

This ends the message of our Soviet comrades. It brings to mind the final words of Leon Trotsky, as he lay dying from the murderous blow of a Stalinist agent:

"I am convinced of the victory of the Fourth International. Forward to the revolution."

Until his last breath Trotsky fought tenaciously to maintain links with the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union, the continuity of the October Revolution, despite the Stalinist terror and the murder of thousands of militants. They are dead now, for the most part, murdered in the camps.

But the Fourth International lives on, including in the USSR itself, thanks to the heroism and courage of militants like Comrade I. Trotskyists fight against 'the forces of reaction and of the past' in the very country of the October Revolution.

What a tremendous encouragement it is that throughout the world, our organisations are in the forefront of the struggle, showing the way toward the emancipation of the working class, which will be achieved by the class itself. What a powerful call to action for us all.

Sixty-eight years ago, on the 25th October 1917, the Russian Revolution

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TROTSKY WITH YOUNG LEFT OPPOSITIONISTS IN THE RED ARMY

triumphed. A republic of workers and peasants was founded on the ruins of the hated Czarist empire. The workers and peasants government addressed themselves to people throughout the world, denouncing secret diplomacy used by the tyrants, stating before the working people of Russia and the whole world their intention: that they would do what they said they would do.

Today those who are in league with imperialism to impose their wishes on the masses, who seek to deny by violent means the right of Polish workers to form their own independent trade union organisations; those same people dare to put themselves forward as the 'heirs of October'.

But everyone knows that they are just Stalin's heirs, of those who inflicted terrible blows on the gains of the revolution, without being able to annihilate them altogether since they are unable to destroy the working class of the USSR.

The future does not belong to Stalin's heirs, to the representatives of a fundamentally counter-revolutionary layer. The future in the Soviet Union, as everywhere else, belongs to the workers. In the USSR, it belongs to the heirs of October, to the workers and peasants, of whom the most conscious expression is the Soviet section of the Fourth International.

Today we are very proud but also conscious of the seriousness of the tasks facing each one of us, each section, each member of the Fourth International. Our activity is determined by the movement of the working class and oppressed people developing in South Africa, Poland, Latin America and throughout Europe.

It is by the way of a call to struggle for victory that the emotive message from our Soviet comrades ends. We address this appeal to all sections of the International. Forward to victory, build the means for the victory of our class.

The first quarter of the century was irreversibly marked by the October Revolution. Despite the obstacles, the treachery, the struggle for the emancipation of the working class continues and is entering a new stage.

The end of the century will see and not only in the USSR, the accomplishment of the promise enshrined in the workers and peasants revolution. The workers of the world will rid the world of all exploitation and all oppression.

This is what Trotsky lived for, what he founded the Fourth International and for what he gave his life. This is the meaning of the struggle Comrade I was engaged in, along with the Soviet section and all sections of the Fourth International.

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# Statement from our Soviet Section

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"Comrades,  
It is with great sadness that the leadership of the Fourth International Group announces the death of Comrade I in Moscow, a man whose entire conscious life was devoted to the noble cause of the struggle of the working class for a future rid of oppression and exploitation.

I's premature death is an enormous blow to us. He was an astonishingly open and generous man. He put his untiring energy into everything he did, into the struggle, in supporting his comrades and friends, in helping young people to develop.

But above all, I was a genuine person, a personality in the deepest sense of the word. Born in the black period of Stalinism, his early experiences bound up with the bureaucracy, I found the courage to change his ideas and to become a true fighter against the 'partocracy'.

The ranks of the Trotskyists in the USSR have grown, continually welcoming new faces, among them many energetic personalities.

I was rightfully regarded as a leader of the struggle against the bureaucracy and remained so until the end of his life.

A talented teacher, he put all his energies into developing the new generation in a spirit of criticism, of independence and awareness of their role in society.

I was deeply attached to his own country, a partisan of the October Revolution, a cultured man. He had no time at all for those who sought to inculcate hatred and suspicion between peoples.

A fighter for his ideas, he never spared himself in the struggle against the forces of reaction and of the past. He lived for his ideals.

Those who knew him personally - the members of the Fourth International Group - grieve for him and we send our sincere condolences to his family, those close to him and his friends.

"The best tribute we can give to him is in the way we remember him.

We believe firmly in the unity of words and actions and in our victory."

# French Youth

On Thursday, 26th September, 20,000 young people, most on their first demonstration, responded to the call by UNEF-ID - the French Independent Students' Union - for a mass protest of the youth against apartheid.

The demonstration against the racist regime exposed the myth promoted by the media that young people are self-centred individualists and uninterested in politics.

The youth proved that their supposed indifference in fact expresses the rejection of a very particular type of politics: that of empty rhetoric and broken promises by people and parties that renege on their commitments. The youth reject political actions in defence of interests that they do not support.

The president of UNEF-ID, addressing the rally at the end of the march, pointed to the fact that many different organisations - including political groups, trade unions and human rights groups - had ensured the success of the demo by uniting and playing a full part in the preparations. He then went on to state his union's intention of building and strengthening this unity against apartheid.

It was clear that the French Communist Party - the PCF - sought to undermine this unity as they tried to organise a separate demonstration the very same day, starting an hour earlier than the UNEF-ID demo.

The inescapable conclusion is that thousands of young people rejected this divisive action by uniting in solidarity with the South African people against apartheid. Indeed dozens of militants from the youth section of the PCF - the MYCF - joined in the preparations and the march itself.

Some points can be drawn from this experience. In the demonstration in addition to the anger directed against the racist state, there was also considerable enthusiasm for the revolutionary struggle of the people - men, women and the youth - against apartheid.

This demonstration by thousands of the youth also represents a call for the most decisive action in France towards the building of an honest party that will not sell them short. The youth were also demonstrating for their own future.

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# Portuguese Election Campaign

The Workers Party of Socialist Unity, the POUS, Portuguese section of the Fourth International (ICR), put up 309 candidates throughout the country in October's parliamentary elections. Over 25 SP and CP militants participated as independents on the slate of the POUS. In an appeal issued during the election, they explained why:

"Like the majority of workers, we are revolted by what is taking place in the country. We declare that it is time to open the way to struggle for solutions for working people.

"Some of us are Socialist Party militants, others from the Communist Party. We all participated with renewed hope in the struggle and the vote of working people which two years ago defeated the Democratic Alliance (AD) and its parties which once again gave an absolute majority in Parliament to the Socialist and Communist Parties.

Today there are hundreds of thousands of workers and thousands of our comrades, many of whom get their wages late, many of whom are suffering unemployment. We have to ask the question: what did Mario Soares (SP leader) and Alvaro Cunhal (CP leader) do

with this majority which working people gave them?

The answer is painfully obvious.

Mario Soares, with the Socialist Party leadership, turned his back on the popular vote and immediately formed a government with the PSD, the chief party of the AD, to implement, against working people, the destructive policies of the right-wing.

As militants of the SP and CP, we cannot accept this. We may have different opinions, experiences and affiliations. But we agree with the POUS on the fact that it is time to open the way to independent struggle and solutions for workers, to an authentic workers party in this country and at the international level.

If we want a decent wage, work security, proper housing, guaranteed education and health for ourselves and our children, decent reforms, we must organise ourselves to obtain them by struggle.

If we want to defend ourselves and advances towards socialism, we must unite and regroup.

If we want a workers party which would really be our own, we must build it!"



# IV INTERNATIONAL

*International Centre of reconstruction*



LIFE OF THE SECTIONS

## Latin American Conference

Last June the second conference of the Latin American sections of the Fourth International (International Centre of Reconstruction) took place. The general report presented at this conference included an analysis which underpinned the central tasks today guiding the activity of the sections across the Latin American continent. In particular it was to organise a Latin American Conference, initiated by working people, on the foreign debt, against imperialism and for workers' parties and independent unions.

The continuation of activity in solidarity with Nicaragua and in defence of the Central American revolution also preoccupied the conference. The perspective was for a second Latin American Conference in solidarity with Nicaragua and the Central American peoples. The first conference which took place in Bogota in July 1983 marked an important step in the building of a movement in support of the Nicaraguans across the continent.

### POLITICAL PRISONERS

The discussion which took place also related to the concrete situation in a whole number of countries: Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador and the Antilles. Resolutions on the work of the sections in these countries were adopted.

In addition, particular discussions took place concerning campaigns on Poland and for the release of political prisoners in Argentina and Peru.

Following the discussion a resolution was adopted on developing international action for the release of Mario Firmenich, Obregon Cano and all Argentinian political prisoners, and for those responsible for the repression to be put on trial and punished with an expression of opposition to any amnesty for the military.

A manifesto on "The Rights of Man in Peru, for Liberty and Life" was also adopted.

The relevance of the resolutions adopted is founded on the features of the current period of the class struggle at the international level, and on the repercussions in Latin America of the 'turning point' in the world situation.

Indeed, the revolutionary upsurge at the world level is expressed in Latin America by the existence of a generalised revolutionary situation - even if its rhythms are different in the various countries. This upsurge is equally expressed in the formation of working class political and trade union organisations, which are independent of the control of bourgeois nationalism and the old communist or socialist parties.



Examples of this new process are the development of the Workers Party and the CUT (central trade union federation) in Brazil, the formation of the Workers Party in Peru, the independent existence of the Bolivian COB (central trade union federation), the strengthening of the workers' unions in Ecuador, Uruguay...and even Chile under Pinochet's dictatorship. This is in addition to the existence of guerrilla organisations in Central America, and above all that of the workers and peasants government of the FSLN in Nicaragua. Despite all kinds of pressure it leads a policy in defence of revolutionary gains.

So out of a struggle which is tending towards the regroupment of working class and anti-imperialist forces, it is possible and necessary to develop a positive orientation in a framework of class independence.

### SEARCH FOR REGROUPMENT

The national and international activity of all the sections of the Fourth International (ICR) is defined by the search for this regroupment. The construction of our sections can in no case go forward outside of and in opposition to this movement in search of and building for mass worker organisations - organisations which meet bitter opposition from the CPs dependent on the Kremlin, which unconditionally defend the existing regimes.

The activity of the Trotskyist organisations is fundamental to helping build these organisations. Today, all our sections in Latin America aim to take part in the forms that the masses are using to defend themselves against imperialism's attacks.

In Argentina we are fighting for whole sectors to overcome in a positive way the crisis of Peronism and advance towards an independent political regroupment.

In Ecuador, we are trying to orient towards a regroupment of independent trade unionists in the FUT the united trade union centre.

In Mexico, the Marxist Workers League is raising the question of joint discussion and intervention with the Workers' Revolutionary Party, in order to intervene in the crisis of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party, Mexico's governing party) and official unionism.

In the Antilles, the GTA (Trotskyist Group of the Antilles) is discussing its own insertion in the national liberation movement.

In Brazil and Peru, the Trotskyist are playing a large part in building and developing the Workers Parties, already founded in Brazil and on the point of being founded in Peru.

BY MIKE PEARCE