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EXPLANATORY NOTE

by Joseph Hansen

This bulletin consists of documents circulated in the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, during an internal discussion that began in December, 1969, in preparation for a conference scheduled for March, 1970.

The Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party considered the discussion to be of such interest as to warrant making at least the main contributions available for the information of the members of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole. The Political Committee therefore suggested to the United Secretariat that the two tendencies which had formed in the IMG be asked to select whatever documents of either side they considered to be of principal interest, and that these be published in the International Information Bulletin.

The United Secretariat, of course, had no objection to making the documents available as information to the members of the world Trotskyist movement, but pointed out that in many countries the Bulletin is called the International Discussion Bulletin and that to make the documents available there would imply opening an international discussion immediately on the subjects on dispute in the British section. To avoid this, the United Secretariat suggested that the IMG reprint the documents and make these available to other sections and sympathizing groups or parties, with the understanding that if this proved insufficient and the other sections or groups or parties wished to, they could reproduce the documents themselves for the information of their own members. When the discussion period opens in preparation for the next world congress of the Fourth International, the United Secretariat pointed out, any section can -- as in the case of discussions elsewhere in the Fourth International -- make any contributions it considers advisable on the subjects raised in the IMG discussion.

Accordingly, the Political Committee of the SWP has made a selection of the docu-

ments circulated in the IMG discussion for the information of members of the Socialist Workers Party.

A few editorial problems should be mentioned. Not all the bulletins of the IMG are numbered or dated. In some instances contributions were circulated to members without being included formally in a given bulletin. We have tried in these instances to follow a chronological order. In addition, various typographical errors crept into the roneoed (mimeographed) documents. Where these appeared obvious we took the liberty of correcting them, but without claiming to have caught all of them or to having avoided adding a few of our own. We hope that these will prove to be only incidental.

It is possible that some comrades in the IMG will feel that certain documents not appearing in this collection should have been included. We are quite agreeable to indicating these to the members of the SWP and to making them available as a supplement, if they are otherwise unobtainable and if the National Committee of the IMG considers that this would be advisable.

It should be noted that four documents, circulated in the IMG following the conference, have been included in this collection because of their obvious connection with the pre-conference discussion.

We repeat that this bulletin is not intended to open a discussion internally in the SWP. It is intended solely to help keep our members informed on developments inside the Fourth International. On the other hand, when the Fourth International itself opens an international discussion in preparation for the next world congress, the Political Committee of the SWP may then consider whether it wishes to voice its opinion on the topics raised in this discussion.

July 21, 1970

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION ON WEST EUROPEAN
PERSPECTIVES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE U.K.

By John Blair

Introduction

This document is the product of two extensive discussions in the National Committee, which accepted the general line of its argument. It is intended to lay the basis for discussion in the pre-Conference period. Comrades could usefully supplement it by reference to the following:

The Principal Lessons of Scarborough by Peter Petersen (1967)
Conference Documents on the Labour Party, 1968 and 1969
Report on the 1969 Summer Camp discussion on European Perspectives
The 1969 Labour Party Conference by T. Southall, Black Dwarf 24
Draft Document on our Tactics in Europe (referred from World Congress)

John Blair, 12.12.69.

1. The discussion on tactics in Europe is inextricably bound up for us with the discussion on our own immediate perspectives in Britain, and in particular with the turn we are making towards the attempt to build a revolutionary youth movement in this country. Although there are very clearly significant differences between the political experience of Trotskyists in different West European countries and the level of development of the working class and revolutionary movements, enough remains of common experience to enable a fruitful discussion to take place at this level. Inevitably however, our own contribution to this discussion and this report itself will, in the main, take up the particular problems of work in Britain with its very strong working class organisations but its very weak revolutionary traditions. It is to be hoped that after the forthcoming European conference, we shall be able to circulate material drawing in a more detailed fashion on the experiences of our comrades in other countries, from which many valuable lessons will undoubtedly emerge.

2. The discussion takes place within the general framework of perspectives worked out in the document 'The New Rise of World Revolution:'

a) Our economic perspective of a general slowdown in the rate of expansion of the imperialist economies with the real possibility of a generalised recession of these economies in the early 1970s.

b) The consequent likelihood of a sharp rise in the tempo of the class struggle, particularly in the face of incomes policies, redundancies, pressure for productivity agreements etc.

c) The continuing relative isolation of our forces in most countries from the organised working class movement and the hegemony of social democratic and/or stalinist organisations over the politics of the class.

d) On the other hand the fact that these economic difficulties of the capitalist economy, which will inevitably be reflected in attacks on the standard of living of the working class, will take place at the end of a long period during which these standards have progressively risen.

e) Therefore the combativity of the class is liable to be greater than eg. at the time of the 1929 slump which was preceded by a long period of stagnation and the defeat of the class in the General Strike and related struggles.

f) It takes place within the context of a series of post war successes for the world revolution, culminating in the recent period in the heroic actions of the Vietnamese against U.S. imperialism.

g) A world wide phenomenon is observable of a radicalisation of youth outside the framework of the traditional workers' parties. This is particularly noticeable in the advanced capitalist countries.

3. The question of our turn to youth work is being dealt with in other documents, and it is not proposed to deal with it in detail here. However, the key question which we have to try to answer is the relationship of this turn to our long term strategic goal of building the British revolutionary party. The European document continually and correctly stresses the essential truth that in the advanced imperialist countries this will not be done without the adherence of important sectors of the organised working class to revolutionary politics. Experience repeatedly reminds us that such a breakthrough is the key to putting revolution on the agenda: the French May 1968 revolutionary upsurge aborted by the French C.P.; the chronic crisis in Italy which contains the seeds of a pre-revolutionary situation but which is being stifled by the tradition workers' parties. In Britain the struggle against the incomes policy is being routed by the 'left' of the trade union bureaucracy and the C.P. (with the collapse of their Trade Union defence committees) into the old avenues of parliamentary action.

4. The experience of those organisations which call themselves revolutionary, but continually ignore these facts of life, is a negative example we should examine seriously. The S.L.L. could assemble 1,000 young people to demonstrate outside the Labour Party Conference, but it did not have one iota of influence on what went on inside the hall, and nor did the demonstration make any difference to this situation. In making the turn towards work which is primarily outside the structures of the organised Labour movement we should avoid making the same kind of mistake. We have constantly to re-emphasise that the very reason for our existence, for the creation of a youth movement etc., is to enable us to become a strong tendency in the politics of the class itself. The experience of the last few years shows that we cannot make the simple equation: disillusionment with social democracy = development of political militancy. It becomes crystal clear that only the conscious intervention of revolutionary marxists, capable of conducting the battle for the political destruction of the Labour Party will suffice.

5. The decisive question is the form this intervention is to take. The experience of the entry tactic is examined in detail in the European document. Its conclusion is that no-where did we succeed in the long term strategic goal of opening up a big left wing split in

the mass parties. The experience of the J.C.R. was in fact, in spite of its important consequences for our movement, a minor success set against the tasks we had set ourselves. The document is right however to stress the tasks we had set ourselves. The document is right however to stress that notwithstanding its relative failure, the entry tactic gave us a number of important dividends. We should of course also acknowledge that we tended perhaps, especially in Britain, to see the likelihood of a split in over-formal terms. Thus we knew that a Labour government would betray the working class and we assumed from this that a large number of people in the Labour movement would rapidly draw the same conclusion through the experiences of the 1964 Labour government. We underestimated the loyalty of the Labour Party to its leadership and the extent to which the traditional 'left' would capitulate; also the extent to which by giving the appearance of opposition, certain sections would actually serve as a "left arm" of capitalism.

6. While the failure of the long term perspective is to an extent due to factors of this kind, in the British case, the ultraleft behaviour of certain other tendencies definitely played a role in minimising the gains which were made. In particular the role of the S.L.L. and, to a lesser extent, I.S. at crucial stages in the development of the Labour Party Young Socialists, possibly aborted developments which could have been productive in the development of a revolutionary youth movement. So that while we cannot claim any startling successes for our entry work, this was primarily because it was conducted with tiny forces, and we should strenuously defend the method of analysis which led us to adopt this tactic and our own conduct in relation to that of other groups.

7. In the present period it would be clearly the utmost dogmatism to maintain this tactic in the manner of the R.S.L. -- an organisation which because of its purely 'national' perspective, totally failed to analyse recent developments in world capitalism and their implications. By burying themselves in the Labour Party they are assuring that they are quite unable to attract any of the newly radicalising layers of youth.

8. The present state of the Labour Party was well illustrated at the Brighton Conference (see article in Black Dwarf). The general picture which emerges is of a low level of political awareness and a sham left/right conflict. It is therefore difficult to imagine any real political struggles taking place in the Labour Party in the coming period. The advent of the election will enable the government to pull together the remaining ranks while the ineffectual leadership of the left trades union bureaucrats will continue to serve as a left cover for Wilson.

9. The decisive importance of our turn towards the building of a revolutionary youth movement consists precisely in the absence of any real political struggles inside the Labour Party. This situation favours the rise of ultraleft ideas and currents amongst the youth who want to see decisive blows struck against capitalism and imperialism in a period when the mood favourable to such struggles does not exist in the class itself. The urgency of our devising the means to draw large numbers of such youth to the politics of the I.M.G., is that we alone can offer the careful analysis of the realities

of British working class politics which can convince these youth of the importance of a carefully worked out strategy for the development of revolutionary parties, and avoid the dissipation of their energies, and ultimately of course their enthusiasm, on the mad cap projects of the Maoists, S.L.L. etc.

10. The question of the coming election poses a very real problem for our organisation which must be solved in a very short period of time. We have to start from the position that we can have no influence whatsoever on the result. Anything we say or do will, on the whole, be in the nature of propaganda amongst the vanguard. This said however, we must also stress that we do have an interest in the outcome. It has been argued that the Labour Party can now be characterised as a bourgeois party because its active membership is predominantly middle class and its leadership accurately reflects the interests of the progressive wing of the ruling class. Such an analysis would be as superficial as that which calls the workers' states 'state capitalist' on the basis of a superficial examination of their structures. As long as the connection with the Trades Union movement lasts -- and for the meantime it appears likely to, since the union bureaucracy have concluded from their triumph over the "In Place of Strife" proposals that they can hope to have some influence over the activities of the leadership -- there always exists the possibility of working class struggles being reflected in the ranks of the Party. The last few years have seen a lessening of delegates to the G.M.C.s, but this has been a question of attendance rather than allegiance: large numbers of active trade unionists maintain their Labour Party cards. In the event of a return to a Tory government pledged to penal legislation against the Trades Unions, perhaps a big convulsion at the top of the party and the emergence of a leadership which would demagogically oppose such measures, it might be possible that these people and others came flocking back. It would be quite suicidal therefore to dig a chasm between ourselves and a whole layer of Trades Union militants, by a premature writing-off of this organisation.

11. If we maintain the position that the Labour Party still retains its fundamentally working class character, then we cannot adopt the same attitude towards it as our German comrades have towards the S.P.D. A smashing defeat for the Labour Party would represent a setback for the British working class movement which could as easily open the way for a right wing turn as a left one. It would moreover be a mystifying experience for the class because it would enable the Labour leadership once again to pose as a real opposition to Tory policies and win back at least a part of their previous support on this basis. We have a direct interest in keeping the Labour Party in power because the working class will learn infinitely more from their actions in Government about the rotten nature of social democracy and the need for a revolutionary alternative. The contradiction between the working class base of the party and the capitalist politics of its leadership which we have to exploit, is seen most nakedly in this context. On this theme it should be acknowledged that one of our past mistakes was to underestimate the length of time it will take in the British situation for this lesson to be learned.

12. It has been argued that, because a catastrophic defeat for the Party would undoubtedly open up very big conflicts within the leadership, and would almost certainly bring about an increase in the combativity of the Unions who would be more willing to challenge a Tory than a Labour government, this would provide a more favourable situation for intervention by revolutionaries. In the short term this is quite correct. But it ignores the long-term problem of the creation of an alternative. It is doubtful, to say the least, that we would have the forces in such a situation to make a really decisive intervention, particularly in view of the ultraleft position of other organisations who would be most unlikely to make such a turn. And, as we have constantly reiterated, an eclipse of the Party which was not accompanied by the emergence of a really viable alternative, would be a tremendous setback for the movement.

13. Our propaganda at election time should seek to place our critical support to the Labour Party within the context of this kind of analysis, which must of course be considerably developed and clarified before then. In other words, we should adopt Lenin's maxim and state quite clearly that we support the Labour Party as the rope supports a hanging man. We should see the election primarily as the time when we can develop within the left our particular appreciation of the situation in the Labour movement and its importance. But since our main work at this time will still be in the youth and anti-imperialist fields, we should also engage selectively in concrete action around the election -- the continual harassment of Government spokesmen and also and more important, of 'left' M.P.s. The election offers us the opportunity to present, perhaps through the Week, an "extra-parliamentary programme." The question of parliamentary candidates requires considerable further analysis and discussion. It should be dealt with very carefully and seen in the light of our analysis of how to build a revolutionary party in Britain. Thus the ideal situation for such a candidacy would be where some sections of the local Labour movement were prepared to disavow the Labour Party candidate in favour of a revolutionary candidate. Another consideration is that we still remain very much in a cadre-building stage in which our main work remains that of carrying on the struggle for hegemony of the vanguard forces. Our intervention should therefore be on a realistic, not over ambitious scale and should be designed primarily to assist in this process.

14. To make a prediction about the outcome of the election is difficult and indeed pointless. The precise attitude taken by the bourgeoisie in Britain towards the coming election, and specifically towards the Labour Party, is an extremely complex question. In the first place, this question cannot be treated mechanically as if some central committee of the bourgeoisie determined the attitude of the whole class. While it is possible therefore to say that the Labour Government is working in the general interests of the bourgeoisie, it is clear that some sections will always prefer a Tory government. The value of the Labour Party to the capitalist class lies in its capacity to act as a reformist muzzle for the working class and in certain periods, such as 1964 onwards, to impose measures like the incomes policy, whose imposition by a Tory government would create infinitely more problems.

15. But recently contradictions have been revealed in this process. These stem basically from the contradictory position of the bureaucracies of the Labour movement, the analysis of which has been one of the particular contributions of our own movement to marxist theory. For while the leadership of the social democratic parties

invariably follow capitalist policies, they can never over a long period become totally identified with and integrated into the capitalist state without rapidly losing their capacity to manipulate their working class base. Hence the phenomenon, which recurs with great regularity, of such organisations making a seemingly 'left' turn. It is in this context that we should analyse the recent concession made by the Wilson government to the pressure on it to withdraw certain proposals in the White Paper 'In Place of Strife,' proposals which undoubtedly had the support of the overwhelming majority of the capitalist class. This concession was a necessity for them to maintain their credibility with the Labour movement and particularly to prevent an open rupture with the Trade Union bureaucracy. But despite this, the early autumn of this year saw a sustained campaign by the capitalist media to inflate the Labour Party's electoral prospects. Whether this is explained by a real desire on the part of important sections of the bourgeoisie to keep Labour in power, or whether it stems from a fear that a resounding defeat for the Labour Party will reduce the credibility of the two party system and perhaps produce a more militant opposition to Tory policies is a question for speculation. But the point is made here to illustrate the very complex nature of this question, for which no simple answer can be found.

16. The other imponderable involved in such calculations involves the crucially important issue of the economic situation at the time of the election. One or two very recent indications have shown that this may not develop, in the short term, quite as unfavourably for capitalism, as we have tended to assume. If this is the case, the Labour revival which, in the wake of the Wellingborough and Louth by-elections appears so unlikely, could become something of a reality.

17. Our organisation needs to have a number of contingency plans to deal with our work in the post-election period. It is not possible here to set these out in any detail, and they should be the subject of further discussions in the period leading up to Conference. However, we should certainly be prepared to deal with these situations:

a) A narrow win by the Labour Party which would be unlikely to call for any immediate sharp changes of line

b) A narrow victory for the Tory Party with a relatively confident Labour opposition

c) A resounding victory for the Tories with the consequent possibility of upheavals within the Labour Party, perhaps with the advent of a new leadership. This last variant probably requires the most discussion since it is the most likely under which we might have to consider once again committing some of our comrades to consistent entry work. But at the same time it is the variant under which the existence of a point of polarisation outside the Labour Party and around a revolutionary youth movement, might be of crucial importance.

18. In conclusion, we should emphasise that it is not possible to lay down, in a precise fashion, the line of our tactics for the next few years. In relation to the youth movement for instance, we do not yet know what are the precise struggles in which our comrades of the youth fraction will intervene in order to put on the flesh which will be necessary before we can think of launching an autonomous youth organisation. Nor can we predict with any accuracy the outcome of the election which will be

which will be of decisive importance with regard to the situation inside the Labour Party. But we can arrive at some general conclusions:

a) The entry tactic as hitherto practised is redundant. We are now in a period in which it will be possible to win large numbers of youth directly to the banner of the International.

b) Tendencies amongst the working class -- especially the most recent rise of militancy in hitherto dormant and frequently unorganised layers, indicate that the question may soon be posed of the possibility of independent interventions in this field which by-pass the structures of the organised Labour movement.

c) Therefore there exists the possibility in the future of influencing developments within the organised Labour movement in a new way. ie. by the creation of a developing pole of attraction outside of its structures.

19. Such a perspective is only dealt with here in the most general fashion, and a number of notes of caution have to be added. If in the period of our entry work, the danger which constantly faced us was that of opportunist adaption, so in the coming period the main danger will be that of ultraleftism. To combat this we should:

a) Organise our Trade Union work at a much

higher level than hitherto. This question should be the subject of other detailed documents and discussion in the pre-Conference period.

b) Ensure that our internal educational work continues to tackle the question of developments in the Labour Party and to analyse the experience of the entry tactic, its different forms etc. in a British and international context.

c) Constantly propagandise in the vanguard for our particular conception of the development of a revolutionary party and defend our 'entrism orientation.'

Second, we should avoid the danger of over-generalising from those trends which we discern. For instance while there is a substantial layer of radicalised youth, only a minority of youth are as yet in this position. While thousands of women workers are becoming more militant, millions remain conservative and unorganised. While some workers are disillusioned with the Labour Party, millions will vote for it in the next elections. etc.

20. If we can avoid these dangers, maintain a flexible attitude towards the Labour movement and make real steps towards building a viable revolutionary youth organisation, there is every chance that our organisation can take full advantage of the opening of this new era for revolutionary politics in Western Europe.

by Tony Roberts and Connie Harris

The following letters were submitted to International in response to the second installment of Bob Purdie's article "For a Free Debate on Trotskyism and Revisionism" in the October 1969 issue of International. The Political Committee decided that the two letters should not be published in International and upon the recommendation from the Political Committee the December 6 and 7 National Committee meeting decided to include the letters in an Internal Bulletin.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM - Tony Roberts

In last month's International, Bob takes the SLL to task for their 'contortions' in avoiding debate with the YCL. But this is another matter. In his polemic, Bob goes on to make a critique of the present stage reached by the 'communist bloc.'

Much of this is valid, necessary and unavoidable. Since the war, the Stalinist monolith has been rent by internal crises, and it is only on the basis of these developments, as Bob stresses, that a proper analysis can begin. (The recent split in the CP on the invasion of Czechoslovakia only adds relevance to the point).

But in his analysis Bob seems rather confused as to what exactly is the political significance of these crises -- a confusion reflected in his use of terminology. He agrees that 'Stalinist' retains its validity as a term --

"denoting the basic social nature of the bureaucratic caste in the workers' states, the political roots of the CP's, and the theoretical heritage from which none of them have as yet broken ..." (emphasis added)

a definition I would wholeheartedly agree with. In the next sentence, however, he calmly proceeds to contradict this evaluation by talk of the communist bloc's 'new dominant feature,' needing an entirely new terminology (e.g. Krushev apparatus).

Juggling apart, it would seem a difficult feat of logic to reconcile the two. Either the communist bloc hasn't broken though its "theoretical heritage" -- whereby 'Stalinist' remains the only comprehensive definition. Or it has -- whereby an entirely new terminology is indeed required to reflect the new political role (or roles) of the movement. Bob would seem to be sitting on both ends of the seesaw at the same time. His analysis is thus flawed by a central contradiction.

'Scientific'

The crux of the matter stems -- as he himself points out -- from the use of the word 'scientific.' For Marxists, scientific definitions are scientific precisely because they bring out the political role of social forces and do not limit themselves to surface descriptions. In this sense, 'Stalinist' is indeed a precise, scientific term because it defines not a case of paranoia but the political role of a social force (the bureaucracy and its adjuncts).

If Bob believes that it is no longer 'useful': if he believes, for example, the term Krushev apparatus is scientifically necessary, then he is saying that the political role of the Kremlin has changed in a qualitative way. I am not so sure that the peoples of Hungary and Czechoslovakia would agree.

I do not believe that Bob means this. But this only goes to show that terminology in politics is a very precise matter and that muddled terms can be very dangerous. 'Stalinist' remains a scientific definition because, despite the very grave fissures inside the communist bloc, no tendency has as yet been able to wriggle out of its "theoretical heritage." Indeed, as far as the workers' states are concerned, such a breakthrough could only come with the destruction of the social base which incarnates that heritage: the bureaucracy itself.

'Diversification?'

As evidence of the new 'political diversification,' Bob cites the Czech and Russian CPs on the eve of the invasion and asks: 'Does it (Stalinist) explain to us the differences?'

One would equally ask: does 'social-democrat' explain the difference between, say, Harold Wilson and Hugh Scanlon during the battle over 'In Place of Strife' -- in which Wilson was willing to imprison strikers? Of course not.

What it does do is set the source and limits of the conflict -- exactly as 'Stalinism' does for the Moscow-Peking rift today or the Tito-Stalin struggle in the late '40's. There are very severe differences -- which we do not ignore, which we analyse and act upon -- reflect different reactions to a changing situation within the political framework inherited from the past. Indeed, it is this heritage which is the source of the conflicts.

You have to see the wood before you can count the trees. If all Bob is trying to stress is the need to come to grips with the new trends within the communist bloc, no one could disagree. That is a fact. But if -- as it would seem -- he is saying that these 'present manifestations' mark a distinct break with the past (hence the new terminology) this is an entirely different matter. That was the essence of Krushev's speech when he defined the Stalinist era as the quirks of one man happily dead and buried ...

CPs in the West

In recent years, the Western Communist Parties have received some severe jolts which have, on occasional issues, resulted in opposition to the Kremlin. Such developments are very important in deciding our orientation towards these parties.

But it would be inaccurate to overstress the 'fragmentation' and 'diversification' which these jolts have had. Nowhere have they called into question the basic orientation of CP's in the west, noticeable since Stalin's day, of an increasing rapprochement with social democracy. Indeed, on the question of Czechoslovakia, those who condemned the invasion are those who wish a still closer liason with the social democrats: that is, those who are pushing the original Stalinist orientation to its logical conclusion, at a faster pace than suits others, and who feel slightly embarrassed at the grosser elements of their mentors' actions.

This is not to say -- let it be quite clear -- that very many rank-and-file CPers were not outraged at this violation of national independence, for healthy reasons. But it only goes to show that such people are going to be won for

socialist policies only in a struggle against Stalinism and by a persistent explanation of what it is and where it leads. For this reason, pretending it doesn't exist -- an 'old debate' -- only does disservice to such people, and the thousands of young radicals coming into politics for the first time. The SDS experience in the United States is ample proof of where such ideas lead.

From a confusion in terminology can flow precisely such a danger.

Such indeed is the role of Monty Johnstone -- representing a tendency very adept at renouncing the embarrassing but secondary elements of his movement's history (e.g. purge trials) -- very adept at defending the essential aspects of Stalinism (Socialism in one country).

* * *

Letter to the Editor, International, from Connie Harris, October 1969

Bob Purdie, in his article in the October issue of International, "For a Free Debate on Trotskyism and Revisionism" maintains that "Stalinism" as a term denoting the basic social nature of the bureaucratic caste in the workers' states, the political roots of the CPs, and the theoretical heritage from which none of them has as yet broken, retains its validity." With this statement I am in complete agreement. However I find myself unable to agree with Bob that the term 'stalinist' has lost its usefulness in the contemporary world.

From the point of view of Marxism, 'stalinism' has a precise and scientific meaning. It is an international phenomenon expressed through the bureaucracies of the workers' states and the Communist Parties throughout the world. It defines a bureaucracy that is both nationalistic and counter-revolutionary but with different social roots from the bureaucracies in the trades union and labour movements of social democracy. In order to develop workers democracy the bureaucracies will have to be overthrown by a political revolution.

According to this criteria, the bureaucracies of the degenerated workers' states remain fundamentally Stalinist, even though they may also be labelled Titoist, Krushevist, Maoist, etc. Likewise the bureaucracies of the European C.P.s are as 'Stalinist' today as when Trotsky defined them as such in the 1930's. They may have differences with Moscow on some questions

but these differences do not invalidate the fact that they all derive from the same political ideology -- Stalinism. We can expect that these differences will increase as the bureaucracies bend in different ways to the pressures of the deepening crisis of capitalism. Their social reformist character will bring them more and more in conflict with the revolutionary forces.

It is true to say that Stalinism expresses itself in a variety of forms, and so does capitalism. Is it not true to say that the forms of governments in Greece and Britain, for instance, are different, but that they both have their political roots in the ideology of capitalism? Furthermore, that they represent two different forms of expression of this ideology today? The invasion of Czechoslovakia alone shows that the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism in the Soviet Union exists today as before.

I agree with Bob, that there is little advantage that, before we can exchange ideas with others on the question of Stalinism, we first insist on the acceptance of our definition of Stalinism. That would presuppose that the debate had been won before it had begun. It is precisely because "amongst wide layers of new forces on the left and dissident elements in the CP's the term Stalinist has taken on quite a different meaning from that traditionally used by Trotskyists," that we have to explain very clearly that Stalinism has as precise and scientific a meaning today as when Trotsky used it.

If we fail to do this we will not help to clarify the political confusion of those rank and file members of the CP's who are questioning the lack of revolutionary action of their own parties and are opposed to the bureaucratic action of their own leaderships and those of the degenerated workers' states. Without political clarity on the exact nature and character of Stalinism today, and an understanding that the distortions of the workers' states and of the communist parties are inherent in Stalinism how will the revolutionary forces come to understand the need for political revolution and consciously help to achieve this?

It is a question of tactics as to how we conduct our debates and discussions with members of the communist parties. Let us not allow tactics to lead us to distort some basic revolutionary concepts.

Fraternally,
Connie Harris

PAPERS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A YOUTH ORGANISATION

- 1) Resolution on Youth Organisation by Herb
- 2) Some Notes on the Development of a Youth Organisation by Chan Singh

The following resolution is a re-draft of a resolution presented to the December 6-7 National Committee meeting. The general line was adopted and what appears below is a re-draft in the light of the discussion, submitted as a contribution to the IMG pre-conference discussion.

1) At present and for some time to come IMG will remain a pole of attraction for the Vanguard largely at the propaganda level. At all times youth tends to be most open to revolutionary ideas and most willing to struggle. Therefore we always pay special attention to youth as a major source of recruitment.

2) But at the present juncture youth work may have not merely a quantitative importance in relation to our efforts to influence the workers' vanguard but a strategic role in building an alternative leadership. The radicalisation of youth outside the framework of the traditional parties, presents the possibility of building a Marxist cadre out of the struggles of revolutionary youth. Insofar as the youth are able to act as a new vanguard for the workers movement -- capable of mass mobilisation, political initiative and organisation, of challenging bourgeois power independently of the traditional organisations -- we should alter our entrust orientation and develop an orientation to youth as the main axis of our work.

3) In Britain the youth radicalisation has proceeded outside the traditional workers' organisations but has been less deep than elsewhere and although the youth 'movements' are much broader than the confines of the existing splinter groups, these organisations have a stronger hold over the rising youth movements than in the case of many other countries. Thus the phenomenon of a new youth vanguard counterposed to the old workers' Vanguard is at present less evident in Britain than elsewhere.

4) The strength of the splinter groups in relation to the youth movements, means that a youth organisation will either reproduce the divisions within the splinter groups or it must differentiate itself from the various splinter groups by possessing the full ideological definition of the IMG.

5) A youth organisation cannot be seen as the sole and adequate road to the building of a revolutionary party or even of a working class cadre. In fact the presence of a youth organisation should free the IMG from the danger of adapting itself to the youth milieu in such a way as to dilute its organisational principles or limit its efforts to gain influence or implant itself within the working class movement. The creation of a youth organisation should be accompanied by a more systematic effort to work within the organised labour movement.

6) A youth organisation will achieve successes only insofar as it is able to transcend the limits of theoretical debates imposed on their youth movements by their splinter groups and develop a concrete analysis and programme for the youth. The guarantee of political homogeneity and unity in working out a political line must be furnished by the IMG itself through its cadres in the youth organisation.

7) In the present period the youth organisation cannot expect to win the best elements among youth propagandistically but only by combining ideological clarity with a real political practice. This

requires an extensive implantation within a determined milieu and an effective national and local leadership.

8) A vanguard youth movement, if it is to be able to lead youth in struggle must have a life of its own and cannot be 'subservient' to the IMG. We want to build a vanguard youth movement that is in agreement with the political programme of the IMG and the Fourth International. In that sense it will be politically homogeneous with the IMG and at the same time organisationally autonomous, -- holding its own congresses, making its own decisions and electing its own leadership. Its relationship to the IMG should be one of fraternal collaboration. Although members of the IMG in the youth group will be under the discipline of the IMG the day to day relationship between the organisations must be on the basis of fraternal collaboration for which there are no hard and fast formulas.

* * *

Preconditions for youth organisation:

1) In a number of localities our cadres must be able to take political initiatives in their own name and to demonstrate their presence as a political force.

2) We must possess a youth journal which appears regularly.

3) We must possess a national leadership which can function effectively. If these conditions are not fulfilled, duplication of structures will have small political returns and will tend to over-stress the embryonic youth organisation and/or the IMG.

Immediate tasks:

1) Our main sector of intervention should remain within the education system except in those localities where we have roots predominately among young workers. In education our main emphasis must remain in higher education.

2) We should concentrate in building strong local bases in three broad geographical areas, Scotland; Midlands; and London.

3) In the articulation of our organisational work we should concentrate on: a) Developing a cadre able to polemicise with other tendencies and put forward our total programme. b) An aggressive recruitment policy. The main instruments for both these tasks should be: red forum/week circles, the journal, local schools, a speakers list on which comrades can draw. c) Seeking to take political initiatives which will enable us to draw new forces toward us in the course of educational campaigns.

4) We should continue to strengthen the NYCC paying particular attention to finances.

* * *

Some Notes on the Development of a Youth Organization -- Chan Singh

1. The way our orientation to youth is developed will have important effects on our work over a long period. The pre-conference discussion is therefore extremely important, as mistakes made will be serious ones in their long term effects.

2. What are the reasons for having a youth section. It is worth beginning by eliminating false reasons. It is not the case that youth as a whole is a specially deprived sector -- it is not as a whole more deprived than the rest of the population. Some sectors of youth are deprived, but because of their particular sectional position -- e.g. students, school students, apprentices. Thus calls for, for example "student power" are meaningful in a way that a call for Youth Power would not be. Our own organisation should be big enough to bridge any generation gap, and something would be seriously wrong with it if young comrades felt that they wanted to work in a separate organisation for youth alone. There is therefore, unless such faults do exist in our organisation, no reason to build a parallel organisation to the IMG.

What are the positive reasons for having a youth organisation? If young people are divided sectionally, as is the rest of the population, is there anything that might be considered a uniting factor? I think such a factor is in the main one of mood. Because of the generation gap, deriving in part from rapid social change (see the excellent analysis in the first section of the Worldwide Radicalisation of Youth document for the Ninth World Congress) the social consciousness of youth is potentially more flexible than that of many older people. For various reasons, I think this is particularly true in Britain. There are therefore potentialities for bringing wider groups of people more quickly round a general revolutionary political line, organising them for more militant actions, among youth than among older age groups.

It follows from this that an organisation can be created on an IMG political programme, dominated by young IMG members, but covering a much wider group. Such an organisation would aim for an accelerated development of political and organisational consciousness, as well as by leading radical and imaginative types of political action.

Further, from such an organisation, the best comrades could quickly be absorbed into the adult group (where appropriate their main field of work could continue to be the youth field) thus enabling the more rapid increase in size in the IMG, which is very urgent. (I contrast this with our attitude to VSC, where, because of the correct understanding of the paramount importance of building a campaign of solidarity, who tended to be hesitant about recruitment. Since the reasons for developing a youth organisation are different, the attitude to recruitment can be, too.

3. If the above analysis is correct, the type of organisation we should try to develop follows logically. It should be autonomous in organisation, since the mood of youth would be to reject any organisation which they don't control, but the links with IMG should be constantly stressed. Within this autonomy, the IMG members would be in a dominant position, both by reason of having organised the group, and by their superior organisational and political consciousness. This will ensure that new members of the youth group turn to them for a lead. If all possible comrades are not recruited to IMG the very moment they are judged ready, the organisation will inevitably as it increases in size, grow away from the parent group. Thus, our comrades should meet regularly as the IMG youth fraction, and discuss tactics within the youth organisation. Youth groups should only be established if IMG members are in the area, and the youth fraction should be under the overall control and direction of IMG. In this sort of organisation it would be very unusual for

non IMG members to be put on IMG internal sections since if they were ready for this, they would presumably be ready for membership.

Summary of this section.

While having organisational autonomy, the youth organisation would not be parallel, but subordinate to the IMG, in that the overall political level of the members would be distinctly lower. As the level of an individual young radical rose, he would be immediately recruited to the IMG. It would be a focus of accelerated political education, of militant imaginative actions and a source of recruitment.

4. Orientation to sections within youth. This important problem needs a separate document. On the one hand there is a desperate gap in our organisation in terms of industrial work, and attractiveness to working class militants. So the youth organisation could be directed towards young workers as the Rouge Circles have been in France very successfully. On the other hand, recognizing the weakness in Britain in comparison with France, it may be necessary to get a bigger base among students first. It should be noted however that in this locality there is a very determined move by radical students to do work in the industrial field. They will not accept an organisation which emphasizes internal work in the university or work on international issues before work in industry. If this feeling is more general, or on the increase, its implications must be met or we shall not be successful.

5. Written material. If the above analysis in terms of mood is correct it follows logically that the Week should be the general paper for attraction and sale by the youth group. It has been successful because in its imaginativeness and design breakthrough it has met, and helped to develop the aspirations of radical youth. If the youth group is established, a whole section should be devoted to it, possibly written by it. The Marxist youth journal should be mainly internal, cadre developing organ, but may be attractive to some groups, especially university students.

6. The Youth Organisation and Other Organisations. It follows from the arguments in this document that the IMG, as the uniting revolutionary organisation should have absolute priority for development in new areas. The means will vary according to locality and opportunity. e.g. Week circles, Red forums, T.U. defence committees, Socialist societies. When an IMG branch is established and efficiently functioning, a youth organisation can be set up. Then some organisations could simply be turned into youth sections (e.g. Week circles, which are likely to be composed mainly of young people). This will be easier if the Week has a Youth section. Organisations not controlled by us can either be abandoned, or used to recruit to the youth section where we are not powerful enough to get rid of them.

7. Conclusion. Our youth organisation should therefore neither seek to be an umbrella organisation for all radical youth, which we could not control, nor a parallel organisation to the IMG, which would be superfluous unless the IMG itself is inadequate. A programmatic agreement without complete political understanding, and a willingness to be active in action should be the basis of recruitment to an organisation dominated by the superior organizational and political ability of its IMG members.

August 12, 1969

by David Cameron

Introduction

This discussion document is submitted as a contribution to the pre-conference discussion in the Group. Although it deals specifically with our perspective of working towards the creation of a revolutionary youth organisation, it inevitably touches on other aspects of our work. This is especially the case because I have chosen to concentrate on trying to situate our youth perspectives in the context of our general political strategy and on raising some of the questions which I do not feel have been adequately discussed so far. There remains the other task, which I have only tackled in general terms -- that is, the need to make a concrete analysis of youth radicalisation in Britain, the British student movement, and so on. That would require a separate document (or series of documents) which it must be the responsibility of the youth comrades to prepare.

David Cameron 10/1/70

1. The first essential when considering our youth work is to view it as an integral part of our overall political strategy. In the coming period this must be to create a revolutionary pole to the left of the Labour and Communist parties. This means working towards the creation of an organisation which is independent of the existing structures of the British Labour movement, but which can have an effect on them through its direct intervention in the struggles of the working class. The task which is posed before us is how to make the transition from the Group as it is at present, essentially an ideological vanguard, to the creation of an organisation which can increasingly act as a political vanguard -- which can demonstrate in action the relevance of our programme and win forces on that basis.

2. Our immediate problem is the assembling of the forces necessary to create such a vanguard political organisation. Where will these forces come from? To a limited extent they will come from the work the Group carries out in relation to the worker's movement -- work which is no longer basically enterist, so that our intervention is mediated through the existing structures, but which is oriented towards the developing struggles of the working class. Such work should be increasingly possible and profitable in the coming period, through the T.U. Defence Committees, the Workers' Control movement, "Bullseye," and so on. But this work can only enlarge our cadre force of worker militants (or rather create one) without seriously challenging the reformist-Stalinist hold over the labour movement. Our analysis of the world-wide radicalisation of youth indicates to us that it is from the "new youth vanguard" that an important part of the cadres for a vanguard organisation of the working class will come. And in this sector it is not just a case of being able to win a numerically strong cadre force (although that can and must be done) but of also having the possibility of winning the political leadership of a whole social layer which has largely broken free of Social Democracy and Stalinism. The student and youth movement in Britain, at present extremely fragmented and lacking direction could, under a serious revolutionary leadership with a clear political perspective, become a real political force. It could initiate actions which would influence the most advanced elements of the working class away from Social Democracy and Stalinism, and greatly accelerate the process of creating a nascent revolutionary alternative.

3. The aim of our youth work, therefore, must be not just to win cadres to Trotskyism, but to do it in the course of struggling for and winning the leadership of the revolutionary student and youth movement. It is scarcely necessary to point out that this movement is much less advanced than in a number of other countries and is at present in a period of comparative recession. But if we are able to strengthen our cadre force and demonstrate our capacity to lead even small actions in this period, we can be presented with great opportunities in a period of revival for the movement. We are confronted, moreover, with something very close to a vacuum of leadership. As regards the youth organisations of the Labour and Communist parties, not only does radicalisation of the youth no longer take place via their structures, but they have, in the case of the Y.C.L., very little, and of the L.P.Y.S., almost no influence among radicalised youth. The S.L.L. and I.S. also have only marginal, and probably declining, influence. The incipient spontaneist tendencies present in R.S.S.F. have receded along with the movement, but will undoubtedly come to the fore in any new rise of the student movement. But there are at present very many militants around the movement, no longer carried along on the crest of such a mass movement as existed in October 1968, but engaged in small-scale actions and propaganda work. These militants exist everywhere. Many of them are looking for an effective organisation and a coherent political analysis. It is these comrades, predominantly students, but including a not insignificant number of young workers, whom we must win, and who can win for us the leadership of the revolutionary youth in Britain.

4. We have to win these youth to the Fourth International -- but how? To a certain extent, of course, we will win them by convincing them ideologically. The effectiveness of our theoretical analysis should not be underestimated, particularly in relation to youth who have some acquaintance with the other political tendencies on the left. We should miss no opportunity of taking on these tendencies in political debate and trouncing them. But this is insufficient. Essentially we must convince the youth that the Fourth International has more to offer than fine principles and impressive political argument. Generally speaking, it is not our capacity to analyse phenomena that is in question -- it is whether we are an effective revolutionary organisation, whether we can actually lead struggles -- whether in fact we can put our ideas into practice. It is worth recalling that in the field in which we were able to do this in the past -- the Vietnam solidarity movement -- is the source of much of our political credit today, won us many cadres, and established us a credible political organisation. What we did then in that one sector we must now do on a much wider scale. We must, in all the sectors in which youth are engaged in struggle, be able to give leadership which can advance these struggles -- in the universities, in the secondary schools, in the anti-imperialist movement, among young workers. It is by thus translating our theory into revolutionary practice that we will win the leadership of the youth.

5. What do we have to do in order to win the leadership of the revolutionary youth? We have to develop programmes for the various sectors, give our cadres a thorough Marxist education, and plan carefully our intervention in national and local struggles in order to be able to win

hegemony. Is the IMG, as an organisation, capable of carrying out these tasks? To answer this question in the negative is not to question the correctness of the Group's politics. It is simply to recognise the limitations of a small group. The IMG has very broad responsibilities as a section of the Fourth International, despite its small size. It has to defend in ideological battle the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. It has to make a continuing analysis of the contradictions of British capitalism. It has to maintain an orientation towards the workers' movement, and seek to win cadres there, even if this work brings only modest gains at present. It has to develop its work on the Irish question. And in addition to all this it has as a priority, the task of seeking to win the leadership of the revolutionary youth, and to win the best elements to the Fourth International. The size of this task, along with the fact that the youth movement has a dynamic of its own, and develops outside the labour movement, is the basis for the creation of a youth organisation. Such an organisation will have to devote its whole attention to analysing the dynamics of the youth milieu, to elaborating programmes which can enable us to intervene and win cadres, and to educating these cadres in Marxist theory. It will have to compete with other political tendencies for hegemony among the youth vanguard.

6 Given the strategic aim of winning hegemony in the youth vanguard, the necessity of creating a separate organisation to pursue this objective stems, therefore, from:

a) The desirability of creating an organisation which can devote its whole attention to operating within the youth milieu and making the necessary analyses to enable effective intervention.

b) The effect which this will have in freeing the Group to a certain extent from preoccupation with organisational and tactical aspects of youth work, thus enabling it to devote more attention to other fields of work.

Consequently, what type of youth organisation must we create?

a) It must be of a high political level, a cadre organisation, if it is to be able to develop the kind of cadres necessary to win political leadership among the vanguard youth. Membership of it must be based on an understanding of the politics of revolutionary Marxism, of the programme of the Fourth International, and on a high level of political commitment.

b) It must, while resting on the same political basis as the Group, be autonomous in its organisation, and in such matters as the working out of tactics, allocation of fields of work, recruitment, etc.

What we must create is in fact a vanguard youth organisation, which is politically homogeneous with IMG, but at the same time an integral part of the youth and student movement, which regroups the best elements of the vanguard youth on the basis of its actions and programmes, and seeks to play a role of leadership.

7 What, therefore, will be the relationship between the Group and the youth organisation? Essentially the latter is an instrument created by the Group to fulfill a particular function. It cannot be seen as having the relationship to the Group which communist youth organisations, in third, and, till recently, the Fourth International have had to their "parent" parties. Basically these organisations were peripheral to the revolutionary party, subsidiary to it, having no

dynamic of their own, though organisationally autonomous. They were a means of training raw youth to a level where they could join the revolutionary party. In Britain, there is no revolutionary party, and IMG cannot substitute for one (and has never tried to do so). It views itself as one of the components of the revolutionary party of the future. The youth organisation will be another component. It must be seen, therefore, not as the youth group of IMG, but as a vanguard organisation among the youth in political solidarity with it -- playing a role which is complementary to that of the Group. The best example so far of a vanguard youth organisation operating in this way is that of the JCR in France.

8. The key problem in the relationship between the Group and the youth organisation is to combine political homogeneity with organisational autonomy and tactical flexibility. Political homogeneity must be assured primarily at the level of the national conferences and leading committees of the organisations. This means not just ensuring that such homogeneity exists on an abstract, theoretical plane but that in actual practice the two organisations carry out different parts of the overall political strategy of the Group. Having said that, the youth organisation must be allowed the maximum freedom on tactical and organisational questions, bearing in mind that the line between strategy and tactics is frequently a fine one. There is no ready made formula to avoid the problems which will arise here. At a local level, the closest cooperation between the two organisations is absolutely necessary -- facilitated, as at national level, by a considerable overlap of personnel. Particularly at this level of day-to-day politics, it would be absolutely illusory to imagine there will be no problems, no friction. The problems will arise in life, and will be solved in life. On the part of the comrades of the Group who will be working the youth organisation, it will be absolutely obligatory to continually bring the experience of the youth work into the branches and to discuss it with the other Group members. To fail to do this will accentuate another tendency, for non-youth comrades to dogmatically apply the (indubitably correct) formula that the Group has at all times control over its members, and to utilise the right to instruct youth members as to what line to take in youth work. Such a tendency would undoubtedly cripple our youth work by demoralising our youth comrades, and would also lead to justifiable resentment among non-IMG youth comrades. In relation to this last point, it is necessary to emphasise that the political bases of the two organisations will be the same, and all that will differentiate non-IMG members will be that they have not yet become convinced through their own experiences of the need to belong to the Fourth International. Consequently, provided that no serious political differences arise within the youth organisation (and there is no inherent political basis for such differences), it should be possible for our comrades to dominate on all important questions by virtue of their experience and clearer political perspectives. We must seek to lead the youth organisation by politically convincing it, and imposition by party whip of a "Group line" should only be a last resort when we have failed to do this on a major issue of principle. This, of course, would be a cause for serious concern. On lesser questions it is better to let the youth organisation make mistakes and learn from them than to bureaucratically "correct" them -- and in any case on such questions the opinion of a youth comrade with experience in that field (IMG member or not) may be worth more than that of an IMG comrade with no experience of youth work. The most important thing is that, within

the general framework of our strategy, the vanguard organisation of youth must have the freedom to take necessary initiatives in line with the requirements of its work without being unduly restricted.

9 Many of the problems of creating a vanguard youth organisation are posed in a rather abstract way at present because we have really only begun to approach the question. There is no doubt that the turn we are proposing is not a simple one, and many issues will arise which we cannot even foresee at present. (There is the possibility, though it is certainly not the most probable variant, of a short term entry into an existing youth organisation.) What is necessary in the immediate period is that we develop the work of the Youth Fraction and study its experiences very carefully. Then we will be able to add flesh to the bones of our present perspective.

The Youth Fraction must seek to:

a) Develop and deepen our analysis of the dynamics of the youth radicalisation, the student movement and so on.

b) Develop specific programmes for the various sectors of youth.

c) Provide its cadres with a real understanding of Marxist theory and of the politics of the Fourth International.

d) Plan and carry out our interventions in the struggles of youth in order to establish us as a serious political force in that milieu.

e) Intensify our general political propaganda and agitation among the youth. This means increasingly utilisation of the weapon we possess in The Week and the creation of peripheral organisations such as Week circles, Red Forums, etc.

Furthermore, the Youth Fraction must continually seek as far as possible to become a really autonomous entity. This implies a functioning national leadership, the development of our youth journal, emphasis on financial self-sufficiency, and above all the creation in the localities of groups which are defined not just as adjuncts of IMG but which are really able to operate as a political force among the youth in that area.

10. When we come to the stage where we are ready to launch a vanguard youth organisation, this move must be seen by the broad youth vanguard as a logical and necessary step. The organisation must be seen not just as a device to win more members to IMG, but as a necessary instrument of the struggle of the youth vanguard against capitalism. This depends of course to a large extent on the effectiveness and relevance of the intervention of our Youth Fraction in the intermediate period. Finally, we must not see the youth organisation as being necessarily a straightforward continuation of the Fraction. Where there exist individuals or groups who are willing to join with us in creating such an organisation, we must have the most open and flexible attitude. It goes without saying, of course, that any such regroupment could only be on the most principled political basis, and that we would not dissolve ourselves in any centrist organisation.

THE CASE FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVOLUTIONARY
SOCIALIST YOUTH ORGANISATION IN BRITAIN

By T. Philips

The following contribution to the pre-conference discussion makes an assessment of the conditions which make the construction of a revolutionary Marxist youth organisation objectively possible. The first section of this paper should be seen as the document World Wide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International, presented to the last world congress by the United Secretariat and which has been published as the basis for further discussion in the International. The full text of the document is available in the July 14, 1969 special issue of Intercontinental Press which carried the main documents of the congress. It is available from Pioneer Book Service for 4/6 and should be read in conjunction with this paper.

The document explains the objective basis for the youth radicalisation and the student struggles around the world. It describes the crisis of world imperialism and the pressures of the "third industrial revolution" on both the capitalist economies and the economies of the workers' states bringing about fundamental changes in the character and function of higher education. It explains how this factor along with the crisis of social democracy and Stalinism makes the youth and student radicalisation a permanent and significant force on the world political scene. The document argues that the Fourth International must rise to the challenge of winning these youth -- especially the student youth where the radicalisation is deepest. It points out that a general feature of student struggles underlying the revolutionary potential of students has been the natural link-up of "student issues" and larger social issues.

To meet this opportunity and challenge to win the radicalising youth to a revolutionary strategy and organisation and the best of them to the ranks of the Fourth International, revolutionary, Marxist youth organisations must be built. They will be built by mobilising youth in struggle around a program of democratic and transitional demands embedded in the strategy of the "red" university or "red" education system.

Ernest Mandel describes the objective basis for the revolutionary potential of students in the pamphlet "The Revolutionary Student Movement -- Theory and Practice." Here are some key paragraphs:

"A few days ago when I was in Toronto, one of the leading Canadian educators gave a public lecture on the causes of the student revolt. The reasons, he said, 'are essentially material. Not that their living conditions are unsatisfactory; not that they are treated like badly paid nineteenth century workers. But socially we have created a sort of proletariat in the universities who have no right to participate in the determination of the curriculum, no right to at least co-determine their own life during the four, five, six years which they spend at the university.

"While I cannot accept this non-Marxist definition of the proletariat, I do think that this bourgeois educator has partially revealed one of the roots of the generalised student revolt. The structure of the bourgeois university is only a reflection of the general

hierarchical structure of bourgeois society; both become unacceptable to students even with their present elementary level of social consciousness . . .

"In addition, in Europe, very likely more than in the United States we have very inadequate material conditions in the universities . . .

"However I must insist that the main-spring of the student revolt would persist even if these material conditions were corrected. The authoritarian structure of the university and the inadequate substance of the education received, at least in the field of social science, cause more discontent than these material conditions. . .

"This is why the attempts at university reform which have been pushed by the more liberal wings of the different establishments in western neo-capitalist society will probably fail . . .

"What is the goal of university reform as proposed by liberal reformists in the western world? It is in reality an attempt to streamline the organization of the university to fit the needs of neo-capitalist economy and neo-capitalist society. . .

". . .an attempt to subordinate the functions of a university even more than in the past to the immediate needs of neocapitalist economy and society. It will generate a still higher degree of student alienation . . .

"I do not say we should be indifferent to any kinds of reforms of the university. It is necessary to find some transitional slogans for university problems just as Marxists have tried to find transitional slogans for other social movements in whatever sector these come to life. . ."

A central theme of the world wide youth radicalization document is the necessity of a revolutionary leadership with a transitional approach to the student struggle. Two sections from the document are reproduced here to emphasize this essential aspect of the world wide student radicalisation.

(Note -- "university" refers to secondary and higher education.)

Strategy of the "Red" University

Radical circles are hotly debating the central question of orientation. What should be the direction and objectives of the student struggle? What kind of relationship should the student movement seek with the broader struggle of the working masses and oppressed nationalities? What sort of program should the revolutionary vanguard put forward for the student movement?

The reformist tendency maintains that students should concern themselves primarily with narrowly defined university issues -- grades,

courses, the quality of education, living conditions, narrow campus politics. They see struggles around such issues in isolation from the crisis of capitalist society as a whole. They counterpose such limited struggles to the inclinations of the politicized students themselves to take up issues of key concern to the world, such as the war in Vietnam.

At the opposite end of the spectrum stand the ultralefts. Most of their strategies come down to turning the energies of the student body away from the academic milieu altogether, to leaving the campus and taking the student activists to the factory gates, or into the "community," to distribute leaflets proclaiming the need for revolution. The Maoists epitomize this in the slogan "Serve the People."

Both of these orientations should be rejected as one-sided and sterile. The revolutionary youth vanguard, to be effective, must put forward a program that transcends the campus in its goals, but at the same time includes it; that connects student demands with the broader demands of the class struggle on a national and international scale; that shows students how their own demands relate to these bigger struggles, are an integral part of them, and can help to advance them. The program put forward by the revolutionary youth must tie together the long range perspectives and daily work of a revolutionist in the school arena. The program put forward by the revolutionary youth is one that mobilizes for struggle around the basic issues of the world struggle and the needs of the student population itself.

The student population is not homogeneous. Students come from varying class backgrounds, with widely differing interests and they are on many different levels politically. Their only homogeneity consists of their common position as students in a capitalist society and university -- or a bureaucratically deformed workers' state.

Many politically advanced students, in the course of struggles around diverse issues, come to comprehend the need to gain control over their education and educational institutions and to recognize that this goal can be fully satisfied only with the revolutionary transformation of society. But they puzzle over a way of formulating the objective so as to tie it in with the current struggles in society as a whole. How can the battles over prevailing educational conditions be linked with the desired goal of completely transforming society? It is difficult for them to see how their fight as students fits into the general fight against capitalism. This is a source of frustration and of searches for shortcuts to the revolution which in turn breed opportunism and ultraleftism.

During the massive student protests in Yugoslavia in June 1968, the Belgrade students summarized their demands with the call, "For a Red University!" This formulation was very apt to their situation. They meant that Yugoslavia is supposed to have a socialist educational system but that actually it has been shaped to fit the interests of the ruling bureaucracy. Consequently the Yugoslav students face problems that are quite comparable to those faced by students in the capitalist countries. To solve these problems, they demanded that the Yugoslav educational system be transformed to what it ought to be -- let the bureaucratic university give way to a "red" university.

This idea was also advanced by radical students in some of the capitalist countries and adapted to their situations.

"For a University that Serves the Working People -- for a Red University!" With this basic orientation radical students seek to answer the questions: "What kind of education shall students get? Towards what ends should this education be directed? Who shall control the educational facilities? What layers in society should the educational institutions serve?"

The concept of the Red University means that the university ought to be transformed from a factory, producing robots, into an organizing centre for anticapitalist activities, a powerhouse for revolutionary education, an arena for mobilizing youth in struggle for the complete transformation of society.

The Red University concept as it has appeared on the campus up to this point, is a big advance over slogans which refer to the narrower goal of student-faculty control over the university. The struggle for autonomy and self-administration is only one aspect of a rounded program aimed at helping students to understand the role of the university under capitalist domination, to educate them in the movement to bring the broadest layers of this generation into the struggle for that revolution.

Included in the concept of the Red University is the need to counter the teaching of bourgeois ideology, which goes under the name of "education," whether in the field of sociology, philosophy, economics, psychology, or whatever. Revolutionary students must understand the need to confront the prestige and authority of the capitalist university and its normally procapitalist faculty on its own level of theory and ideology. They must fight against converting knowledge and its acquisition into a mystique, the concept that higher education is something reserved for a select and highly intelligent few, and not accessible or comprehensible to the working masses.

The university as an instrument in the class struggle -- a Red University -- is opposed to the liberal view of the university as a sanctuary of a privileged minority, holding aloof from the social and political controversies in the rest of society. The resources of the university should be made available to the exploited the poor, and the oppressed. Students and faculty should have an absolute right to invite anyone they please to address them on any subjects they wish. They should be free to establish close ties with working class organizations and parties, the minorities, and the popular masses, becoming a source of information and enlightenment for them.

The strategy of seeking to convert the capitalist university into a Red University has special application in reference to oppressed national minorities. The need for one or more leading centres of higher education has been felt at some stage by every powerful movement of an oppressed people for self-determination. In the struggle for national freedom in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism, a university shaped for the special needs of an oppressed nation serves as a symbol and an agency for developing national consciousness and national culture in a way most conducive to overcoming narrow nationalist limitations and giving the struggle an international perspective. For both democratic and socialist reasons, the demand for the establishment, extension and improvement of such facilities under nationalist control must be fought for by the revolutionary vanguard.

In Belgium the demand for Flemish

universities in Flanders, notably at Louvain, won broad support amongst the Flemish-speaking population and a struggle over this issue even brought down a government cabinet in Belgium.

In the United States, owing to the rise of black nationalism as an increasingly strong force among the Afro-Americans; the Red University concept has appeared in the variation, "For a Black University."

The insistence of black students upon greater access to higher education, upon control over the curricula, finances and professors in independent facilities where they can study their own culture and history, upon the inclusion of courses of particular interest to Afro-Americans, and upon opening the doors to "Third World" students has led to university and high school battles from one end of the country to the other. Backed up by direct actions involving both black and white students and faculty members, the actions aimed at forcing the school authorities to concede on these issues have exposed the determination of the white supremacist rulers to maintain control over their educational factories. These efforts have also awakened many students to the revolutionary implications of black nationalism and the lengths to which the capitalist class will go to oppose the Afro-American struggle for liberation.

As shown by its origin, the call for a "Red University" is similarly applicable to student struggles in the Soviet bloc. The universities in the workers' states have acted as prime centres for expressing grievances of the populace against the bureaucratic regimes. In their recent struggles, the Polish, Yugoslav, and Czechoslovak students have advanced concrete demands stemming not only from their own particular problems but also from those facing the entire working class and its allies. Prominent among these have been the call for political freedom, workers' control of production, and an end to social inequalities.

In the colonial and semicolonial countries the concept of the Red University can readily be linked with the traditions of radicalism and the struggle to establish or to preserve university autonomy. There the students are now playing, as they have often done in the past, a role of first-rate importance in the struggle for revolutionary goals. They have undertaken actions that rapidly bring them into conflict with antidemocratic regimes, that soon involve issues going beyond the universities and lead to the mobilization of popular support among the workers, peasants and other oppressed sectors of the people.

The battles engaged in by the radical students of Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Pakistan, India, Egypt, Mali, Turkey, and a number of comparable countries show how universal this pattern is.

A Program of Democratic and Transitional Demands

The universities and high schools are all the more important because of the size of the forces involved, their mood of combativity, the actual struggles they themselves initiate, their location in the big cities where the greatest potential forces for revolution are assembled, their ties to the workers, peasants and plebian sectors, and their readiness to include issues going far beyond immediate campus problems. In addition to all this, experience has repeatedly shown how valuable the universities and high schools are, both as testing grounds for the education and development of young radicals and as sources of recruitment to the revolutionary party.

An impressive example of the possibilities opened up by a correct policy is provided by the international campaign which was organized by student militants in a number of key countries in the support of the South Vietnam NLF and its struggle against American imperialism. To launch the solidarity campaign, international connections in university circles were utilised. Through agitation and actions around this key issue, hundreds of thousands of students became politicalised and radicalised. The attempts to organize large numbers of students in demonstrations on behalf of the Vietnamese revolution frequently posed the right of the students to use university facilities for ends that outraged the authorities bringing the students into collision with them. Political issues were thus brought to the fore in sharp form. These confrontations in turn mobilized more students in the defense of their democratic rights and further intensified the struggle.

The validity of the political approach outlined in the founding document of the world Trotskyist movement, The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International has received striking confirmation in the struggles involving the students. What is now required is to apply this approach in a better-planned and more thorough way, working out a set of democratic and transitional demands for application in this field as it stands today.

The student struggles cannot be isolated from, or counterposed to, the political issues arising out of the world class struggle as a whole. Neither can the struggle for the Red University be isolated from the task of building a "red" youth organisation with links to a "red" Leninist party. Similarly, the program of democratic and transitional demands arising from the student struggles is organically linked to the rest of the transitional program as outlined in the founding document and developed since then. The program of demands for the student movement represents a concrete application of the general approach outlined in The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International.

The ultimate objective of the Fourth International is to link the student struggles with the struggles of the workers and national minorities at their present levels of development and orient them toward a combined drive for state power, bringing into the struggle all the forces opposed to the capitalist or bureaucratic regimes.

Proceeding from the existing state of development and level of consciousness of the students, these demands express their most urgent needs and grievances, directing them in the most effective way against the institutions and authorities that have come under fire from the students themselves. In mobilising around such slogans, young militants can come to understand the validity of the transitional program as a whole and become educated to the necessity of a fundamental change in the entire capitalist system.

Because of the decay of the capitalist system and the erosion of democratic conquests made in some instances almost two centuries ago, many of today's student struggles being over the most elementary issues, such as the right of free speech. However, they tend to develop beyond this level quite rapidly, going beyond the campus, beyond the framework of democratic freedoms as conceived in the most revolutionary phases of capitalism in its rise, reaching into the economic area and bringing up problems that can

actually be solved only under a socialist system. A clear understanding of this logical progression makes it possible to advance a consistent series of interlocking slogans that can be readily adjusted for particular situations. Above all it facilitates the recognition of suitable slogans of this type originating from the ranks in combat.

A combined demand for free education and for a decent standard of living -- to which everyone has a democratic right but which can be provided only in a socialist society that has overcome the limitations of the capitalist system -- is offered in the following series of suggestions for students in orienting their actions:

- 1) A university education for everyone who wants one, the full expense to be underwritten by the government.
- 2) No maximum age limit on free education; no limitation on the number of years a person may continue in school, or resume school after dropping out, postgraduate studies included.
- 3) Decent housing for students.
- 4) An annual salary for all students adequate to their needs and safeguarded against inflation by automatic compensating increases.
- 5) Guaranteed jobs for students upon graduation.

In the struggle by students for control over their own education, the following list of "student power" demands have been advanced to one degree or another in various universities internationally:

- 1) Abolish government-controlled student organisations. Recognize the right of students to organise and govern themselves according to their own free choice.
- 2) Joint control by students and faculty over the hiring and firing of faculty members and administration officials.
- 3) Let the students themselves democratically decide what subjects should be taught.
- 4) Abolish the powers of professors and administrators to arbitrarily penalize students.
- 5) Freedom of political association for students and professors.
- 6) The right to utilise university facilities to promote educational and cultural activities of direct interest to organisations of the working class, peasants, oppressed nationalities and plebian masses.

In the struggle for political freedom on the campus, some of the following slogans have become central issues in major confrontations:

- 1) University autonomy, to be won or kept inviolate.
- 2) Repeal of all laws infringing civil liberties. End the witch-hunt.
- 3) The police and all other repressive forces to be strictly banned from entering university grounds or buildings.
- 4) Dismiss all government officials responsible for victimizing students, workers, national minorities, political dissidents.

5) Dissolve the special police forces and secret political police.

6) Release all the political prisoners.

7) Abolish the censorship, whether official or "voluntary" of the press, radio, television and the arts and sciences.

8) For freedom of the press, freedom of association and organisation, freedom of speech, assembly, petition, and travel, and the right to engage in demonstrations.

In student struggles directly involving national minorities, the fight for their rights comes sharply and specifically to the fore, as has been dramatically shown in the United States in relation to the struggle for black liberation. The issues arise most often around violations of democratic rights, or battles to establish them. They are not confined to the university level but extend throughout the educational system to the primary grades. Consequently struggles in this field immediately affect the oppressed communities as a whole to a much greater degree than is the case with majority groups, and the issues are more easily seen as involving much broader questions concerning the perspectives of a national minority in a decaying capitalist society. Because of this, the possibility of student struggles having catalytic effects in the minority communities deserves special attention.

The slogans in this field can be summarised in the following categories:

- 1) Recognition of the right of the oppressed national minority communities to control their own public affairs, including education from kindergarten up.
- 2) Representation of national minorities on all policy-making or policy-implementing bodies of the schools.
- 3) Against racism and great-power chauvinism. For truthful teaching of the history and culture of oppressed national minorities in all schools, with periodic reviews by educational committees elected by the oppressed national minorities.
- 4) Recognition of the unconditional right of a national minority to use its own language in the educational system.
- 5) Unlimited government-financed educational training through postgraduate study for oppressed national minorities.
- 6) Establishment of adequately financed, independent university-level educational facilities under control of national minorities.

A special area of concern to students is the relationship between the school administration and the giant corporations and their government. For big business and the military, the university constitutes an indispensable recruiting ground. Linked with this is the role of the universities in highly questionable research projects undertaken in the "public interest." In connection with antiwar campaigns, where a natural connection is easily seen, important struggles have been initiated in this area. Typical slogans fall into the following sequence:

- 1) End the ties between the university and the military.
- 2) Abolish secret research by the university for the government.

3) Abolish secret subversion by government agencies of student organisations.

4) Expose the ties between university officials and big business by making public ALL investments, holdings and contracted projects of the university and of all directors trustees and administrators.

5) Abolish research of special interest to big business.

6) No recruiting of personnel on the campus by the big corporations.

7) Lower the voting age and the age limit on holding public office. Old enough to fight, old enough to vote, and to have a voice in deciding public affairs.

The permanent perspective of large armed forces in the capitalist countries, aimed against the colonial revolution and the workers' states, and available for domestic repression, makes the following central demands important to student youth as well as working class youth and youth of national minorities:

1) Defend the democratic rights of all youth conscripted in the army. No restrictions on soldiers exercising their full citizenship rights.

2) Abolish capitalist conscription.

In countries suffering totalitarian regimes as in Spain, South Africa and elsewhere, the universities have repeatedly demonstrated their importance as incubating centers of organized revolt. The experience in Spain is now particularly rich in showing how the efforts of students to break the grip of government sponsored student organisations and to organise along independent lines parallel similar efforts by the working class and interlocks with them.

Here the campus struggle centers around a single broad demand: "For university autonomy!"

As already indicated, this can be readily formulated in particular slogans that grade into slogans transcending the struggle on the campus and connecting up with the broader issues involving the workers, peasants, and plebian masses in the cities.

The situation is symmetrical to this in most of the workers states. Here the student struggle naturally follows the orientation of pointing up the contrast between the official socialist ideology and propaganda and the lack of anything resembling the socialist democracy which Lenin stood for and explained in State and Revolution. As shown in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union itself, the sequence of demands tends to go as follows:

1) Freedom of discussion of philosophical, cultural and scientific questions. The right to express a critical viewpoint.

2) Freedom to discuss historical questions. Let the truth come out!

3) Freedom to discuss current political issues.

4) Abolish the censorship.

5) For the right to organise and demonstrate.

6) No political persecution. Let the public including foreign observers, be admitted to all

trials.

7) Freedom of travel. No restrictions on sending representatives to visit youth organisations in other countries or in receiving their representatives on visits.

8) Eliminate self-perpetuating social inequalities and the special privileges of the bureaucracy.

9) Return to revolutionary internationalism.

10) Solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed in other lands.

Youth radicalism is not restricted to college and university levels. It has widely permeated the high schools and in some places even the upper primary grades. High school students in numerous countries have turned out by the thousands in the mobilisations against the Vietnam war and have been among their most enthusiastic and energetic supporters. The high school students organised in CAL (Comites, d'Action Lyceen) played a major role in the actions before, during and following the May-June 1968 events in France.

At a certain point in the development of every youth organisation, its ability to organise, lead and win over decisive layers of high school youth becomes a key test. Revolutionary socialist youth organisations must take the lead in organising the secondary school youth, fighting with them for their rights and seeking to co-ordinate their activities with other sections of the anti-capitalist struggle. Scheduled to enter the higher institutions of learning or go in large numbers into the factories, these young activists will provide an invaluable ferment of militancy and socialist consciousness in both arenas.

To put forward and fight for such slogans and goals, to advance them in a way to take full advantage of openings and opportunities, requires a Marxist leadership that is politically alert, tactically flexible, and able to avoid falling into either opportunistic adaption to the student environment or into ultraleft sectarianism.

* * *

British Youth Radicalisation and the Tasks of the IMG

British imperialism is not immune from the crisis of world imperialism. Its craven support for the counter-revolutionary war of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam; its failure to suppress the rising national struggle in Ireland; its ties with the discredited South African and Rhodesian racist regimes; the weakness of the pound; attempts at rationalising industry; increasing redundancies; attempts at control over the rising militancy of young workers through the anti-union legislation of IN PLACE OF STRIFE; Barbara Castle's prices and incomes policy; and the attempts by the Trade Union Congress bureaucracy to strangle shop floor militancy with its arbitrary and undemocratic "guidelines," all testify to the effects of this crisis on British capitalism whose competitive position in the increasing imperialist rivalry is being eroded.

As in other advanced capitalist countries these pressures have their reflection on demands for big changes in the educational system. Coupled with the existence of strong socialist

traditions and a highly organised working class, with its own political party -- the Labour Party -- the objective conditions for a general radicalisation of youth are evident.

A) The effects on the educational system

The class stratification of the British education system is one of the most rigid in the advanced capitalist countries. At an early age students are streamed into educational slots, pre-determining their job status. The binary system which separates the university from the rest of the higher educational system, ensures that relatively few make it into the upper echelons of higher education. Few of these have working class backgrounds. The British university has traditionally been a haven for the privileged, and a training ground for the executive officers, managers and sons and daughters of the British ruling class. In this framework, the pressures for change in the educational system stemming from the "third industrial revolution" and the needs of British capitalism, stand out even more sharply.

British capitalism, the first to industrialize, has to a considerable degree been one of the last to respond to the need to rationalise its education system to meet the needs of the less competitive British economy. Nonetheless as far back as 1943, the president of the Board of Trade said:

"Much closer collaboration between industry and commerce and the education system is essential if the country is to develop a national system and the personnel with the training and the knowledge adequate to meet the needs of the future."

In 1964 the Robins report stated:

"Unless higher education is rapidly reformed it is argued there is little hope for this densely populated island maintaining an adequate position in the fiercely competitive world of the future."

Statistics on the student population indicate the attempts by British capitalism to solve this problem. In 1939 there were 50,000 full time university students; 1954 - 82,000; 1962 - 118,000; 1966 - 154,000; 1969 - 205,000. The projected demand for 1980 is 425,000. While the university population will double in the next decade, the non-university sector of higher education will treble. The present secondary and post secondary non-university student population is about six million. Other figures show that in the universities, an increasingly major proportion of graduates move into jobs as white collar workers in industry and commerce. The general trend is to reduce the divisions and compartmentalization of the educational system -- to rationalise it through comprehensive secondary schools and through polytechnics in the post secondary schools. Institutions like the London School of Economics are more and more embedded in servicing the research needs of British capitalism.

The Labour Government, in its paper University Development in the 1970's is attempting to meet the needs of British Capitalism by tying students to loans, "indenturing" students with grants to jobs in industry, increasing the student-staff ratio, instituting around the clock use of facilities, developing cram courses of two year lengths and restricting foreign students. The existence of a large number of low paid youthful apprentices in British factories is another factor in the educational problems facing British

capitalism. A debate between official student leaders, academics and government authorities over the effectiveness of these reforms is now raging.

Clearly, if not so advanced as in some other countries, the conditions producing alienation from rejection of the capitalist education system, by large sections of the student population, on all levels, especially the university, exist and will intensify dramatically in the next period. The fear expressed by leading bourgeois figures of the student population during the 1967-68 LSE crisis, is a reflection of the loose and uneasy ties of the British youth to bourgeois society.

British capitalism has not escaped the permanent crisis of the capitalist university and educational system -- the objective basis for the mass radicalisation of its student youth. More specifically, the objective conditions for the building of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard youth organisation, able to lead the masses of radicalising youth in struggle against the capitalist education system and capitalist society existing in all advanced capitalist countries to one degree or another -- exists deeply and intensely in Britain too.

B) Significance of recent student struggles

Over the past three years, Britain has had its share of student struggles. A general survey shows that they have occurred outside of the Labour Party, the Stalinist organisations and the National Union of Students; they have expressed an interlocking of demands for university reform with demands around larger social issues; they have used forms of direct action borrowed from struggles in other countries; they have involved at one time or another big sections of a radicalising student population, and in general followed the patterns of student revolt of the other advanced capitalist countries.

The 1957 furor over the role of the MI5 political police which had "agents at every college and university in the British Isles" and the youthful base of the CND movement was a prelude to this development.

But it was the LSE occupation in March 1967 which expressed the maturing of the student revolt. The struggle at LSE, one of the most prestigious universities and certainly the most symbolic of the changed role of the university under capitalism, began over the objection by students to the appointment of a director involved in the stabilising of the racist Smith regime in Rhodesia. It quickly led to a wide struggle by LSE students in defense of their democratic rights and for reforms cutting at the capitalist rule of LSE. The 1968 occupation of LSE in support of the Vietnamese struggle and the London October 27 Vietnam demonstration, the subsequent repression, gates incident and closing of the university, elicited solidarity actions by large numbers of students in at least 20 universities and colleges around the country.

In 1968 there was a struggle at Essex against the use of the university for germ warfare research and for university democracy; the Leeds struggle against police prying into student political activities; the Birmingham occupation for student representation and actions at Enfield college around the issue of racism. Many other struggles can be listed; Bristol Hornsey Sussex Guilford etc. More recent struggles have involved polytechnic students and students at training colleges expressing solidarity with striking teachers. These struggles testify to

the deepening radicalisation among Britains rapidly expanding student population. In these struggles, in line with student struggles the world over, there has been a linking of democratic and transitional demands expressing both the needs and grievances of students in their particular situations, and the rising class struggle throughout the world.

One of the most striking examples of this radicalisation was the mass student and youth based 100,000 strong London Vietnam demonstration on October 27, 1968. Another expression of this was the 1968 founding of the Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation with around 700 students at the founding conference.

However, it cannot be denied that these struggles have generally been confined to a relatively thin layer of students anchored in the various tendencies and currents around the socialist societies. These struggles have mobilised masses of students from time to time, but no firm student organisation has emerged. The RSSF is no longer a factor and in some quarters there is a feeling that British students are an exception to the rule. Yet in the past months literally thousands of students have taken part in demonstrations against British imperialism in South Africa dramatised through the tour of the Springboks rugby team. Another indication of the revolutionary potential among students, is the fact that over 2,000 students in 10 cities turned out to hear Ernest Mandel talk about the rise of world revolution today. The Schools Action Union has a life in the secondary schools in many cities drawing 300 in a December strike for secondary school democracy in London. Even Eton hasn't been spared with an existing branch of the SAU. Most recently on January 25, 1970, Edinburgh students organised a sit-in against class discrimination by university administrators in the interest of the corporations and the ties of the University of Edinburgh with corporations with South African interests. Behind these actions lie the objective basis for youth radicalisation.

The failure of these struggles to reach further in mobilising student youth is due not to objective but to subjective factors. The absence of a disciplined revolutionary youth leadership with an understanding of the necessity for a transitional approach to student struggles, is the main factor lacking. This is the meaning of the LSE and RSSF experience. In January 1970 two student leaders were barred from LSE and a student arrested in a demonstration against big business control of the ruling bodies of the university. Yet despite the thousands involved in the struggles only months ago, there appeared no movement for defense against this repression. In December 1969 the national RSSF conference registered its total collapse.

The fact that the LSE movement, which was organised against repression by a brutally authoritarian university regime, deeply involved in the complicity of British imperialism in imperialist crimes in Vietnam and Africa, has "disappeared," and is no longer able to defend itself, testifies to the failure of the LSE leadership epitomised by the sectarian theorists around International Socialism and the socialist society, and the pragmatic anti-theory activists like Paul Hoch. RSSF, conceived as a mass organisation based on a loose coming together of tendencies, societies and individuals on the common platform of rejection of all those not willing to respond to its demagogic and ultraleft rhetoric, carried through its sectarian logic into total isolation from the mass of the students caught in the grip of the capitalist education system.

Both these experiences express the lack of a conscious revolutionary leadership within the student movement, and a tendency of those who claimed to lead to substitute ultraleft phrase mongering, sectarian factionalism and pragmatism for leadership.

The rejection of the reformism of the leadership of the British Labour Party has been a healthy impulse of the British student movement. However, it is evident that the mirror image of reformism -- ultraleftism and sectarianism -- has plagued the British student movement and has been a considerable obstacle to its development. The existence of a revolutionary Marxist leadership would have demonstrated by fighting against this development, that it was not at all necessary or inevitable.

C) The role of opponent tendencies

The test of tendencies who claim to give revolutionary leadership, is their ability to organise and lead sectors of society who are beginning to move against it. Our principle opponents in the youth field, the Keep Left Young Socialists, International Socialism, the Young Communist League, and the Revolutionary Socialist League, have all failed in this task. Their failure to give leadership to the rebel youth, especially student youth, has been a significant contributing factor in the disorienting of the student movement. In rejecting the student youth as petite-bourgeois (SLL-YS); in orienting students out of the schools to the factory gates (IS); in rejecting the essential revolutionary thrust of the rebel youth by trying to freeze student struggles to educational reforms (YCL); and by ignoring the action outside the Labour Party (RSL); these tendencies have adapted themselves to the worst features of the newly radicalised youth; failing to give them a serious perspective for struggle and the programmatic and organisational traditions of Bolshevism.

Despite their failures, both the SLL-YS and the IS have profited considerably from the youth radicalisation. The ability of the YS to mobilise approximately 500 working class and school youth at a January 1970 Keep Left conference, underlines the possibilities for the development of a revolutionary socialist youth organisation. The Keep Left YS, although weakened both by its lack of organisational independence from the Socialist Labour League, and its sectarian political line, exists as a serious organisation, with an experienced cadre presenting the IMG with a political obstacle.

The IS has profited by the radicalisation in the universities. Despite its failure to come to grips with the problem of Bolshevik organisation, and its rejection of a transitional approach to student struggles, the IS, by recognising the objective basis for student radicalisation, has tended to fill the organisational vacuum in the universities. The fact that the IS can mobilise several hundred students who consider themselves revolutionary socialists if not Trotskyists, presents another big challenge to the IMG. Neither of these organisations will give revolutionary leadership to the student movement. It is clear that this responsibility falls to the IMG aided by its ties to an international movement which has responded well to this challenge.

D) The task of the IMG among youth

The IMG is confronted with three interrelated tasks; 1) to win the leadership of Britains

radicalising youth in both the spheres of ideology and action. 2) To build a strong revolutionary Marxist youth organisation. 3) To draw new cadres from the youth to build the British section of the Fourth International -- the IMG.

The experience of youth struggles in Britain point directly to these tasks. To lead the rebel youth from revolt, to anti-capitalism, to commitments to the Fourth International, requires an independent revolutionary Marxist youth organisation with a transitional programme for youth -- especially student youth. This organisation will only be built by the conscious, systematic intervention of the cadres of the IMG decisively into all sectors of the student youth. The winning of the radical youth as cadres for the Fourth International, is our most urgent task, and will lay the basis for all our future work in the class struggle as a whole. The link between revolutionary theory and the working masses who will reconstruct society is revolutionary cadre. The objective case for a student oriented revolutionary Marxist youth organisation points to the direction in which we have to move in order to win this cadre.

In some countries where there are large radical youth formations the task of the Trotskyists is to move into these organisations, and clear them out of the way, by taking the best of the youth for the revolutionary Marxist youth organisation. In Britain, we are challenged by a number of competing tendencies which in their own way are attempting to win the rebel youth. We have to fight to win these youth to a revolutionary strategy and organisation.

Only an independent, open, revolutionary Marxist youth organisation can win the best of the youth, both students and young people in general, to the political and organisational traditions of Bolshevism. There are no easy ways or short cuts. What is required to build this organisation is Trotskyist initiative and leadership of united actions around a programme of democratic and transitional demands arising from concrete struggles.

This organisation should be in political solidarity with the IMG, but organisationally autonomous with a full internal life of its own. In this way it can attract radicalising young people, who are not yet committed to the Bolshevik perspective of becoming lifetime revolutionists, but who are willing and ready to participate in a broad range of political actions together with the IMG and its members. It can lead actions and take initiatives in the student movement in its own name. It can serve as a valuable training and testing ground for candidates for IMG membership and make it easier for them to acquire the political and organisational experience and education necessary for long term political activity. Membership in this youth organisation enables young radicals to decide their own policies, organise their own actions, elect their own leadership, make their own mistakes, and learn their own lessons, in an organisation in political solidarity with a world revolutionary organisation, giving them a program based on a world view and a hundred years of working class struggle and Bolshevik, democratic centralist organisational norms.

The advantages for the IMG are obvious. This organisation will provide an area of recruitment to the IMG. It helps prevent the IMG from acting as a youth organisation and from lowering the norms of Bolshevik organisation and discipline, political maturity and level of theoretical understanding, to the less demanding levels of an organisation agreeable to youth.

This organisation must have its own press, in its own name, reflecting the Trotskyist programme and at the same time being the best organiser and propagandist for the mass of radicalising youth.

This organisation should be a youth organisation, appealing to both student and worker youth, reflecting the common struggle of youth against capitalism but with its major emphasis towards the student youth where the radicalisation is deepest.

The IMG is faced with the challenge of creating this organisation now. The winning of the radicalising youth in Britain to Trotskyism and the future of the IMG depends on its ability to do this.

E) Where we go from here

The experience of the IMG youth fraction has in general emphasised the main lines of this paper. The experience has pointed to the necessity of moving beyond discussion circles to active national intervention into the youth arena. In the framework of moving as rapidly as possible to the founding of an open, independent Trotskyist youth organisation, the following steps should be taken by the IMG:

1) The youth fraction should take on the character of a functioning youth organisation. Although work in non-student sectors cannot be ignored, especially where there are specific local opportunities, the emphasis must be in the student youth in both secondary and higher education where the radicalisation is deepest. This means concrete day to day work in the universities, colleges and schools; seeking and entering student struggles with the perspective of leading them; giving comrades concrete assignments for work in these areas (e.g. non-student comrades can be assigned to sell literature, do contact work etc.); orienting the branches to the building of youth fractions; recruiting contacts to the youth fractions on the clearly stated purpose of working towards an independent Trotskyist youth group.

Pivotal to this is the development of a youth press. This press, an open organ for the youth fraction, must be clearly oriented to the building of a Trotskyist youth organisation, expressing the general line outlined in this paper. It must at the same time, become the leading organiser, newspaper and spokesman for the student and youth struggles in Britain. The use of IMG resources must reflect this priority.

Within this framework, comrades must take initiatives on a whole series of questions, for example: in fulfilling our responsibility to mobilise youth in such struggles as the defense of the Vietnamese revolution; defense of the Irish struggle for self-determination; the struggle against British imperialism's role in Africa. Trotskyist youth must be foremost in leading the developing struggle for women's liberation, in organising the defense of victimized students and building and leading broad united struggles of students arising from conditions in the universities, colleges and schools. It is the responsibility of Trotskyist youth to find ways to intervene in the coming general elections to give youth a correct perspective of struggle against the reformist labour bureaucracy. An open out-going programme of educational activities will be a necessary part of this move toward a Trotskyist youth organisation.

2) A change in the orientation of the IMG as a whole is required for this shift. IMG

branches must in general become oriented to the youth -- especially the universities and other student sectors. This means the leadership of the IMG must be oriented to political intervention in these areas. An artificial separation of "student work" and "workers work" is not compatible with this perspective. The resources of the IMG must be turned to the necessity of laying the foundations for the youth organisation.

3) Our perspective must be to move as rapidly as possible to the founding of the youth organisation. The leadership of the IMG and the leading comrades assigned to youth work, will have

the responsibility of preparing a transitional programme for British youth. This programme will come from the objective situation in Britain and the experience of our comrades over the next months, as well as the experience of the movement internationally. This programme will be the basis for the launching of a revolutionary Marxist youth organisation in Britain and a decisive step forward in the struggle to gather the mass of British youth under its leadership and the task of winning the best of them to the Fourth International.

January 27, 1970

by S. Williams

The main resolution of the 1965 Eighth World Congress of the Fourth International stressed as "our most urgent immediate task" the strengthening of the struggle against "the imperialist aggression in Vietnam and for the Vietnamese Revolution." The National Committee resolution adopted at the last IMG National Conference dealing with Vietnam concluded:

"The Americans are far from pulling out, in fact their basic policy remains the same: to win in Vietnam. After the elections (in the U.S.) it is most likely the opposition to the war will reach new heights. Our task is to ensure it is adequately reflected in Britain. For the duration of the war Vietnam will be our number one priority."

Today, the Vietnam struggle remains the front line of World Revolution -- the pivot of the new rise in world revolution today as outlined in the main resolution of the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International. Despite the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese Liberation fighters, despite the growing organised opposition to the war within the imperialist army itself, despite the rapidly expanding mass movement of U.S. troops, the strategic aim of the U.S. imperialist ruling class remains the same (even with sharp internal tactical disputes) -- the crushing of the Vietnamese revolution and the turning back of the revolution in Southeast Asia. The scale of the U.S. counterrevolutionary intervention is rapidly spreading into Thailand and Laos. More powerful and fiendish weapons of mass destruction are being introduced into Vietnam with the aim of allowing some token troop withdrawals to ease domestic tensions while stepping up the attempt to destroy the entire social fabric of Vietnam through a policy of systematic genocide.

The deepening of U.S. aggression into Southeast Asia has been paralleled by a deepening of British complicity in Vietnam. The craven support of the Wilson government for the strategic aims of U.S. imperialism, reflected by Wilson's recent pilgrimage to Washington, is simply a continuation of the long history of British imperialism's intervention against the liberation struggles in Southeast Asia -- specifically Malaysia and Indochina. The recent exposures in the capitalist press of Britain's intervention into Vietnam at the end of World War II, laying the basis for the present situation, and British military atrocities in Malaysia, has revealed the criminal character of Britain's true role in Southeast Asia.

The controversies raging in the bourgeois press, the reporting of the Song My Massacre, are a reflection of the impact of the powerful international anti-Vietnam war movement stretching throughout the "Commonwealth" countries, North America and Europe -- and the unease of sectors of world imperialism with the course of developments in Vietnam.

The revulsion of the world's peoples to U.S. aggression in Vietnam is expressed in Britain through a recent poll which indicated that six out of ten people in Britain sympathize with the Vietnamese over the Americans. In the U.S., millions of Americans are prepared to take to the streets in mass actions against the war, while the legions of the powerful American working class are beginning to flex their muscles in self-defense against the war-propelled anti-labour drive of the Nixon administration. Recent points of contact between these two forces, in the General

Electric strike, point to the possibility for a link up in struggle of the organised anti-war movement and the labour movement indicating the growing ability of the American people to force the withdrawal of the troops from Vietnam.

The support of the British ruling class for the Vietnam war is important for the U.S. ruling class which is more and more having to "go it alone" in Vietnam. The antiwar movement in Britain therefore has a major role to play in the international movement against the war. This is sufficient reason for us to pause a moment to assess the state of the anti-Vietnam war movement in this country. A sober assessment of our work is necessary to enable us to fulfill our responsibilities to the Vietnamese revolution.

A. How the anti-Vietnam war movement was built

The anti-Vietnam war movement in Britain has been the most successful movement through which different left tendencies have been able to come together in united action to mobilise opposition to a continuing imperialist war supported openly by the British government. At its peak it brought 100,000 people into the streets on October 27, 1968 -- the largest mass action in Britain in many years.

This was not a chance happening. It was our leadership of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign which spearheaded the anti-Vietnam war movement and was the underlying factor in its development. It was our tendency which had a clear view of the need to build a mass movement against the war. Through our intervention, the anti-Vietnam war movement developed as a non-exclusionist, single-issue, mass action oriented campaign around a principled theme of solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle for self-determination, the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam and an end to British complicity in the war. It was through our intervention that the non-exclusionist ad hoc committees were formed, in the framework of the Leninist concept of the united front, to carry out the mass mobilisations.

Since its inception, many discussions have taken place in the anti-Vietnam war movement around the above points. Through our leadership of the VSC, which functioned as the conscious anti-imperialist wing of the anti-Vietnam war movement, our understanding of the necessity to mobilise mass actions on the broadest possible united basis gave us a decisive political weight in these discussions despite our size. Many comrades who have been recently recruited have not been through the experience of these discussions. It is therefore useful to review the basic concepts we fought for during that period.

1. Non-exclusive single-issue campaign:

We saw the possibility of mobilising the largest number of people possible in action against the war in this way. People with differing views on a whole series of issues including the meaning of the Vietnam war, who identified with the justness of the Vietnamese fight and the unjustness of U.S. intervention could get together in common action against the war. We realised that the introduction of other issues into the campaign would reduce the area of agreement, create unnecessary divisions, and reduce the size of the mobilisations. In this framework, while knowing that the only long term answer to imperialism and imperialist wars is the program of the Fourth International, we did not attempt to impose

this program on the anti-Vietnam war movement since it represented a minority view of the hundreds of thousands of potential anti-Vietnam war activists. To do this would have excluded those who did not consider themselves revolutionary socialists from the anti-Vietnam war movement and cut across our ability to move them into action against this particular imperialist war.

Maintenance of this united action framework was the reason the Socialist Labour League refused to participate in building the united front. Ignoring the necessity to build a broad movement against the war, which would naturally include the Communist Party, the SLL demanded the anti-Vietnam war movement adopt its position on Stalinism. When the movement refused to capitulate to this attempt to narrow it, the SLL excluded itself.

2. Principled defense of the right to self-determination: For some time the Communist Party, liberals and pacifists and other reformist currents refused to come into the coalition because of their opposition to the majority position of immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops. The Stalinists counterposed a demand for "negotiations." This position, in the framework of the Stalinist position of peaceful co-existence with imperialism, violated the democratic right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. We maintained the U.S. imperialists had no right to be in Vietnam; they were the aggressors, the cause of the Vietnamese was just and to demand that the Vietnamese should negotiate with the aggressors (a decision only they could make) would mean to legitimize the aggression of the U.S. By the time of the October 27 demonstration, the Young Communist League came into the united front and accepted the withdrawal position as well. The Stalinists as a whole no longer push the negotiations line under pressure from the international anti-Vietnam war movement and the Vietnamese themselves who have the withdrawal position.

3. Mass Street action: Throughout the world the international anti-Vietnam war movement has been responsible for bringing into the streets millions of people opposed to U.S. aggression in Vietnam. The impact of these demonstrations, the visible proof of the worldwide opposition to the war, has boosted the fighting spirit of the Vietnamese, given courage to the antiwar GI's and other layers of the American people and helped produce deep divisions in the ranks of the U.S. imperialists over the tactics to be followed. In addition to the problems faced by the U.S. ruling class on the Vietnam battlefield at the hands of the Vietnamese, they have the problem of increasing social tension at home.

Not all sectors of the anti-Vietnam war movement have recognized the importance of mass street actions and for various reasons belittle the importance of numbers. Pacifists have suggested the heroic acts of individuals have more impact. Liberals and Stalinists, whose direction is to confine the movement within parliamentary channels resist the logic of mass street action which keeps the movement out of the control of the "left" parliamentary figures. The ultraleft suggests small militant actions of revolutionary "militants" and "anti-imperialists" in punch-ups with the state repressive forces is more radical and militant than peaceful mass actions.

Our understanding of the importance of mass street actions comes from our view of class society and the process of social change. Only mass action by the working class, independent of the control of the bourgeoisie politicians or the labour bureaucracy will bring about social change. The gains of the working class have come through

this process. In the same way, a victorious fight against the Vietnam war can only come through larger and larger mass actions on an international scale which go beyond the parliamentary strait-jacket and rely on the power of the working people in action. A peaceful demonstration of thousands around principled demands is far more "militant" and "revolutionary" than a demonstration of a few hundred "revolutionaries" who succeed in breaking some windows and injuring a few cops.

B. Why October 27, 1968 was a major success

When we viewed the October 27, 1968 demonstration as a success, it was because it succeeded by its massive size in making a powerful declaration of the hostility of a wide layer of British society, especially its youth, to U.S. aggression in Vietnam and British complicity. The demonstration drew in new layers of British youth, far beyond the actual strength of the various revolutionary tendencies. It set other layers into motion which could be mobilised in further actions. It was not only a massive declaration against the Vietnam war but in a certain sense an act of rebellion by thousands of youth against British society, who turned out despite massive red-baiting and scare campaigns in the national press -- part of the process of the worldwide radicalisation of youth. This was all the more evident since the general theme of the action clearly posed opposition to U.S. aggression in Vietnam, solidarity with the justness of the Vietnamese struggle and condemnation of the role of the British government.

There were a number of more immediate factors contributing to this outburst. The dramatic heroism of the Tet offensive burst the bubble of the U.S. victory claims and the hysterical publicity in the capitalist press, reflecting the panic of sections of the British ruling class in the wake of the French May-June events, contributed significantly to the actual size of the demonstration. Without these "resources" the demonstration would have been significantly smaller. However, this in no way minimises its political significance.

Not all forces involved viewed the demonstration as a success. For example, a significant layer of independent radicals which could be described as SDS radicals, frustrated in their attempts to give themselves an organization by turning the anti-Vietnam war movement into a vaguely anti-capitalist multi-issue organisation, broke from the VSC nationally and concentrated their forces in Camden. From there, they issued a few copies of "Red Camden" and have turned to local work around the building of a community centre.

In retreating from the task of mobilising masses of people in action against the war, this layer cynically dismissed the power of mass action fundamental to the Marxist view of class society. They did not understand the revolutionary logic of a mass movement. In attempting to turn the anti-Vietnam war movement into some vague anti-capitalist movement, they refused to unite with the vast majority who are opposed to the Vietnam war but who do not yet have an anti-imperialist consciousness, let alone an anti-capitalist one. They rejected the most immediate and important task of serious revolutionists -- the job of mobilising these people in action around understandable demands which defend in practice the Vietnamese revolution. That is -- those which defend the right of the Vietnamese to determine their own affairs -- the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops and an end to British complicity. In refusing to see the task of

winning many more thousands of people to action around these objectively anti-imperialist demands and to fight the "negotiations" line of the Stalinists and labour bureaucracy as the main priority, these Camden "revolutionists" retreated before the development of the mass movement, leaving the scene of the action for work in their Camden isolation. The opportunity to explain their revolutionary view to the thousands who could have been mobilised into action didn't appeal to them.

C. The anti-Vietnam war movement since October 27

These disputes existed in the period leading up to October 27 as well as disputes with the Maoists who viewed a massive punch-up with the cops as the epitome of revolutionary duty. They posed problems for our small forces which had the major responsibility for organising and carrying out the action. This weakened our ability to intervene to build the base of VSC and make contacts for the IMG. After October 27 we were faced with further difficulties. Other forces, in addition to the Camden layer, who came into the mobilisation, began to turn away from the task of building on this success for their own reasons. The Stalinists, never happy about the whole development, withdrew. International Socialism, another strong force in the mobilisation, declared that another October 27 would be a "disaster" and went into inactivity on Vietnam. These developments left us alone in VSC with a few independents and friendly contact with the YCL. Our inability to intervene in the demonstration to lay a firm foundation for the anti-Vietnam war movement compounded the effect of the withdrawal of these forces. These factors, plus illusions created by the Paris peace talks and the posture of the capitalist press on the end of the Vietnam war combined to throw the movement into a slump. When the forces that left the anti-Vietnam war movement at the point of its biggest success talk about another "disaster" or say that people were demoralised because the demonstration didn't storm the American embassy they are simply trying to cover up their default and their sectarian reaction to a living movement with militant sounding excuses.

New developments in the late summer and fall of 1969 and the first months of 1970 have ended the period when objective factors like the Paris peace talks impeded the movement. The U.S. escalation, the massacre revelations, the exposure of Britain's role and the expanding struggles of youth have renewed the objective possibilities for mass actions against the war. Yet despite this, VSC has virtually collapsed. It is in debt, continues to subsidize its bulletin Vietnam, barely maintains an office, maintains little contact with what are now mostly paper affiliates and its active forces are not much more than a few members of IMG and a few independents. At one stage, VSC had 131 affiliated organisations which included nine trade union branches, 34 VSC branches, 21 college and university socialist societies, five Labour Party branches, three Independent Labour Party branches, 15 Labour Party Y.S. branches, 22 branches of I.S. and 24 other organisations from IMG to SLANT, a left Catholic group. The VSC covered Britain with a network of contacts, had leading and prominent people on its national council and considerable prestige throughout the country, not only because of the mobilisations it initiated but from its work on the free speech campaign for the Vietnamese and the International War Crimes Tribunal.

After October 27 there were three demonstrations initiated by VSC: March 16, 1969, two to three thousand strong around the visit of the

Vietnamese; November 23, 1969, 3,000 strong just after the Song My revelations; and the January 25, 1970 demonstration in opposition to Wilson's Washington visit. This demonstration mobilised at the very most 1,500 people including an SLL contingent of around 600. Far from crystallising and organising the mass sentiment against the war and British complicity that exists, the mobilisations initiated by VSC have become narrower, involving besides ourselves some elements of the YCL and IS, anarchists and individual ultralefts. No new forces have been drawn in.

D. Which way for the anti-Vietnam war movement?

Before taking up this question it is instructive to look at the views of our political opponents. The Stalinists attempt to look busy on Vietnam while trying to confine anti-Vietnam war opposition to parliamentary gestures. IS from its view of world politics, which never recognised the central importance of the Vietnamese revolution in the struggle for socialism, remains wedded to the multi-issue view giving no priority to this question. Its slogan of "March against murder in Vietnam and the U.S." (referring to attacks on the Black Panthers) on the January 11 SLL-YS demonstration is a good example of this.

The SLL has put forward a more serious challenge to our view of the development of a mass anti-Vietnam war movement. The SLL attacks the VSC as a "middle class protest movement," which is by implication anti-working class and an obstacle to what it calls a "working class anti-war movement." All sectarian positions have essential truths about them. The SLL argues that only the working class has the power to really affect the outcome of the Vietnam war and so Vietnam should be brought to the workers. Who could disagree? But life just isn't that simple.

An examination of the SLL anti-Vietnam war campaign shows it to be a rather conservative and sectarian action with a militant sounding ultraleft cover. In the words of G. Healy, "Vietnam should be taken off the streets and into the factories." What did this mean in practice in the period leading up to the SLL January 11 Stop Wilson's Visit campaign? Militants were urged to raise Vietnam in the factories, to pass resolutions dealing with British complicity, U.S. aggression and Wilson's trip to Washington and to send telegrams and letters of protest calling for the cancellation of Wilson's Washington visit. But raising Vietnam among workers is nothing new for VSC. VSC has always attempted to extend its influence into the organised working class. It even produced a pamphlet on Vietnam and the trade unions. What the SLL attacks is VSC's attempt to mobilise in action the sectors of society that can be mobilised now -- its youth, both students and workers, and layers of society not directly engaged in the factories at the point of production. This is not important, says the SLL, and then proceeds to paint a picture of big sections of the class responding to SLL propaganda on the war with militant class action. On such vast illusions, sectarians feed themselves.

Yes -- propaganda linking the war with the struggles of British workers is valuable. Those workers who come to understand the full blown significance of the connection are on their way to becoming part of the conscious revolutionary vanguard. But to reduce the struggle against the war to this kind of activity is just another version of the sectarian line of the best way to help the Vietnamese is to build the revolutionary party.

At the time of the October 27 action, Vietnam and the demonstration were common talk on factory floors across the country. We can be sure that the example of mass action, 100,000 people against government policy, will not be lost on a big layer of workers in factories who are in struggle against the same enemy around their own grievances and experiences with the system. Different forces and layers of society can unite in struggle against a common enemy. If revolutionary socialists refuse to lead sections of society in struggle when they are beginning to move and instead counterpose a policy of passive political education to relatively backward sections of society, they condemn themselves as hopeless sectarians unable and unwilling to intervene in the class struggle in all its manifestations. Such "revolutionaries" deny that it has been six years of bigger and bigger mass actions in the U.S. by mainly students and youth which has laid the basis for a possible link-up between workers in a war industry like G.E. and the organised antiwar movement.

To the SLL we should say: Your January 11 campaign may have been useful propaganda among workers. The numerous telegrams to Wilson from union branches was a useful form of protest. But just who did you mobilise besides the SLL and periphery? Where is your leadership of the 100,000 who were in the streets two years ago? What is all this talk about a class action against the war? Surely you can distinguish between educational campaigns, symbolic and token protests, and mass actions. You cannot attack the single issue mass action, non-exclusionist perspective of VSC without exposing your sectarian politics and refusal to engage in real struggles against a continuing imperialist war.

E. The position of the IMG

None of these tendencies were able to project a course for rebuilding and extending the anti-Vietnam war movement. The IMG as part of a world movement which has led the struggle in defense of the Vietnamese revolution is faced with this major responsibility in the coming year.

However, recognition of this task also means recognition of a gradual drift by the IMG away from its original perspectives for the anti-Vietnam war movement. This drift was expressed in the building of the January 25 demonstration. For example, at the December 5-6 IMG National Committee meeting, a resolution outlining a clear perspective of broadening the anti-Vietnam war movement was rejected. Discussion centered not on getting the broadest participation possible in the January 25 action, but on providing a militant action to attract the militants with perhaps a "seige" of Downing Street. Discussion on the possible good effects of punch-ups with the cops replaced discussion on the political impact of the demonstration and how to most effectively raise the issue of British complicity and lay the basis for the next action. The demonstration itself was small, unplanned and leaderless. For example, when anarchists shouted slogans like "smash IMG" and began burning VSC placards we didn't know what to do and were not organised to do anything about it. Eleven demonstrators were victimised after a punch-up at Downing Street. It is questionable whether this demonstration contributed to building the anti-Vietnam war movement. While a number of organisations endorsed the action, the only tendency that actually worked for the mobilisation was the IMG. Since October 27, the late starts on the building of the demonstrations also reflected the lack of priority the IMG is giving to this work.

This drift has also been reflected politi-

cally. The history of VSC has been centred around the necessity to defend the Vietnamese revolution from a principled position -- consistent with the Vietnamese right to self-determination. However, it is true to say that rather than attempting to formulate a principled position of support and solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle in terms understandable to the non-socialist majority, we have tended more and more to equate a solidarity position with slogans like "Victory to the NLF," "Defeat U.S. Aggression in Vietnam" and "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution." None of these slogans project demands around which larger and larger numbers of people can be mobilised. All these slogans do is project a desire. They are simple declarations of where a tiny vanguard layer of British society stands vis-a-vis the Vietnam struggle. They don't explain the nature of the war or project how it is to end. A wide layer of people understand and are willing to defend the right of nations to self-determination. Many (indicated by the lack of a movement to defend the Irish struggle) do not even understand this.

Marxists must attempt to intervene in the class struggle, to give leadership, that is, to project demands around which people can be organized into action from their present level of consciousness. Demands which do this and at the same time defend the principles of the international class struggle. This is the transitional approach. In the face of difficulties or pressures from the objective situation or political opponents it is possible to lose sight of this basic approach. An objective appraisal of our current direction in the anti-Vietnam war work suggests we have tended to allow ourselves to do just this. It is significant for instance, that we never initiate and lead chants on demonstrations demanding the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

We should remind ourselves at this point of the importance of defensive formulations. A defensively formulated principled position of solidarity stresses the Vietnamese are fighting for their democratic right to self-determination -- the right to determine their own affairs. A call for support to the Vietnamese revolution, an offensive formulation of the same idea, implying its socialist direction, does not explain this democratic aspect of the Vietnamese struggle. The defensively formulated concept can be understood and defended by far larger numbers. If there was a mass revolutionary socialist movement in this country it might be possible for relatively large sections of British society to mobilise around industrial action in the arms industry, to build a volunteer army to help the Vietnamese or even to launch a general strike against the British ruling class in aid of the Vietnamese struggle for socialism. But to pose such possibilities is to demonstrate they do not rest on the realities of the class struggle today.

Demands such as "Withdraw all U.S. Troops Now," "Vietnam for the Vietnamese," "End British Complicity in Vietnam" are consistent with principled defense of the Vietnamese revolution. These demands are rooted in the essential democratic content of the Vietnamese revolution and can be understood by wide layers of the population. If these demands are achieved, Vietnam will be for the Vietnamese, the revolution will triumph, the NLF will be victorious and the socialist revolution in Southeast Asia will have taken a giant step forward. When Marxists mobilise broad sections of society around such demands, recognising the democratic consciousness of the majority of people -- including the students -- they are engaging in concrete action in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution with the

perspective of victory. We should remind ourselves that this is what we mean by building a broad non-exclusionist mass anti-Vietnam war movement in defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

It is in the course of such struggles that those who have been mobilised can develop an anti-imperialist or even a revolutionary consciousness, especially if the movement is in the streets and led by revolutionary socialists.

It is in the course of such struggles that forces basically hostile to the Vietnamese revolution can be forced to take part. If the Stalinists, pacifists and liberals are forced to adopt anti-imperialist slogans, this is good. Far from being an indication of the inadequacy of such slogans this demonstrates their correctness and strength.

This is the way forward for the anti-Vietnam war movement in the coming period. (It is significant that the Vietnamese themselves have appealed for united mass actions around the demand for immediate unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam). It is the responsibility of the IMG to give this work the priority it deserves. The VSC must be re-established as the conscious anti-imperialist wing of the anti-Vietnam war movement and must take the initiative in building a continuing campaign against the war centred around mass actions organised by ad hoc united action committees appealing to all opponents of the war to organise for the withdrawal of U.S. troops, an end to British complicity and the victory of the Vietnamese struggle for self-determination. A correction of our drift into a sectarian and ultraleft position in our anti-Vietnam war work is required if this is to be accomplished. To continue along the present course has its own deadly logic. It means bit by bit to reduce our perspectives of a mass anti-Vietnam war movement to "militant" and small actions of "anti-imperialists." It means to begin to substitute politics with punch-ups against the police. It means to isolate the anti-Vietnam war movement from the mass movement as a whole, letting the labour bureaucracy and the ruling class off the hook. The fact that the January 25 demonstration took on this character underlines the seriousness with which we must view this problem.

F. How this is to be done

Priority for this work must rest on the perspective of a continuing anti-Vietnam war campaign centred on nationally co-ordinated mass actions. British complicity in the war must be a central focus along with solidarity with the U.S. and worldwide anti-Vietnam war movement. Vietnam

be made a key issue in the coming election campaign through demonstrations and leafleting of election meetings and rallies of both Labour cabinet members and Tory leaders. Demands must be

must be made a key issue in the coming election campaign through demonstrations and leafleting of election meetings and rallies of both Labour cabinet members and Tory leaders. Demands must be made on Labour candidates to respect TUC and Labour party anti-Vietnam war sentiment by calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and an immediate end to British complicity in Vietnam. The British government must break with U.S. aggression in Vietnam! End all research in biological and chemical warfare! Break the war contracts of British industry with the U.S. military! Place under public ownership and workers' control industries which maintain such contracts!

We must have the perspective of mobilising the student population in both secondary and higher educational institutions against the war. Tell the truth about the war in the schools! Teach the history of British intervention into Southeast Asia! Kick the directors and shareholders of war corporations out of the governing bodies of the universities and colleges! No recruiting for war industries in the universities and colleges! For the right of secondary school students to organise against and discuss the war in the schools!

We must have the perspective of taking the fight against the war into the labour movement. The TUC and the Labour Party must demand an end to British complicity and the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops! Trade union activists must campaign for trade union participation in the national anti-Vietnam war mobilisations and the international actions against the war! The complicity of British industry in the U.S. war effort must be exposed and stopped by the labour movement!

The VSC as the conscious anti-imperialist wing of the anti-Vietnam war movement must be established in the major universities and colleges. It must be reactivated with a functioning centre in London, a staff worker and expansion of the circulation of its journal. It must take the initiative in building ad hoc committees around the country to organise mass actions against the war. End war-related research now!

This perspective presents no contradiction to the perspective of building a national youth organisation. A youth organisation active in leading a campaign for the defense of a living revolution, organising in conjunction with an international anti-Vietnam war movement and fighting the role of the labour bureaucracy in supporting imperialist crimes in Vietnam, will certainly be attractive to youth.

This perspective, a realisable one with the forces we now have, in an objective situation favourable to the building of a mass anti-Vietnam war movement, must be implemented in the coming year by the IMG if our responsibility to the Vietnamese revolution is to be carried out.

February 15, 1970

by the Political Committee

(This document is in political solidarity with the "Contribution to the Discussion on West European Perspectives" and the recent United Secretariat document on the "Construction of Mass Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe." It does not, therefore repeat the arguments contained in those statements.)

The aim of this paper is to help to give a precise orientation for the organisation in the coming few years. Such a precise organisation is a vital necessity for a revolutionary group so that it knows where it is going and can make maximum use of its limited resources. We have lacked such an orientation since we ceased to see the building of a left wing in the Labour Party as our basic strategic task. This is not intended to be a deep analytical document but instead will argue some basic propositions upon which my line of reasoning in advancing the orientation is based. The appendices are intended to round out this series of propositions. However, in the coming year or so the International will have to carry material making a deeper analysis to underpin these propositions.

These propositions are:

1) British imperialism is in a chronic crisis which has no immediate solution nor even hope of amelioration. The relative and absolute decline of British imperialism has been one of the major political processes of the twentieth century. British imperialism commenced the 20th century with an empire upon which "the sun never set" -- today, direct colonialism is confined to off-shore islands like the Falklands and historic accidents like Gibraltar. British imperialism had an almost neo-colonialist relationship, through huge investment, with much of Latin America, the Middle East and even many countries in Europe -- today United States and, to increasing extent, newer competitors like Germany and Japan have largely replaced Britain in this field. The British navy once ruled the seas and the British air force and army were amongst the strongest in the world -- today British military power has declined to such an extent that the sending of a few thousand troops to Northern Ireland threw it into a crisis.

However, it would be a mistake to think that British imperialism is dead or on the point of demise -- only the British working class will put a final end to "perfidious Albion." Through neo-colonialist forms of exploitation huge tribute is still exacted from former colonies and other underdeveloped countries. When the relationship of forces is favourable British imperialism will show its decayed and gnarled teeth: the Nigerian civil war, the invasion of Anguilla show its true character. But Suez was its final fling in trying to hold back the wheel of history by direct force on a massive scale. The drastic and rapid decline is shown by its reaction to the recent events in Libya. The latter was one of British imperialism's few successes in the second world war, in fact the country is a creation of British imperialism. Yet the new regime was able to order Britain out of the bases with scarcely a murmur from Whitehall.

2) British imperialism's economic, political and social institutions were built on the basis of its world dominant position -- hence their archaic and parasitic features. Now the basis for these institutions has almost completely eroded they are thrown into a deep structural crisis in adapting themselves to the new situation. British industry, long protected by imperial preferences, now has to fight for markets against more modern opponents; it has been ill-equipped to do this

because of the chronic under-investment caused by investors preference for higher yields in the empire. The city no longer finds itself monopolising currency, commodity and insurance transactions. The balance of payments position is less and less shielded by investment incomes.

The Tory Party, once the great champion of the "Jolly Old British Empire" and social stability now tries to posture as a modern European party with a mildly reformist policy. The Labour Party, once the party of reform, is now incapable of carrying out the mildest reforms; since coming to power it has made the poor poorer (see the CPAG report) and breaks the record with unemployment figures; its record on the social services e.g., housing is appalling even by Tory standards. The other major party of the past, the Liberal Party, is reduced to comic opera status, compelled to put up television personalities in an attempt to win a few parliamentary seats, and compelled to tolerate an extremely radical youth organisation -- a far cry from the days when its leader, Lloyd George, was the most intelligent representative of British imperialism at the height of its power.

None of these parties has an answer to the crisis -- principally because there is none -- and all are thrown into a crisis just trying to find a policy to ameliorate the position. The two principal reasons for the crisis are both aspects of the development of the world revolutionary process, Britain's decline vis-a-vis the colonial revolution, other imperialisms and the workers' states; and the changed relationship of forces between employers and workers in Britain itself. About the first factor, British imperialism, its institutions and parties can do nothing except react as the process develops. It will, furthermore be difficult to change the relationship of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie in Britain in the present world context.

3) The latest attempt to solve this crisis (or at least ameliorate it) -- the Wilson Labour Government -- has been an almost complete failure. Its sole major "success" -- that of temporarily improving the balance of payments position -- has been achieved mainly by attacking the living standards of the British people through monetary policies (especially the devaluation of the pound). However, the social function which the capitalist class hoped Labour would fulfill -- that of instituting an incomes policy, thus incorporating the unions almost entirely into neo-capitalist "planning," has been foiled by the resistance of the workers. The Labour Government has also failed in its attempts to change decisively the relationship of forces between the working class and employers in particular key industries -- docks, motor cars, printing, etc. In this sense, the struggle against the anti-trade union legislation, conducted under the leadership of the CP and certain sectors of the "left" trade union bureaucracy was a partial success. However, because it was conducted under the leadership of these people there are greater dangers that a variant of the incomes policy: that of incorporating productivity bargaining into all wage bargaining will have some success.

The other, though much less important, "success" of the Labour Government -- that of helping accelerate the rate of monopolisation of British industry is one of the clearest indications of the class politics of the Wilson Government.

However, even this "success" has an obverse side: the bringing together of workers in larger units and huge international and national monopolies creates the objective basis for a development of class consciousness. A corollary of the increasing trend towards monopolisation has been more and more combine shop stewards committees and working relations between different groups of trade unionists in particular industries. One of the results of all this has been the parity committee which, despite the disgusting behaviour of people like Scanlon, has been able to wring huge wage increases out of the employers. So even here the Labour Government's policies have reaped a very different harvest from the one it thought it was sowing.

4) The next possible attempt to solve the crisis of British imperialism -- a "modern" Tory Government -- seems no more likely to succeed. So much so that sections of bourgeois opinion are by no means certain that they want the Tories to win the next election. The position of the Economist is typical of this trend (see article attached as appendix). However, the Economist does not tell the whole tale: a possible variant of trying to solve the immediate problems of British imperialism would be to try to carry out a massive cut in the standard of living of the British people by huge cuts in social services. There would, of course, be less resistance to this form of reducing living standards than to the equivalent cut in wages. However, even this solution would have its dialectic: the long term effects of cutting social services would give rise to a deeper and more directly social opposition to capitalism. The Tory Government, because of its traditions and composition would have less difficulty than a Labour Government in carrying out this kind of operation. It could even mobilise a great deal of "public support" by a massive campaign against 'scroungers.' However, there is no body of opinion in Britain which really thinks that the Tories have the answer to Britain's crisis.

5) Thus we have a perspective of continuous crisis -- economic, social and political -- with no bourgeois leadership capable of presenting a decisive policy for solving it in the immediate future. The usual solution in such a situation: a Labour Government has been tried and found wanting. At present no bourgeois leadership (or its agencies) seems likely (or capable of) an outright confrontation with the working class. Some tendencies automatically assume that the Tories will begin an immediate attack on the trade unions, if returned in the next election. They would, of course, feel more confident than Wilson does now but they seem too astute to lightmindedly begin a process which will rapidly result in mass struggles against them. We can never preclude the possibility of the enemy making a mistake but on balance it seems unlikely that the Tories will assist us in this respect.

6) This crisis will almost certainly be intensified by a number of factors: -- renewed balance of payments difficulties because of the U.S. recession (one of Britain's best export markets) and expected big increases in imports to rebuild stocks of raw materials which have been excessively run down in the last period; also there is likely to be a cost push inflationary pressure which effects prices of exports -- structural problems which will be worsened by any slow-down in the economy, regional imbalance, the problem of Northern Ireland, inability to absorb the black population, the contradictions in all branches of education (see appendix). -- the growing alienation of the young.

7) Such problems are not new and in the past the leaderships of the traditional workers'

organisations -- both right and "left" -- have always come to the rescue of capitalism, when it has faced them, by diverting and heading off struggles. However, there are a number of indications that these leaderships are less and less able to do this in this period:

a) the inability of the Labour Government to impose an incomes policy and the fact that it had to withdraw the penal clauses. b) the inability of the right wing trade union leaders to stop militant struggles against the Labour Government and employers; strike figures are eloquent testimony to this. c) the decline in the grip of the Communist Party over militants which has acted as a second line of defence for the trade union bureaucrats in demobilising workers struggles. The importance of the Communist Party's influence and role is shown by the way it controlled the one-day strikes last year. On the other hand, the recent miners' strike showed that its former dominant position in this field has declined and that the process is continuing. The Communist Party was unable to stop its members from calling for the resignation of its nominee for NUM secretary, Lawrence Daly. d) the fact that the young people of today have contempt for the leaderships of the traditional workers' organisations. There is no indication that young trade unionists take the leaders of their organisations seriously (right or "left"). In another sphere we can note that the membership of the LPYS and YCL has drastically declined since the rise of the youth vanguard.

But it would be a mistake to think that the social democrats and Stalinists have lost completely their ability to disarm the working class. At this point in time the stage is ripe for another variant of the social role of the bureaucracy of the workers' organisations: that of "left" social democracy in opposition making loud noises against an overtly anti-working class Tory Government. But there are big limits to the viability of such a manoeuvre: at the present stage anything likely to trigger off mass actions by the working class presents the possibility of uncontrolled and unstoppable struggles breaking out. Labour in opposition would have to be careful how fiercely it criticised the Tories!

8) The combination of a semi-permanent crisis situation with the inability of any bourgeois leadership to solve it, and the fact that the leaderships of the traditional workers' organisations are less and less able to disarm the workers and youth, means we can look forward to a whole period of political, economic, industrial and social struggles, leading in some cases to explosions. It would be rash to predict the certainty of a "May" in Britain in the coming year or so but certainly we have to do all in our power to be prepared for really stormy struggles which can break out very suddenly and be violent.

This is not to say that the level of working class consciousness has transcended an "economist" outlook. Whilst, on the one hand, there is a tremendous accumulated discontent, on the other, there has been, amongst older workers especially, a decline in the level of consciousness. This is due to the treachery of the Labour Party leadership and the failure of a mass left to appear. However, the key thing is that more and more sections of workers are prepared to struggle. The task of the vanguard is to use these struggles to develop socialist consciousness amongst more and more layers of workers; hence the importance of inserting transitional demands into these struggles which always raise the question of workers' power.

This state of continuous crisis, with

upsurges and even explosions, can continue for a protracted period but not indefinitely. Sooner or later a shift one way or the other will have to come. There will be a growing tendency in the ruling class to look for a solution via the creation of some kind of "strong state." An obvious example would be a Tory Government, with a huge majority and strong Powellite tendencies to give itself a mass base, which pledges itself to "deal with the unions and the troublemakers." Another possible model would be a coalition Government brought into existence after some severe crisis. However, the "strong state" will not be brought into existence unless the working class has suffered big defeats. It must be noted, however, that one of the forms of a defeat is for the workers to accept big cuts in their living standards without a fight -- the imposition of the Gaullist regime in France is an example of this.

A workers' solution to the present crisis would require a conscious leadership. None of the existing organisations is anything like approaching this and there is no sign of such a leadership arising "spontaneously" from the present struggles. In fact, it is only the strength of the workers' organisations and the world-wide favourable relationship of forces which has prevented big defeats from being inflicted on the working class in the period since the second world war. Lack of a leadership, even a most primitive kind, has prevented the working class from gaining anything like it could from the present favourable conjunctural circumstances. Sooner or later, unless a leadership is built defeats will be inflicted upon the working class and the way will be open for an evolution to the right in British politics.

Thus we have at most a few years to help to create a conscious leadership, largely from our own efforts. The alternative is clearly a decisive defeat for the working class and a period of reaction. In the longer term one can say that in the next few decades (maybe only one or two) we must create a conscious leadership in the advanced capitalist countries, capable of winning the struggle for power, or the likely alternative is disaster for mankind (say through a nuclear war).

9) If the bourgeoisie has a crisis of leadership one can say that the workers' movement is in a worse state. Our strategy of "Labour to Power" was premised upon the assumption that a period of Labour Government would lead to the emergence of a mass left-wing within the Labour Party, this leading to a split, the left wing of which would provide the basis for a further evolution towards a revolutionary party. This has not taken place because of the impotence of reformist schemes in a period of capitalist crisis and the consequent confusion and demobilisation. The behaviour of sectors of the left was an important contributing factor: part of the traditional (ex-Bevanite) left joined Wilson in attacking the working class (Barbara Castle is now chief advocate of the incomes policy), another part limited itself to impotent gestures, whilst evolving to the right just one pace to the left of Wilson (Paul Rose now castigates the Government for capitulating to the Libyans by withdrawing from the bases) and SLL chose to pull out of the Labour Party immediately after Wilson was elected (although it must be noted that its policy had been galloping in that direction for two or three years. The betrayals of the Labour Government and the impotence of the major left forces to oppose its rightward evolution had far-reaching effects in demoralising for a period whole layers of Labour Party and trade union activists. Thus the left wing of the Labour Party was weakened by the Labour Government and many thousands

of activists were either demoralised or virtually depoliticalised (although carrying on their trade union activities).

The Communist Party has been quite unable to make any real advances in a period which one might have thought would be extremely favourable to it. It has gone further to the right putting all its eggs in the basket of "unity of the left;" this meaning an alliance with the 'left' trade union leaders and parliamentarians. As these gentlemen have evolved to the right the Communist Party has been dragged along. Among the youth and intellectuals of the Communist Party, the international crisis of Stalinism has had a devastating effect. Thus in a period of rising trade union struggles and the radicalising of wide layers of youth the Communist Party's membership and influence has gone down. As noted by the recent Communist Party conference its membership fell by 6% and sales of the Morning Star by 5,000 in the last two years. The YCL lost no less than 37% of its membership in the year leading up to its conference last summer.

The Socialist Labour League, despite its considerable technical achievement in bringing out a five-times-a-week newspaper, has been quite unable to jump out of its sectarian skin. It had the chance with the launching of this paper to make a turn -- there are even signs that at least sectors of its leadership recognise the need for a turn, hence the Vietnam campaign -- however, instead it has continued to concentrate its main efforts on justifying its refusal to work with other tendencies and in particular its separation from the world Trotskyist movement. It is likely to make individual gains during the coming struggles but its ability to hold these whilst it continues its sectarianism is extremely doubtful. It too has lost members since the election of the Labour Government and while reliable figures are hard to come by it is useful to compare the Socialist Labour League's own figures for participation on its demonstrations. These show a real decline as highlighted by its January 11 demonstration where Socialist Labour League forces amounted to less than 1,000 (probably many less -- it must be noted that the Workers Press claimed a total of 1,500 including the IS, VSC and IMG contingents) after many weeks of preparation and propaganda. In the past the SLL has always brought out a minimum of 2,000 on such efforts and sometimes many more. But more important is the fact that the SLL with its present policies will be quite unable to make the qualitative breakthrough which is required to construct a revolutionary leadership in Britain.

The International Socialism group made considerable gains in membership during the latter part of 1967 and the beginning of 1968, then stagnation set in. As could be (and was) predicted the effect of trying to build an all-embracing organisation on an unprincipled basis produced a swamp. IS is deeply opportunist and this leads it to water down its slogans and programme in face of a low political level among the people it is trying to influence. This is the basic explanation of why it has adopted a deeply economist approach in trade union activities and for its disastrous fiasco of intervention in Northern Ireland. The latter case is extremely instructive and has been well documented by the Workers Fight tendency. At all stages in this affair because it hoped to convert Peoples Democracy to the Irish IS it capitulated to Peoples Democracy's political backwardness. This reached its peak when IS refused to call for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and attacked those tendencies that did. This is highly instructive because the real test of a

tendency is the way it behaves in important crisis situations. By this example alone (and there are others) IS demonstrated its incapacity to provide a revolutionary leadership to struggles unless it basically alters its policies. Having said this it must be noted that IS reflects something in the movement -- the pressure of radicalised petty bourgeois sectors which are hostile to a disciplined political programme; this mood has a real echo among the radicalised youth and not just among petty bourgeois. Hence until a really authoritative revolutionary organisation is developed IS is likely to be with us and could even grow in particular situations. It must also be noted that IS seems to be trying to commit political suicide by adopting a more and more anti-student, anti-youth vanguard policy. However when the full fruits of this become apparent it is likely that the empiricists in the leadership of IS will make a turn. Finally it has become more and more apparent that wider and wider sectors of the left are recognising IS as a non-serious organisation and it seems it may have taught youth militants a negative lesson in respect to organisational principles.

Solidarity has made gains in the last period, especially from the disillusioned libertarians who left IS because of its alleged adoption of democratic centralism. It has done serious and useful work in several industrial struggles (notably Fords) and the squatters campaign. However, it too is a prisoner of its own dogmas and, in fact, its very success has led to a further fragmentation in practise. Now it has several local bases it is establishing local papers which are quite free to put forward any policy they like. A crystal ball is not necessary to see where this will lead. Solidarity may give a lead to local struggles but is quite unable to even begin the job of constructing a national leadership. Many of the militants in Solidarity will probably find their way to the revolutionary party of the future, via the process of splits and fusions. We should, therefore, seek to have working relations with them.

The Communist Party of Britain (M/L), which contains a number of important industrial militants and has succeeded in stabilising itself to the extent of having a regular printed monthly paper, a bookshop and a headquarters, seemed a likely contender for the hegemony of the Maoist forces in Britain. This has not come to pass and the CPB's addiction to the thoughts of chairman Mao and the beacon of socialism in Europe -- Albania -- is not the only explanation of this failure. The CPB's industrial militants have not been able to work out a separate strategy for themselves. Indeed, Reg. Birch and the group around him seem to be able to keep their union positions only on the basis of their personal records of militancy and combinations with other forces (not always of the left!). Some hundreds of potential revolutionary militants are trapped in the CPB and other Maoist groupings and are thus abstracted out of the process of building a revolutionary leadership in Britain. The Chinese leadership sees these groups (in all countries) as pawns in its struggle with the Moscow bureaucrats. It is not interested in forming a mass party but one which will pay its respects to Chairman Mao. Thus the Maoist militants are prisoners of their dependence on Peking and will suffer continuous frustration in their endeavors to build up influence in this country. They are likely to get real surprises emanating from Peking in the form of sharp shifts in policy. Despite their rabid anti-Trotskyism it is important for us to maintain unity in some action at least with the serious Maoist militants.

The Revolutionary Socialist League has con-

tinued to work patiently at its Labour Party work. It would claim to have notched up some considerable success in the Labour Party Young Socialists and in the Labour movement generally on the Morsey-side. However, most of these successes exist on paper only: despite its leading position in the LPYS it has neither stopped the rapid decline of this organisation nor converted it into an organ of even the most modest struggle. Transport House is unlikely to be worried by the paper resolutions of the LPYS whilst its main activities are selling raffle tickets and canvassing. The coming General Election is likely to cause a crisis within the RSL (which it should do a little to exacerbate) as they are faced with the difficulty of getting their members to canvass for Labour in a virtually uncritical manner. Because the RSL is a passive organisation which comments rather than tries to intervene it will be unable to play a role in mass struggles. However, we should note that the RSL too has made sharp turns in its orientation and we should certainly follow its activities and policies.

With a great flourish and rolling of drums, Tribune launched the Socialist Charter. This has turned out to be nothing more (and perhaps less) than Victory for Socialism. Whilst it represented a step forward insofar as it conceded the necessity for the left to organise within the Labour Party, its main function has been to organise a discredited form of activity: arranging the victory of Socialist Charter candidates in selection conferences, etc. Of course, there has to be some trappings: conferences, participation in demonstrations with huge banners and tiny contingents, etc. But the real purpose of the Socialist Charter -- ensuring the return of more "left" parliamentarians has been shown by attempts to democratise its structure. Clearly, the enthuasastic welcome given to Socialist Charter by the Militant was wishful thinking.

The trade union "lefts" have shown no sign of doing more than speaking at Morning Star rallies and adopting a more sensitive policy in industrial struggles. Apart from the gesture by the TGWU in announcing that its panel of MPs would be reviewed, the Jones, Scanlons and even Jenkins have not ventured into the political arena. It is clear that the "left" trade union leaders have no intention of using their great power in the Labour Party -- from affiliation, etc. -- to present a real challenge to Wilson. The degeneration of Lawrence Daly is a terrible warning to those who would see "left" trade union leaders playing a major role in developing a left alternative in the labour movement.

10) The situation of the left would be extremely gloomy if it were not for the coming on to the scene of a new force: the youth vanguard. Before going on it must be said that this youth vanguard in Britain is small and backward by comparison with other countries. The recent resurgence of student struggle and the inevitability of a huge crisis in all fields of education indicate that this youth vanguard will grow and develop in the next few years. It is also a question of what we, and other left organisations, do to help this growth and development.

The youth vanguard has come into existence with the following characteristics:

- a) it has emerged quite outside the framework of the traditional workers' organisations;
- b) it has been inspired by the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions in particular and anti-imperialist struggles in general;
- c) it tends to be anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-Stalinist and is contemptuous of

of reformism;

d) it tends to equate organisation with bureaucracy;

e) it has been unable to create any stable organisations of its own; and

f) it is very internationalist oriented and longs for unity with the working class.

Its full potentiality in Britain was shown by the size of the October 27, 1968 demonstration. Of the 100,000 on that demonstration a big majority were youth and various samples collected indicate that about 2/3 of the participants were for the overthrow of capitalism. With all this in mind it is not surprising that nearly all the increase in size of the left groups has come from this milieu. Only the CP and SLL (for different reasons) have failed to make substantial inroads. It is also clear that with the above characteristics we have a vast potential for growth and increase in influence which we have only just begun to scratch the surface of. Even the negative features give us the opportunity to speak to thousands about basic Marxist theory (on the construction of a party, democratic centralism, etc.) where before we spoke to tens or hundreds. This phenomenon is not merely quantitative: it amounts to us being in harmony with a whole social layer.

11) In addition to the new youth vanguard other likely reinforcements exist for the revolutionary potential of the British working class: These are:

a) The black workers who are overwhelmingly young proletarians and who are completely alienated from all the traditional parties of British capitalism (see appendix).

b) Women workers who are becoming more and more unionised and conscious of the double exploitation they suffer. The conscious factor is very important and the influence of the growing women's liberation movement is likely to be explosive among the young. Housewives, who will directly face the consequences of growing inflation are likely to be drawn in too. The Government's "Equal Pay" law, even assuming it is not shelved after the General Election, has all kinds of anomalies and will even worsen the position of some women. Its application and the expectations that it has aroused will help to strengthen militancy rather than damp it down providing there is some kind of leadership -- even an economist one.

c) newly unionised sectors. It is one of the many contradictions of modern capitalism that previously conservative sections of the working class -- public employees, administrative staff, etc., can become very militant, very quickly. Such sectors tend to fall behind in the wages race precisely because of their previous lack of militancy. Not having a history of struggle they are not held back by leaders with a former "left" prestige. Lastly, as neo-capitalism is forced to rationalise more and more these sections feel the pressures of the speed up, etc. This not only creates general discontent it "proletarianises" them by knocking out of their heads their former ideas of higher social status.

d) the Irish immigrant population. As explained elsewhere, the problem of Northern Ireland has no acceptable solution in foreseeable circumstances. The sending of troops, the granting of niggling reforms and lack of leadership has enabled the Government to temporarily dampen down last year's struggles. But already the relative stability is breaking down. If a real mass campaign could be developed in this country -- even something as modest as the VSC in its best days -- a really explosive situation would develop. The Irish in this country, who in their large majority support the oppressed Catholics, are bound by a million strands to the situation in Ireland. The situation in the Republic, already very

volatile, is likely to be stirred up by a recession and developments in the nationalist movement. The Irish in this country are mainly workers in industry, building, etc. and tend already to be more militant than their English counterparts.

All the above sectors, together with the youth, share two common characteristics: they will be relatively harder hit by a recession and they are more volatile in crisis situations. Their specific weight in the coming struggles will, therefore, be much greater than their numerical proportion would indicate.

12) The IMG has been in existence for just over five years although one can say that it only became a national entity during the latter half of 1966 and the first half of 1967 as the Vietnam campaign developed. Essentially its first task was, starting from scratch, to lay the foundations of the British section of the Fourth International -- this task being forced upon us by the degeneration of the mainstream of Trotskyism in this country. Starting off with inexperienced and heterogeneous forces -- virtually confined to one town for a period -- it has achieved certain basic tasks which made its recognition as a section possible at the last world congress:

a) trebled its size (hopefully by the time of the conference quadrupled) on the basis of a big qualitative improvement in membership commitment (by a process of development, selection and the splitting off of groups which were opposed to democratic centralism);

b) established itself as a national entity, thus demonstrating very clearly that the SLL is not the only Trotskyist force in the field;

c) intervened in and even initiated struggles which have a national impact, especially the creation of VSC, which helped to alter the course of British politics;

d) accumulated a very modest infra-structure: a national office, full-timer, etc.

However, we must be objective and assess our present stage as that of being essentially a propaganda group. Obviously from the situation described previously this is quite inadequate -- what can a propaganda group do in the case of big industrial struggles (in particular a general strike)? If we are to play our role in the historic task of helping to bring into existence a revolutionary leadership we have to transcend being a propaganda group.

We are, in a sense, in a vicious circle just now: our ability to intervene in the many struggles and even explosions which are inevitable in the coming years is strictly limited by our small size; and yet unless we can intervene in this kind of struggle we will find it difficult to grow in size and influence. The example of the Northern Ireland struggle last summer, where we could not send someone over until two or three months after the main action and where we were incapable of taking the political initiative, is a warning. We will not automatically grow in size and influence in even the most militant struggles. Put another way we can say that unless in the coming years we can go from being a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action the opportunity may be lost for a whole period. Moreover, other larger groups are likely to grow in the coming situation, thus making the long-term job of building a revolutionary leadership that much harder.

Our essential task is to use the few years' breathing space that we have -- which will give us many opportunities -- to make the qualitative leap from a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action -- this is the only way to

break the vicious circle.

13) By a league for revolutionary action I mean an organisation capable of initiating campaigns in an increasing number of fields, able to intervene in most of the important political processes and able to take the initiative in the decisive struggles. It is not yet a revolutionary party -- it is not substantial enough and has not yet got the support of a decisive section of the working class. However, because it is seen as a serious force by the whole left it can act as an important pole of attraction which militant workers will respect. It is, furthermore, an organisation which already poses the question of the formation of the revolutionary party by a quantitative growth and qualitative development through fusions and regroupments.

A propaganda group is restricted on most questions to commenting and trying to influence the programmes and actions of the principal forces actually playing a role in the struggle. Of course, it is quite possible for a propaganda group to take initiatives and even lead campaigns in particular fields; however these are the exceptions and due to the coincidence of favourable circumstances or untypical relationships of forces in limited sectors. An example of the latter being our leadership of the Vietnam struggle in Britain.

14) The prerequisites for a league for revolutionary action are:

- a) to have a substantial number of disciplined militants organised along Bolshevik lines -- able to act as one man in a crisis or decisive struggle;
- b) to be a national body with functioning cells in all the important centres;
- c) to have a nationally known press which puts forward a clear line on all the important political issues of the day and which all sections -- friend and foe -- respect and take into consideration;
- d) to have a strong centre able to dispose of considerable resources which can be thrown into decisive struggles;
- e) to have a political leadership which has a worked out perspective of action and authority within the league and respect without.

15) The IMG clearly has a very long way to go to reach these objectives, but the writer is convinced that we have both the possibility and the necessity to travel this path in the next few years -- after that it may be too late for a whole period.

Concretely, the achievement of the following aims over the next year would constitute a qualitative advance towards this objective. Their achievement would, furthermore, decisively change the relationship of forces between us and the other groups thus making the next stage of development relatively easier:

- a) the doubling of our size as from conference;
- b) the creation of twice the number of branches and groups as we have now; with the systematic attempt to create nuclei in the major industrial towns;
- c) the creation of a strong centre based upon a core of professional workers, making an intelligent division of labour possible and giving us the possibility of intervening far more aggressively in decisive struggles as they come up;
- d) the creation of a viable autonomous

youth organisation;

- e) the establishment of a large circulation weekly political newspaper, capable of issuing agitational material in important struggles; the same paper acting as the league organiser;
- f) the establishment of more of the Bolshevik norms of internal life: a functioning political leadership, which gives continuous day-to-day leadership via a structured POLITICAL discussion, ideological work via a theoretical journal and special publications and an internal bulletin;
- g) the creation of a meaningful national trade union fraction, with a public face;
- h) the establishment of a viable publishing house;
- i) the establishment of an educational department;
- j) the establishment of national caucuses, which are known and functioning, in the fields of:

- 1) women's work;
- 2) black work; and
- 3) teaching (in its widest sense);

k) helping VSC to achieve a minimum necessary infra-structure to enable it to retain its hegemony of the anti-imperialist wing of the anti-Vietnam war movement by continuing to organise united front-type mass activities while ever the war continues;

- l) in view of our international possibilities and the fact that the Middle East could become the "Vietnam" of the early 1970's, create a nucleus -- based upon our Arab comrades and others designated to that activity -- which will enable us to move quickly into a dominant position in this field;
- m) the creation of an Irish caucus -- based upon Irish comrades -- to enable us to intervene in the coming struggles in this field;
- n) the establishment of a sound financial structure based upon the pledge system and strict budgeting.

16) The reiteration of all the things we should be doing is not, of course, an orientation. In the past we have had central focuses which enabled our comrades to orient themselves in a unified national manner. These were Labour Party work and Vietnam work. The former gave us an instrument through which to mediate our endeavours in a variety of campaigns: the left wing of the Labour Party. The latter gave us a dynamic and nationally known campaign with which we could insert ourselves in various milieux: the labour movement, student movement, putting pressure on the CP and YCL, forcing other groups into a united front, etc.

Neither of these two orientations is sufficient now: obviously we can no longer focus everything around the Labour Party; the Vietnam issue is not sufficient in this respect because:

- a) there are a large variety of other campaigns in which we must be active; and
- b) the youth vanguard has matured and is no longer prepared to be limited to single-issue campaigns.

Moreover, we must note that our special relationship to Vietnam work corresponded to a certain stage of our development: our small size prevented us from taking up a variety of issues and, for Vietnam work, we had access to resources far beyond our means. We must also note that our ability to force a united front on other groups was also partially because these groups did not see us so much as a competitor as they do now. Several of them, particularly IS, saw the relationship as being one where we did the work and

they reaped the benefits.

What then is the central focus which will enable us to intervene in all these fields and yet not just dissipate our efforts? This focus, I would suggest, is the concept of our need to go from being a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action. The means to express this focus should be two-fold:

- a) the rapid creation of the youth organisation; and
- b) the building up of the large circulation weekly newspaper.

(But with the rider that there should be a continuous campaign to recruit people to the IMG and to build new branches.)

17) There is to be another document on the youth organisation and I do not want to duplicate what might be said there. However, it is essential to the theme of my argument to say that the youth organisation should be seen as a cadre organisation with a high level of commitment able to intervene in and extensively recruit from the youth vanguard. In a certain sense, one might say that the youth organisation is -- in its original projected form, anyway -- a special device to enable us, as it were, to "enter" the youth vanguard.

This being the case, then the forces vitally necessary for us to intervene and build nuclei in all the fields I have listed will be gained directly from the youth organisation. In the main our interventions in mass struggles will be mediated through the youth organisation, which will go directly to those engaged in struggle. The winning of several hundred cadres through the youth organisation will give us the young workers for the trade union base, the young black workers, the Irish, Arabs, women unionists, etc.

18) Detailed examination of the practical steps necessary to establish the weekly political newspaper fall outside the scope of this document. Its exact character and launching will be determined by processes very difficult to predict exactly at this stage. However, I am inclined to say that it would be wrong to build it up as a youth paper. Whilst the youth organisation would use the weekly paper as its face to the outside world it would also need a specifically youth paper -- say a monthly -- which would cater to the special needs of the organisation. This would enable us to avoid a clash between the paper serving the league and the one serving the youth organisation.

The political weekly would be the means of intervening, locally and nationally, in all manner of struggles and political processes. Local branches would both centre their activities around the distribution of the paper and use it for their particular needs. A paper of this kind would be the means whereby the league could express itself massively and quickly on the important issues of the day. The editorials of the weekly would become both directives and political guides for the members of the league, the youth organisation and sympathisers.

There is huge scope for such a paper providing it is well written, technically good and organised properly. This makes some form of collaboration with other forces essential until we have grown (and recruited these forces).

19) The campaign to go from being a propaganda group to becoming a league for revolutionary action should start immediately after the conference. Once having taken the major decisions, each unit should draw up a plan to apply

them in its locality or field of work. Conditions would vary from place to place but where we are properly established the organising of a large public meeting to launch the youth organisation (and later the paper; or vice versa according to circumstances) would seem to provide a focus for activities. At the same time to enable us to make the growth in membership, etc. possible a plan would have to be drawn up for real contact work; not merely the sending of letters or invitations to meetings. The branch or group should have a project of recruiting a given number of people over a period and a short list drawn up to work on. Then visiting should be organised.

20) This orientation by no means envisages the abandonment of our central concept for the necessity for there to be some structural fragmentation of the traditional workers' organisations for a mass revolutionary party to be built. This question is examined by the United Secretariat resolution and it is only necessary to say here that what is being put forward here is a different idea as to how we can help to bring about that fragmentation. I am arguing that we will best help this process by putting pressure from the outside rather than by trying to bring about an organic development within. Our experience since the election of the Labour Government in 1964 shows us that with the present relationship of forces the radicalisation of the working class tends to by-pass the actual Labour Party. In fact it can be clearly demonstrated that the Labour Party has shifted to the right appreciably since 1964. This needn't necessarily be a permanent feature but it is difficult to envisage any circumstances where, in the next period, a mass left will grow in the Labour Party as a result of the radicalisation of the working class.

On the other hand, a league for revolutionary action would be a pole of attraction for some of the most advanced militants in the trade unions and maybe even the Labour Party. The best thing for us would be to recruit some existing activists in these fields. We should, therefore, have a conscious policy of keeping a watch on developments in the Labour Party, perhaps best by maintaining forces in the IPYS and Socialist Charter. We should also continue to direct some propaganda towards the Labour Party. Such is the situation inside the Labour Party that worthwhile militants no longer have a shibboleth about working with people outside the party. In no way should we advocate that people resign from the party.

This flexible attitude is the one best suited to our present situation and the tasks that face us.

21) To sum up, we have to do the ground work in the next year that will enable us to go from commentary politics to the praxis of intervention. This in a period that will be characterised by sharp turns and bewilderingly fast changes. Our major enemy in this change of orientation will be conservatism. In our drive to build and change the nature of the organisation a further threat of organisational sectarianism faces us. We do not intend to assemble a cadre force as if motivated solely by a collectors mania. The cadres and the organisation must not only be capable of leading and growing but also capable of working with sectors of the labour movement. Lenin said that "politics begin with millions." In this pre-history "politics" we have always to consider not only the short term needs and dictates of our present organisation but also the tasks that face us historically; the major one being the formation of a revolutionary party. It is for us to avoid the

organisational sectarianism of IS and the SLL and build our organisation not in competition with but for the labour movement.

In conclusion, it must be said that what is put forward in this document is very ambitious and will require a tremendous pace of activities. This will mean a radical break from the methods of thinking and activity inherited from the past. The era of the small group is now over; the main function of the Trotskyist movement is not any more that of preserving and defending a body of ideas against Stalinism and reformism. Today, the task is to rapidly set about the job of laying the basis for mass revolutionary parties. This in turn reflects the speed up in all political processes; a phenomenon which is gathering momentum. We have no choice in this matter -- our situation is determined by objective processes over which we have no control (even if we wanted to slow things down!) To paraphrase Truman: its going to be hot in the kitchen and those who don't like it hot had better abandon revolutionary politics!

But there is more involved. It should be the aim of every revolutionary to live a full life which does the maximum to achieve what Lenin called the noblest task: the liberation of mankind. We are lucky: we live in a period when capitalism is in its final death agony and when its

main props, social democracy and Stalinism, are both in mortal crisis.* Thus our efforts can achieve much more and be more fruitful than those of our predecessors who were active in less fortunate times. Thus we and our co-thinkers have the opportunity to really help bring about what Engels called mankind's leap from the barbarism of his prehistory to real humanity when mankind's history will really begin; failure will exact a terrible price: at best the pushing back of mankind for a whole historical era. Thus we must set about this task with utmost determination and a terrible energy. In this process formalism, egoism and pettiness must be swept aside and be replaced by the wonderful comradeship of revolutionaries setting about a vital task:

FORWARD FROM A PROPAGANDA GROUP TO A LEAGUE
FOR REVOLUTIONARY ACTION!

*Even if we are wrong about this, we must agree with Trotsky that "it is better to have been a Spartacus"

SOME FURTHER REMARKS

In order not to break up the theme of the argument in the original document I have deliberately left detailed elaboration of some questions to this appendix. This has the added advantage in that by dealing with some of the tactical questions here differences on these questions can be separated from differences with the main line of my document.

1) Structural Imbalance

This is an international feature of neo-capitalism and one which, despite all the efforts of the various governments concerned, is likely to be intensified, especially in times of recession. What gives this a special twist in Britain is that the two most important "under-developed" regions coincide with national differences. This fact, together with the conscious factor (radical nationalists are directly inspired by national liberation struggles), gives the potentiality of an explosive situation.

Ireland also enters into this algebraic formula. A protracted struggle in Northern Ireland will, without doubt, stimulate an upsurge in Wales and Scotland. For some time there has been active collaboration between radical nationalists from the three countries: the misguided Free Wales Army had close links with sectors of the IRA. We need to note that this will introduce an unstable factor into British politics of some considerable importance. Because this phenomenon takes place in a world-context of national liberation struggles fusing with social revolution a constant leftward pressure will be exerted upon the nationalist forces. Already this is seen in Ireland.

Exactly how we should relate to these forces lies outside the framework of this document. However, it must be said that we have to vigorously oppose the right-wing sectarian policy of the SLL (dressed up in ultraleft language but so similar to that of Transport House!) and other groups. We need to point out that Marxists stand for the greatest extension of democracy under capitalism, including the right of separation. There is a wealth of literature by Lenin, in particular, on this question (especially his polemic with Piatakov, which explains the Marxist attitude very precisely). We must make it known widely in the movement that Engels wrote in favour of a federal Britain (and was approvingly quoted by Lenin on this topic). Our tactical orientation on the question is tied to attitude of the working class in the countries concerned.

2) Ireland

I have written extensively on this topic in International and I think my analysis there has stood the test of time. In relating the Irish question to the working out of a perspective and orientation we must emphasise the intractability of the problem for British imperialism. The Tory Party would find this problem harder to tackle than Labour, which has the advantage of a historic identification with the cause of the oppressed Catholic minority -- this fact may have saved them the Gorbals seat in the recent by-election. The Conservatives have strong political, social, economic, historic and even personal links with the Unionists of Northern Ireland. The historic record -- and historic records are important in Irish politics -- is that of threatening civil war in Britain to assist their unionist colleagues just prior to the First World War. All this would make it more difficult for them to steer the Stormont regime upon a reformist path and reduces

their room for manoeuvre. British imperialism in its weakened form has not got the resources to enable it to deal with the Irish problem by economic pump-priming.

The factor which assists British imperialism is, of course, the complete lack of any kind of leadership in Northern Ireland (not even tactically astute nationalist, let alone revolutionary). There is the same lack in the south. Until this problem is solved British imperialism will be able to "muddle along" reacting to events as each new shift takes place. Our job is to help to make this impossible. A strong campaign in Britain would, of course, be useful but the most important thing is to assist the development in Ireland itself. This means seeing as an urgent task the assisting of the construction of a revolutionary leadership and assisting the leftward evolution of all forces. Just now our policy has been to make general propaganda and develop relations with the various forces in Ireland. This policy is insufficient in the long-term. It would be most rash to rush into anything without the deepest consideration and complete information, but sooner or later we will have to actively start to help a particular tendency which we think is nearest (in its potential) to the ideas of revolutionary Marxism (while at the same time supporting all those engaged in struggle against Imperialism). This is why it is absolutely essential to have a caucus based upon Irish comrades who closely follow Irish affairs and who make regular visits home. The recruitment of such comrades should be seen as a top priority and not handled in a routine formalistic manner.

3) Work with the Black Population

We have to ask ourselves why, in view of the fact that we are the only tendency to give unqualified support to the concept of black power, we have not gained influence and members among the black community to any great extent. The general answer is, I believe, that our failure reflects the general low political level that exists on this front. A basic weakness has been for people to attempt to mechanically repeat the experiences of the United States movement in this country (a fault which we are not entirely free of). Another factor which cannot be ignored is that of the number of militants, mostly very heroic and extremely well-intentioned, who have the "caudillo" complex. All of this represents the pressure of bourgeois ideology on the movement and leads to extreme fragmentation. It might be added that the activities of left groups in general has been extremely negative and black militants are to be sympathised with when they say they do not trust the white revolutionary.

A particular reason for our failure is our neglect of this work which took the form of conducting general propaganda work (very useful but ephemeral) and doing little to build up a core of black Marxists who would try to help the black movement to solve these problems.

We need to remember and emphasise that the Black movement in the United States reached its present high level and breadth after millions of black people had been through a whole series of disillusioning experiences in which they tried out various forms of struggle. This long experience cannot be replaced by intense propaganda or imitation. The million and a half Black people in this country will only lose the

bourgeois illusions that the majority of them undoubtedly hold as a result of experience and going through various forms of struggle. It is impossible to skip over stages in the development of consciousness although the vanguard can learn from others' experiences immediately. This means that the vanguard organisations should launch forms of struggle designed specifically to take masses through experiences which will demystify them.

Another important difference with United States movement is the fact that the Black population in Britain is much more heterogeneous. Many big sections of the Black population here do not even speak English in their own homes. Indians and Pakistanis have a cultural life all of their own which in some areas is highly organised. Those most akin to the Black Americans, the West Indians, are those which have the greatest cultural affinity for British institutions. Among West Indians British bourgeois ideology, mediated through religious groups, is quite strong. All of this plays into the hands of divisive forces and makes the fight for unity extremely important.

It is vitally necessary that we organise regular meetings where our Black comrades and close sympathisers can work out a policy to solve these problems. The coming pressures on the Black community are going to be immense. As British imperialism seeks to solve its problems by cutting social services they will be the first to suffer. Already the Black population occupies the worst housing, their children go to the worst schools and the social amenities in their ghettos are totally inadequate. When the recession develops the Black workers (especially the young) will suffer the most from rising unemployment. Powellism will become a bigger and bigger temptation for the politicians of all the traditional parties. On the positive side the colonial revolution and the struggle of Black people in the United States will continue to inspire the young radicals, and wider sectors as struggles grow.

It is vital that we work out a transitional programme for this activity. On a more general front we must patiently work for principled unity -- vertical, horizontal and multi-national -- of the various groups. We must make links with all the national groupings in this country, especially to find common ground with them in the case of struggles in their home countries. In the early 1970s social instability is likely to grow in Pakistan and India; solidarity action with the struggles in these countries will become an extremely important activity.

4) The Crisis in all Fields of Education

One of the aspects of the general crisis of British imperialism is the fantastic contradiction it suffers in the field of education. It desperately needs the hundreds of thousands of technicians, etc., absolutely necessary to bring British industry up to date with its competitors yet, on the other hand, it is quite unable to spend the huge sums of money needed to make this possible. (It is difficult to imagine the huge sums involved: expenditure on education is by far the highest capital investment in Britain.)

Combined with this we have the conscious factor insofar as teachers and other educational staff are becoming proletarianised, i.e., gradually losing their illusions of a higher social status. This in turn, interacts on developments amongst students and school pupils, especially their fight for democracy in seats of learning. All these sectors are very influenced by methods of struggle used by workers, anti-imperialist demonstrators, etc.

This is a contradiction of immense difficulty for British imperialism. Quite apart from anything else no class system can allow a situation where its educationers, i.e., the transmitters to new generations of the official values of society, are permanently discontented. Over a period the social consequences of such a situation can be catastrophic for it. In Britain today, it is vitally necessary for the ruling class to demobilise workers struggles by creating the mystification that strikes are unpatriotic and against the interests of the people as a whole. How can they do this when teachers, the transmitters of such mystifications and general symbols of authority to the younger generation, are indulging in militant strike action?

A solution the Government may seek is that of greater productivity in education. We should do all in our power to make this difficult for them. This means fighting within the teaching profession against such a solution and linking the fight for higher wages with a fight for a better quality of education and against bourgeois ideology. This makes especially reprehensible the IS line of confining the struggle to wages militancy. We should also do all we can to broaden support for the teachers in the working class movement, especially the trade unions. The recent demonstration in Birmingham shows the huge potential for this.

It is difficult to make a precise prediction but appears likely that the teachers' present militancy will continue. At the coming NUT conference it appears almost certain that a new pay structure, commencing at £1,250 a year, will be demanded. With the present fighting mood it would appear likely that a struggle for this will commence regardless of the outcome of the present fight. Only a particularly cynical and unopposed betrayal by the leadership (leading to splits and loss of trade union membership) would seem capable of completely damping down this fight. The journal Rank and File could, if it rejected the economism of IS and the latter's anti-student policy, play an important role in countering such an evolution. Our teachers caucus therefore is of considerable importance.

5) Recruitment and Assimilation

An objection might be raised as to where all the new members of the league and the youth organisation are going to come from. This is easily answered: they will come from the 2,000 or so people who sympathetically (and very often enthusiastically) attended Ernest Mandel's meetings last Autumn, from amongst the hundreds who will go to hear Tariq Ali speak in practically any large town in Britain, and from the thousands who respect the work IMG has done on Vietnam. Once we start moving out recruitment will become easier. One of the biggest stumbling blocks to our growth has been the image we give of being small with no perspective of growing -- once this ghost is laid our growth in certain areas could be quite spectacular.

A bigger problem than finding people to recruit will be that of assimilating new members. This will be achieved by the two-fold process of intensive education and continuous nationally integrated campaigns.

This is why I specifically detailed the establishment of an educational department amongst our tasks. The purpose of this committee would be to liaison with the branches and groups on the questions of week-end schools, intense "one-off" Marxist education courses, reading lists, specialised educational projects, etc. As we grow the whole question of speakers for

schools will become a problem in itself. At present branches arrange week-end schools in a haphazard uncoordinated manner. (This is not their fault.) We should aim to have at least one week-end school a month arranged in such a way and with such topics that the group nationally can benefit.

The new leadership will be primarily responsible for the series of national campaigns. The new political committee will have to plan out a series of projects (subordinated, of course, to our main orientation) which give very concrete day-to-day leadership to branches and groups. In all cases internal and external written material should be produced. Particular emphasis must be laid upon international campaigns. This is both politically essential and will help to integrate new members far more than any other type of campaign.

6) Trade Union Work

A separate paper is being drawn up on this topic so I will only touch on certain subjects. Concretely I would suggest:

a) We should establish an "open" face by publishing material in the workers' control campaign, etc., in the name of our trade union committee. This could take the form of papers for the conferences and periodic pamphlets on selected topics, e.g., equal pay and transport.

b) that we should have a policy of using the areas where we have some base in the trade union defence committees to widen our national influence. A carefully prepared conference in, say, the East Midlands could be considered.

c) that we try to propagate the idea of solidarity action with teachers, students, etc., in the trade union defence committees.

d) that from a longer term point of view we channel our comrades into jobs which extend our base -- the example of the tubes is very instructive.

e) that we examine whether or not it is possible to use the Voice technique of syndicating material for different editions in relation to Bullseye.

f) that we work out a precise perspective for Bullseye as a matter of urgency.

7) Workers Control Campaign

Our relationship with this is, of course, complicated by the differences with Kork. However we have always held the position -- even on the morrow of the break with him -- that our policy was that of giving support to this campaign. Another factor which is becoming more and more important is the polarisation between the upper "left" trade union bureaucrats and the rank and file shop stewards, etc. The time when the workers' control campaign could unite, fairly harmoniously, in one spectrum forces ranging from anarchists to Jones and Scanlon is over. If Scanlon speaks at the next workers' control conference he is likely to be asked a lot of questions about his attitude towards recent struggles, especially Fords. This polarisation is beginning to express itself in an organisation form through differences between the London and Nottingham wings. As the election comes nearer these problems will increase -- the "left" MPs seeing the conferences more and more in terms of their electoral potential.

It needs to be said that although we adhere to the united front principle of working with anyone on the left, despite our political differences, on a principled basis that the participation of the "left" trade union bureaucrats in the workers' control conferences can give them a left cover.

For this reason their participation needs to be conditional upon them -- and the organisers being prepared to be criticised during and after the conferences.

In general we should continue with our support for this campaign with the aid of becoming generally known as the revolutionary Marxist tendency within it. We should raise the question of democratising the structure of the organisation and the conferences; and oppose the tendency towards academicism. We should continue to call upon the campaign to link itself with living struggles. It is difficult to foresee the future of the campaign but on balance we must see it as essentially being positive and having spread certain important ideas widely within the labour movement. But we can never return to mere participation and in the coming situation it is vital that we be more open. This, together with the above policies, should enable us to counter right wing tendencies and make trade union contacts and recruits.

8) Certain Political Dangers

Any change in orientation brings about the "natural" danger of over-correction. Adopting the orientation in this document will bring particular dangers in this respect. Notably these are organisational sectarianism, ultraleftism, reducing membership standards and opportunism.

a) Organisational sectarianism - This disease is one which has stricken many revolutionary movements -- the SLL being an almost laboratory pure specimen of the phenomenon. It has its sources in the impact of bourgeois ideology on the movement and the consequences of competition between various groups in a period when they are not put to the real test of leading mass struggles. In the latter circumstances there is a built-in tendency for those groups to flourish which concentrate on building their own resources, putting great emphasis on organisational efficiency, regardless of how this relates to the class struggles. In this situation the yardstick for the "correctness" of a tendency's policies can become its success in selling papers rather than how well it can apply Marxism to a concrete situation. If a tendency can accumulate enough resources to have a print shop or a publishing house the process can be structuralised. For it the recruitment of some business efficiency experts will reap bigger dividends than leading a strike.

These trends are all the more intensified because in a situation where there is a low political level of activity and general lack of Marxist education recruitment will be easiest for those tendencies which have a very simple unsophisticated policy. All of this tends to become self-perpetuating: the more resources a group has the more propaganda it can make, the more propaganda it makes the more members it gains, the more members it has the more resources it has, and so on and so on. This circle will only be broken when the organisation is put to the test in a decisive struggle or if its internal structure fragments (possibly due to the strains caused by its very successes).

The internal set up of a group suffering from organisational sectarianism is extremely undemocratic: there tends to be a strict division between the leaders and the led: internal discussion takes the form of exhortations to sell papers and raise money; those who express doubts are "traitors" sabotaging the organisation. Leadership gets concentrated in cliques (even families) and disputes between cliques replaces genuine political discussion. With

this kind of set up sharp turns in policy are possible -- the large majority of the membership passively accepting what the leadership says. Such is the atmosphere in the organisation that the members can be persuaded to carry out policies which completely cut them off from the rest of the left. Once this kind of degeneration has set in it is very difficult to remedy it.

We must avoid this happening to us -- even to the slightest degree -- like the plague. In our drive to build our press, recruit members and explain our differences with other groups we must always put politics first. Of course we want the highest efficiency but this must always be politically motivated. We must never pose things in terms of competition with other tendencies as a basic motivation. We must stress time and time again that we are not THE revolutionary party and all our members, especially the new ones, must be trained in this spirit. We must encourage the widest discussion with the group and never look upon non-factional criticism as "disruptive." Leading committees must always proceed from the basis that, except in times of crisis, their role is to politically inspire and persuade the membership not to give orders. We must never challenge the socialist credentials of members of other tendencies unless there is absolutely unambiguous evidence of perfidy. We must recognise that until the revolutionary party is built our perspective of regroupment means that many of those in other tendencies will one day be in the same organisation as us. We must stress that we have not got the monopoly of political wisdom nor revolutionary spirit. We must all the time relate our short term goals to our long term aims. Discussions on activities must be deeply political and the selling of papers, etc., never presented as an aim in itself.

b) Ultraleftism - This has been written about extensively by Lenin and his writings on this topic should be systematically studied. Basically ultraleftism has its roots in impatience and the lack of a deep grasp of Marxist method. It flourishes in a period of rapid radicalisation of layers unconnected with the labour movement. It is also greatly encouraged by the lack of an authoritative leadership in the working class movement. Obviously our turn towards the youth presents us with dangers from ultra-left pressures. Combatting ultraleftism involves explaining time and time again the complexity of the problems which face us. It means defending the Marxist concept of the way consciousness changes. It means approaching all questions from the point of view of deep Marxist analysis rather than from superficial impressions and short term movements. It means, in particular, dealing with the labour movement and the lack of development of the working class in a very objective manner, casting aside all idealisation and shorthand thinking. It means explaining tactical flexibility -- a deep study of Lenin's writings is extremely useful in this respect -- and the concept of entry.

Having said all this we need to emphasise that dealing with ultraleftism is not the same as dealing with opportunist tendencies. Some ultralefts are, of course, opportunists in disguise. They use their ultraleft jargon to cover their lack of confidence in the workers and their refusal to do serious work in the labour movement. These people can easily go from infantilism to opportunism very quickly -- one only has to remember the evolution of Eric Hoffer to illustrate this. When ultraleftism is the result of an organisational sectarian approach, e.g., the SLL and some Maoist groupings, changes of this kind can take place with startling rapidity.

However, where ultraleftism is basically the result of impatience and lack of experience and Marxist training, whilst ideologically firm, we have to regard the ultralefts concerned as misguided comrades rather than political enemies. As well as remembering Lenin's strictures on the ultraleft of the first few years of the Comintern (who were, in part at least, well-seasoned dogmatists who refused to work in the mass trade unions) we must also remember his warm words for the revolutionary spirit ultraleftism often indicated. We must not forget, either, Lenin's personal efforts to bring into the Third International the revolutionary syndicalists. We must always oppose those who fulminate against ultraleftism to cover opportunist tendencies.

c) Opportunism - Another danger which will confront us in the coming period is that of opportunism. Precisely in a period of struggle when all kinds of action are taking place there is a grave temptation to water down demands to "be with the masses." A bigger group has more problems in this respect than a smaller because it matters more in terms of action what it says. A small group, just making general propaganda, can virtually take any position it wants without being put to the test of trying its ideas in practice. Until a group is capable of influencing large numbers of people to take action (even if only on a local scale) its policies have more the function of training cadres than actually helping to determine the course of events. Once the latter question arises a group has to think very clearly about what it says and can be held responsible for the course of action it advocates. Organisations will sometimes attempt to alter the course of struggles by merely outflanking the existing leadership from the left. This is an old habit of the SLL and, more recently IS. For them being revolutionary is calling for a £2 a week increase when the CP calls for 30/-. This left opportunism has been matched by IS to growing extent with ordinary opportunism (see especially its attitude towards productivity deals).

The basic motivation for this kind of behaviour is the desire to influence a larger number of workers by avoiding demands which are considered to be too advanced. However, once this is indulged in the process develops and the organisation is subject to increasing economist pressures.

The real counter to this deviation is to always remember our long term aims: an episodic struggle will come and go but unless we have, during the struggle, built the cadre force, increased consciousness and taken the movement forward any success will be ephemeral (maybe making one even more a prisoner of the backward mood of the masses). By and large, flexible tactics and the method of transitional demands can mean that there need not necessarily be a contradiction between the size of forces one can influence and principled politics. Sometimes, as our insistence on the solidarity position on Vietnam demonstrates, the principled position will also be more successful in terms of numbers. It needs always to be remembered that our ability to lead struggles is basically a function of our strength rather than our slogans be too advanced or not.

d) Reducing membership standards - With a constant emphasis on recruitment there could be a tendency to drop membership standards and commitment. Nothing written in this document is intended to encourage such a trend -- on the contrary! The probationary membership system and the strict application of the check up procedure is an important principle of Bolshevik

organisation, and our adoption of this method will help us in the coming period. In our internal life there should be the frankest discussion about membership performance. However, it is important that this is always presented politically and not as a question of abstract duty. We should never forget that our membership will be at different stages of development and at different political levels. Thus this problem has to be seen in a living manner and not as a formalistic ritual. The adoption of the cell organisational form, in which the basic units are related to definite fields of work or even organisation structures of the working class, will considerably facilitate raising membership level and commitment. However, we can only work towards this form of organisation as we grow and no immediate solution is possible along these lines. There is, moreover, no organisational solution to this problem and only a dynamic constantly campaigning body has the right, the authority and the ability to call upon its membership to give their all.

The proposals outlined in this document should lay the basis for a big qualitative improvement in the political development of our comrades. The setting up of numerous specialised caucuses, the increase in educational activity and constant campaigning should contribute to the rapid development of cadres. It is particularly important that we see in the farming out of organisational and political responsibility to the whole of the membership as towards developing of an organisation of political leaders. This is diametrically opposed to the SLL concept of an organisation of people who, apart from a few leaders, receive their orders. People develop, not by being lectured, but by the process of being given responsibilities (with maximum guidance, of course) and learning from experience (even if this results in them making mistakes, even big ones). We have to work towards a position where each member of the organisation has at least two definite responsibilities: one in the organisation, the other in the mass or broad movement (to exclusively work in one or other field is bad for development). Paternalistic attitudes towards new members and especially the young comrades must be vigorously combatted.

3) Ideological Work

All that has been said in this document indicates that there are vast fields of work in Britain in which investigation, analysis and assessment need to be made. The British movement has always suffered from empiricism and its mirror image, dogmatism. Only the New Left Review (and to a lesser extent, the May Day Manifesto Group) has made an attempt to deal with some of these problems in recent years. However, the NLR's work suffers from its lack of an organisational framework in which to relate its theoretical work. Only the praxis of building a revolutionary movement clarifies problems in a theoretically satisfactory manner. Many of the weaknesses of the NLR's position (and even the difficulties it faces) are rooted in its lack of an organisational base.

We need to step into this breach. We have a wealth of talent in the organisation which is not being used. Our journals have other pressures upon them and have only partially attempted this work (this is not to denigrate the important work which has been done on nationalism, etc.) With the launching of the political weekly we will have the opportunity of making an intelligent division of labour between the journals and the International can more and more move towards becoming an analytical journal. In this evolution, which should be commenced immediately, we will

have tremendous help from the International. We do nothing like enough to use all the International material which is turned out now. The popularity of Mandel's writings alone (which we scarcely use) shows what a ready audience we could have. We should organise this work on a long term basis, asking people to specialise in certain fields. We should comment on all the major political books published.

This work should culminate in the publication of a comprehensive political programme for Britain -- our transition programme, rooted in deep analysis. Our ideological and theoretical work should be focussed around the job of completely underpinning this project.

In relation to other tendencies we should seek to make a deep and thorough-going ideological critique of them rather than snipe at their particular sins of omission and commission. This should go right to the root of the faults in the theoretical method and be as constructive as possible. We should aim to have these critiques seen as contributions to theory rather than factional exercises.

10) Some Immediate Political Problems

a) Policy in the coming general election - As mentioned before the traditional revolutionary attitude on this question "Labour to Power," which dates back as far as Lenin's advice to the newly formed British CP in 1920, is no longer completely valid. The following considerations would seem to apply:

1) Defeat for Labour in the coming election would represent a marginal defeat for the working class in a historical and international sense, especially as it might facilitate the emergence of a "left" social democrat opposition, which could hinder a complete break with social democracy.

2) However, this is a minor factor as compared with the major task facing the British working class and its vanguard: the rapid building of a revolutionary leadership -- in fact there are circumstances when the defeat for Labour might assist that process (I do not think that this applies now because of the weakness and fragmentation of the revolutionary forces).

3) The activities of the vanguard in general and ourselves in particular will have very little (and certainly not a decisive) effect on the result of the election.

4) Therefore our policy should be determined by one main factor: using the heightened political interest in the period of the election to spread revolutionary ideas and win people for our organisation. This will be exceptionally important because millions of young people will be voting for the first time, because of the dropping of the voting age.

5) In this context the putting up of candidates would be, in nearly every case we can envisage, an extreme waste of time. To spend the election period working night and day to get a few hundred votes would be unproductive and demoralising.

6) Our best method of intervention is to openly say that we are in favour of Labour winning, not because we expect anything positive from that victory, but because we think that this is marginally more favourable to the destruction of social democracy than a Tory victory. Certainly we are not going to work for a

Labour victory.

7) Our best method of intervention will be to use the heightened political interest to insert into the election campaign fundamental issues. The call by VSC to organise counter-rallies at election meetings is an obvious example of this.

8) We must also make it very clear that we shall do all we can to assist the working class to fight whatever government is elected as undoubtedly it will be an anti-working class one.

b) Vietnam work - Nothing that has been written here should be construed to mean that Vietnam work is no longer a priority for us. While ever the war is the highest point in the class struggle on an international plane it will be our duty to make this a priority. In fact one can say that what is proposed will qualitatively improve our work in this field. One only has to examine the October 27 experience to see the obvious flaws in our previous position. We pulled off the biggest anti-imperialist demonstration for decades and yet were quite unable to stop the movement from going into steep decline afterwards. This decline -- apart from obvious objective circumstances -- was a function of our small size and organisational weakness, not because of any political mistakes we made. It is worth noting that we made few recruits from October 27, thus showing that there is no automatic solution to this problem. In our future Vietnam activity we have to have a bold policy of recruitment to the youth organisation and the league; this for the good of the Vietnam campaign. The youth organisation should organise its own contingents and be known throughout the left as the organisation which makes Vietnam a priority. Likewise the political paper: it should see those 100,000 October 27 demonstrators as its main market and service the Vietnam anti-imperialist movement. Now that the CP is trying to regain the initiative on Vietnam (and maybe having decided to stop working with us on ad hoc committees, etc.) it is now more important than ever before that we stress our solidarity position, limiting ourselves to "immediate withdrawal" will lower the political level of the Vietnam movement.

11) Common Market

This is going to become a living issue more and more as time goes by. Our policy should be based upon the following:

1) That all socialists should oppose Britain going into the Common Market because a) it will result in a sharp fall in the standard of living of the workers (in fact it could amount to an alternative strategy shifting the burden of the crisis on to the backs of the workers); and b) it will strengthen the position of the monopolies vis-a-vis the working class.

This means rejecting the argument of some sections of IS that we should not oppose entry because by going into the Common Market links between workers in Britain and the countries of the Six would be facilitated. This argument again underlines the "economic determinist" trend of the theories of state capitalism. Such links have to be developed consciously anyway to fight the growing internationalisation of the monopolies and this is the key factor.

2) A far more dangerous and widespread approach (headed by the CP, aided and abetted by Jack Jones et al) is the chauvinist line. It has its organisational expression in numerous committees against the Common Market where CPers and "left" trade union bureaucrats operate cheek to

jowl with extreme right wingers like Jay and even some Tories and right wing Liberals. Our opposition to the Common Market has nothing to do with the arguments of those who advocate greater links with the Commonwealth and even a North Atlantic free trade area as a substitute for the Common Market. We must combat this "extra-class" opposition to British entry to the Common Market which expresses one of the worst aspects of popular frontism. This line completely ignores the fact that monopolies have been becoming more and more internationalised; the Common Market merely gives an organised and political expression to this phenomena.

3) Our opposition to the Common Market has to be premised on the fact that the working class will be unable to stop Britain going into the Common Market (or some other form of internationalised capitalism) unless it is strong enough to do many other things as well, in which case membership in the Common Market would be secondary. Therefore what we are discussing is not whether or not Britain goes in but what response there should be to the growing internationalisation of capitalism.

4) Therefore we should counterpose to the Common Market the United Socialist States of Europe and a call for the workers to create functioning organs of struggle to correspond to the organisations of the capitalists. The publication of the United Secretariat statement on this question, with an introduction, would be very important as should other theoretical material.

12) Relations With Other Groups

We have three principal political opponents: the Communist Party, Socialist Labour League and International Socialism.

1) As noted before the CP is in a chronic crisis: this is likely to be extremely grave if, as is expected by our international leadership, the next big explosion in the Stalinist world takes place in the Soviet Union. This means we must direct more and more of our propaganda towards the CP, whilst calling upon its leadership to join united front committees. This is especially important in the trade union field but we must note that this will have little effect unless we are seen as a real alternative to the CP. The rank and file have been used to being in a movement whose membership is counted in thousands and which has links with a string of workers' states -- a reason why the Maoists have had some success with dissidents. It is clear that under these circumstances in the immediate period we will find it difficult to make progress in this field.

However, our youth organisation could, almost from its inception, present a real alternative to the YCL with a very different relationship of forces. This fact should be used to try to win over whole sectors to our ideas by firm ideological work and joint action.

2) The SLL presents entirely different problems. It would be very wrong to become obsessed with the SLL because of the huge amount of material it puts out attacking us -- this is probably a secondary aim of the deluge. The problem of dealing with the SLL is a long term one and we will not be able to tackle it properly until the relationship of forces is more favourable. The SLL is not a competitor with us in the fields where we are going to grow in the next period. Moreover, because of the SLL's history and reputation (some 20 years of political and, not infrequently, physical thuggery) it is widely known on the left -- via the thousands of

bitter ex-SLLers alone -- as an organisation which for years has used the methods of Stalinism (slander, lying about opponents' political positions, forming blocs with rightwingers against other left wing forces, petty organisational cheating, etc., etc.) and it is totally discredited amongst very wide layers of experienced politicals.

Hardly anyone who has been around for some time joins the SLL, and the recruits it gains seem to come almost entirely from young people it has politicised. We must heartily regret this colossal waste of revolutionary energy but we cannot be diverted from our main task by trying to prevent it.

We should keep up a pressure on the SLL via regular articles in the IP (this will also serve the purpose of countering some of the confusion it causes internationally), appeals for united action and by publishing well-documented pamphlets. We may have erred in the last period in giving too much of our journal over to not sufficiently "meaty" criticism of the SLL. We must remember we cannot compete word for word (even if we wanted) and that we require thorough-going and historically researched material to really make an impact on the more thinking of the SLL's rank and file.

3) International Socialism - The IS is not the problem for us now that it was a year ago. It is now more and more recognised for the swamp it is. However, its existence is an unnecessary complicating factor in British left politics. Much of the pressure from IS will be taken off our contacts and milieu by the youth organisation. As we grow we will become more and more attractive to IS members (and the increasing number of ex-IS members). However, it is important that we continue to differentiate ourselves from the IS on the important issues of the day (though many of the remarks made about criticising the SLL apply here too). The effect of this will help to push it into a more consistent state capitalist position thus polarising its membership and con-

tacts. IS because of its resources and existing membership will still continue to attract people, especially those who have been through a bad organisational experience in a bureaucratic organisation. From the long term point of view, the classical method of dealing with a group like IS would be some form of "unity offensive" -- this however will have to wait (if it comes at all) until we are much bigger.

4) Other groups - Most of these are either insignificant (Marxist Studies, Selbyites, Socialist Current) or bordering on the ludicrous (BLA). Some forces may be absorbed by us as we grow (Pabloites, and left wings of Tricontinental and Halsemere Group). Apart from individuals nothing much can be expected from the Maoists until they suffer some traumatic shock from Peking. The RSL, another unfortunate complication, will probably be clarified by General Election (as noted previously). One group is likely to come towards us during the course of the next year or so: Workers Fight. I will not pre-judge our attitude except to say that we have big differences with these comrades and we should proceed in a very principled manner. This is not to say that there are not some extremely good comrades in that tendency.

In general it can be said that the extreme fragmentation of the left will not be reversed until an authoritative and dynamic formation appears on the scene. The whole experience of the Marxist movement demonstrates that fragmentation is very difficult to deal with -- not even the impact of the Russian Revolution and the authority of Lenin could persuade the groups to come together to form the British CP. It required the SLP to set the process in motion. Even then groups remained outside. In Russia, on the other hand, whold groups (including Trotsky's) went into the Bolshevik party during the course of 1917 (as it also doubled and doubled and doubled again its size). We would, therefore, be very lucky to find an easy solution to this problem.

by Paul Petrie

Introduction

This discussion document follows directly from the document presented by Comrade Philips which admirably sums up the Fourth International document reproduced in I.C.P. Vol. 7 No. 26. Before going on however, I would like to point out that I disagree on one point -- on page 16 Comrade Philips states: "To lead the rebel youth from revolt to anti-capitalism, to commitment to the Fourth International, requires an independent revolutionary Marxist youth organisation with a revolutionary programme for youth -- especially student youth." (My emphasis P.P.) The point I wish to make is yes we must have a programme for students, that is in fact what this document is about, but the other youth sectors are at least as important as the student sector and must certainly not be neglected. An example of one of these other sectors is the developing body of second generation coloured youth suffering from having the wrong sort of cultural background to gain access to higher education. They are becoming increasingly militant due to the fact that they were born in Britain and are still suffering from discrimination and also to the example set by the Black Panthers in the U.S.A. Of course this is not the only other youth sector, for example there is the youth in the armed forces, the apprentices etc.

However, the fact remains that at the moment we just do not possess the information necessary to construct an adequate programme for most of the other youth sectors -- it therefore follows that gathering the requisite information must be a high priority. All groups must pass on reports of their youth experiences to the Political Committee for evaluation and dissemination at the earliest possible opportunity.

But to return to this document. The first part is an attempt to show how the Transitional Programme contained in the Fourth International document can be broken down to give the IMG a National Transitional Programme in this sphere. But this programme must not be applied to local situations dogmatically and inflexibly, so taking Leicester as an example, the second part of the document shows how the National Programme must be adapted to fit each area in which it is applied.

Paul Petrie 10/2/70

The Transitional Demands laid out in the Fourth International document are clearly, as indeed they have to be, of a general nature. This means that one of the first tasks facing us in this country as the British section of the Fourth International is to construct around this general programme our own programme which is specifically applicable to Britain.

Part A The International Demands

As a first step towards this goal let us examine the Programme of the Fourth International; it falls into seven interrelated sections:

Section I: For a Free Education and a Decent Standard of Living

- 1) A university education for everyone who wants one, the full expense to be underwritten by the government.
- 2) No maximum age limit on free education; no limitation on the number of years a person may continue in school after dropping out, post-graduate

studies included.

- 3) Decent housing for students.
- 4) An annual salary for all students adequate to their needs and safeguarded against inflation by automatic compensating increases.
- 5) Guaranteed jobs for students upon graduation.

Section II: "Student Power"

- 1) Abolish government-controlled student organisations. Recognise the right of students to organise and govern themselves according to their own free choice.
- 2) Joint control by students and faculty over the hiring and firing of faculty members and administration officials.
- 3) Let the students themselves democratically decide what subjects should be taught.
- 4) Abolish the powers of professors and administrators to arbitrarily penalise students.
- 5) Freedom of political association for students and professors.
- 6) The right to utilise university facilities to promote educational and cultural activities of direct interest to organisations of the working class, peasants, oppressed nationalities and plebian masses.

Section III: Political Freedom on the Campus

- 1) University autonomy, to be won or to be kept inviolate.
- 2) Repeal of all laws infringing civil liberties. End the witch-hunt.
- 3) The police and all other repressive forces to be strictly banned from entering university grounds and buildings.
- 4) Dismiss all government officials responsible for victimizing students, workers, national minorities, political dissidents.
- 5) Dissolve the special police forces and secret political police.
- 6) Release all the political prisoners.
- 7) Abolish the censorship, whether official or "voluntary," of the press, radio, television, and the arts and sciences.
- 8) For freedom of the press, freedom of association and organisation, freedom of speech, assembly, petition and travel, and the right to engage in demonstrations.

Section IV: National Minorities

- 1) Recognition of the right of the oppressed national minority communities to control their own public affairs, including education from kindergarten up.
- 2) Representation of national minorities on all policy making or policy implementing bodies of the schools.
- 3) Against racism and great power chauvinism. For truthful teaching of the history and culture

of the oppressed national minorities in all schools, with periodic reviews by educational committees elected by the oppressed national minorities.

4) Recognition of the unconditional right of a national minority to use its own language in the educational system.

5) Unlimited government-financed educational training through post-graduate study for the oppressed national minorities.

6) Establishment of adequately financed, independent, university-level educational facilities under control of national minorities.

Section V: Relationships with Big Business and the Military

1) End the ties between the university and the military.

2) Abolish secret research by the university for the government.

3) Abolish secret subversion by government agencies of student organisations.

4) Expose the ties between university officials and big business by making public all investments, holdings, and contracted projects of the university and of all directors, trustees and administrators.

5) Abolish research of special interest to big business.

6) No recruiting on the campus by the big corporations.

7) Lower the voting age and the age limit on holding public office. Old enough to fight, old enough to vote, and to have a voice in deciding public affairs.

Section VI: The Armed Forces

1) Defend the democratic rights of all youth conscripted in the army. No restrictions on soldiers exercising their full citizenship rights.

2) Abolish capitalist conscription.

Section VII: The Bureaucratically Deformed Workers' States.

1) Freedom of discussion of philosophical, cultural and scientific questions. The right to express a critical viewpoint.

2) Freedom to discuss historical questions. Let the truth come out!

3) Freedom to discuss current political issues.

4) Abolish censorship.

5) For the right to organise and demonstrate.

6) No political persecution. Let the public, including foreign observers, be admitted to all trials.

7) Freedom of travel. No restrictions on sending representatives to visit youth organisations in other countries or in receiving their representatives on visits.

8) Eliminate self-perpetuating social inequalities and the special privileges of the bureaucracy.

9) Return to revolutionary internationalism.

10) Solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed in other lands.

In order to construct our programme we understand that we must examine each demand and adapt it to fit the conditions prevailing in Britain and then after considering each section we must see whether there are any other points which should be added to our existing Programme of Transitional Demands. We must, however, realise that the programme itself, and the emphasis laid on certain sections of the programme, will change with the objective conditions by the passage of time.

Part B The National Transitional Programme

An application of the methodology outlined above yields us the following Transitional Programme:

Section I: For a Free Education and a Decent Standard of Living

1) There should be a free university-level education available for everyone who wants one. The present system of fees is to be abolished and the universities are to be completely financed by the state.¹

2) All further education is to be free.

3) There should be no barrier to students transferring from one institution or course of higher education to another.

4) The binary system of education is to be abolished.²

5) There should be no night school. People wishing to learn should be given the time off work and financed by the state.³

6) Housing:

a) No student to be isolated from the community in Halls for more than one year.

b) Halls already in existence should be run by an elected student committee.

c) The systematic policy of isolating students from the bulk of the population by building halls of residence for them must be discontinued. No more halls to be built.⁴

d) In view of the present pressure on housing the Local Authorities must undertake to house students in suitable flats, or, failing this, a committee of students must be elected and given funds so that it can buy property, convert it for student use, and let it.⁵

7) Abolish grants tied to parental income. Institute a student wage tied to a Student Cost of Living Index. This wage to be paid for as many years as study continues.

8) Students from overseas must receive exactly the same treatment as domestic students.

Section II: "Student Power"

1) There shall be joint control by staff and students and non-academic staff of hiring, firing and curricula.⁶

2) The administrators and professors should not have the power to arbitrarily penalise staff and students. A discipline code must be drawn up

based on a general assembly of all members of the university as the final court of appeal.

3) Members of the university must have the right to utilise the university facilities to promote educational and cultural activities of direct interest to the working class and to immigrants of all races.

Section III: Political Freedom on the Campus

- 1) There must be autonomy for the universities. The government must cease in its efforts to control the universities through the U.G.C.
- 2) No regionalisation of intake.⁷
- 3) No police on campus. The Vice-Chancellors must state that in no circumstances would they invite the police to intervene on the campus.
- 4) End the system of employing so called "security officers" to spy on students.
- 5) Destroy the Department of Education and Science secret files on students, also no education section in the political police files.
- 6) We demand the right to distribute political literature anywhere without being harassed by the police.

Section IV: National Minorities

This section can be incorporated in toto, with particular reference to immigrants and the Welsh Language.

- 1) Recognition of the right of the oppressed national minority communities to control their own public affairs, including education from the kindergarten upwards.
- 2) Representation of all national minorities on all policymaking or policy implementing bodies of the schools.
- 3) Against racism and great power chauvinism. For truthful teaching of the history and culture of oppressed national minorities in all schools, with periodic reviews by educational committees elected by the oppressed national minorities.
- 4) Recognition of the unconditional right of a national minority to use its own language in the educational system.
- 5) Unlimited government-financed educational training through postgraduate study for oppressed national minorities.
- 6) The establishment of adequately financed, independent, university-level educational facilities under the control of national minorities.

Section V: Relationships with the Military and Big Business

- 1) End the ties between the university and the military by all university departments.
- 2) Abolish secret research by the universities for the government.
- 3) All university officials are to publish details of their investments and business interests and all university contracts are to be made public.
- 4) Abolish research of special interest to big business.
- 5) No recruiting on the campus by the big

corporations with a direct interest in war materials.

Section VI: The Armed Forces

- 1) Defend the democratic rights of all youth enlisted in the Armed Forces. No restrictions on soldiers exercising their full citizenship rights.
- 2) Freedom to join political parties for members of the Armed Forces.
- 3) Freedom to join trade unions for all members of the Armed Forces.
- 4) Freedom to leave the army in the same way as a worker is able to leave the firm which employs him.
- 5) Abolish the criminal system whereby a minor may have 10, 15 or 20 years of his life signed away to the Armed Forces for him by his parents.

Section VII is obviously inapplicable in this country

Comment

It is clearly a moot point whether Section VI should be in this document as it quite obviously is a set of transitional demands for the Armed Forces, or at least the nucleus of a set. Since the Armed Forces are mentioned by the Fourth International I have included them although there is further justification in the fact that cadets from the armed forces training colleges are quite often seconded to university for three years.

This Programme does not make any pretence at being complete -- that is not its purpose, its purpose is to provide a vehicle which can be altered, cut and added to by Conference until such a time as it is considered adequate by the Conference. As the final part of this document I include an example of how this can be applied to local conditions taking as an example Leicester University.

Part C: The Local Programme

The National Programme we have now constructed should not be applied to local situations mechanistically -- it must be adapted to fit specific conditions and to include information appropriate to the place to which it is being applied e.g. the names of businessmen on university governing bodies and their investments. For example the programme as applied to Leicester University would include the following extra points:

III (3) Remove Sawford.

III (6) We demand the right to:

a) Hold demonstrations in the middle of Leicester. Repeal the Bye-Law.

b) To distribute political literature:

1) Within one mile of the Clock Tower. Repeal the Bye-Laws originally passed to prevent the Chartists distributing their literature.

v (2) End the Biology Department contract with Porton Down.

V (3) No big business in university government: Remove Clore, Frears, Goldsmith, Keene, Bennion, Ellis, Henig, and Oliver from their official positions in the university government.

* * *

In finishing I would like to point out that this programme is only a programme for universities and underline my opening remarks by reiterating that one of the most urgent tasks before us is to collect sufficient information to enable us to construct an adequate transitional programme for the other sectors of youth.

* * *

Notes

1. This means that the State would take over any of the University's assets as well, otherwise considerable inequality would arise between long established universities with considerable private assets and the newer universities with their more meager assets.

2. The demand for the end of the binary system can be seen to follow logically from the previous demand.

3. There would of course be special provisions for shift-workers and other special categories.

4. This may need to be qualified slightly. It is generally conceded that it is advantageous for students to be in Hall in their first year since they have, in most cases, only just left home. If this argument is accepted and there are not enough places in Hall for first years then a strong case can be made out for building more Halls.

5. This section provides a good example of change of emphasis with objective conditions -- in the first instance the second alternative would be emphasised, and, when achieved, emphasis would switch to the former demand.

6. This could be achieved by means of departmental assemblies.

7. Therefore adequate accomodation is imperative see Section I (6).

by Susan Williams

The document "From a Propaganda Group to a League for Revolutionary Action" submitted by the Political Committee is the key document before the National Conference. Its purpose is to set the general political orientation and guidelines of the IMG over the coming year. The effectiveness of the work of the IMG over the next period is directly related to the clarity and correctness of this document. This underlines the seriousness of the discussion around the issues it raises.

In my opinion the document fails to pose clearly the political orientation of the IMG in the next period and moreover in a number of key areas makes serious political errors. The purpose of this discussion paper is to present my views on some of these issues. They concern: The present level of the class struggle in Britain; the IMG assessment of the Labour Party; the assessment of the meaning of our political opponents, especially the Socialist Labour League; the present stage of the IMG; and how to build it and the role of our press.

I. The Class Struggle in Britain Today

A. The International Context

The Vietnam war remains the central issue in world politics. This war is a key part of American imperialism's offensive against the world revolution. Because of its international repercussions, the war is the focus on a world scale of the counterrevolutionary power of U.S. imperialism and the rising power of the world socialist revolution. The international antiwar opposition and the sharpening of social tensions in America due to the war are important factors in limiting the U.S. capitalist class's ability to continue the war as it would like. For all its wealth and power, the U.S. ruling class has found it increasingly difficult to carry on a war in Vietnam and at the same time finance and expand the nuclear arms race, prop up and defend the rest of the capitalist world and allocate sufficient resources to allay domestic unrest. The consequences of the Vietnam war have shown the basic relationship of class forces on a world scale is less and less favourable to the imperialists. The inflationary effects of the war are increasing and the cost of continuing the Vietnam operation for world imperialism now requires U.S. imperialism to call upon others within their camp to take a larger share of the costs involved in safeguarding capitalism throughout the world.

The "New Rise of World Revolution," the main political resolution of the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International, projects for the next period an economic perspective of a general slowdown in the rate of expansion of the imperialist economies with a real possibility of a generalised recession. Though President Nixon might say that he does not expect a recession in the U.S. economy such statements are out of tune with the thinking of the great bulk of the economists, including those whose job it is to advise the government and big business. Woven into these various forecasts are deep fears that an economic slump could have important political and social consequences. Gaylord Freeman of the First National Bank of Chicago reveals these worries when he states that ". . . in order to make a profit, which is the basis of our present economy, we need a political system in which private property is respected" and he expresses concern "about the attitude of many honest, conscientious citizens and not just those who are young or Black, who see the war in Vietnam, the continuing

poverty of millions. . . evidence of failure of our entire system and reason for a fundamental change."

Fundamental change, though, is not the way the monopolists and financiers seek to solve their problems. While there are variations in the estimates and forecasts of an economic recession, all are agreed that severe problems face world imperialism. There may also be variations on the possible effects of a recession -- some like Henry Ford think a little depression won't be too harmful, or, like Henry Butler of the Chase Manhattan Bank, that in the long run a recession would do more good than harm. But on one thing they do agree. Solutions lie in attacks on the standard of living of the working classes through incomes policies, redundancies, pressures for productivity agreements, anti-strike legislation, and in increasing attempts to integrate the trade unions through the workers' bureaucracies into the state apparatus. However, this intensifying assault against the workers' living standards, takes place at the end of a period of rising standards, rising expectations, an upsurge in working class combativity in the advanced imperialist countries, and the blocking of US imperialism's counterrevolutionary assault in Vietnam. A rising of tension, sharpness and tempo of the class struggle in the imperialist countries, including pre-revolutionary and revolutionary upsurges in some, will be characteristic of the '70s.

B. The World Position of British Imperialism

Since the beginning of the century, Britain's place in world imperialism has steadily declined. Neither post-war Labour or Tory governments have been able to overcome the fundamental weakness of British imperialism. This weakness is indicated by the constant threat of runaway inflation and the continuous strains in the economy since the war. After World War II Britain's share of the world market was reduced as German and Japanese capitalism emerged again and penetrated the world market and as US imperialism took over the role -- previously undertaken by British imperialism -- of policing the "free world," providing itself with areas for investment and the dumping of the surplus produce of the US economy. The rising liberation struggles of the colonial world have dealt tremendous blows to the British empire depriving the British ruling class of a vast part of its overseas investments. The rising struggle of the Irish workers against British imperialist exploitation is an even more dramatic and closer indication of the weakened position of British imperialism in the world today.

British capitalism also has the handicap of having been the first in the field of industrial development in the last century. Its pioneering role in scientific and technological development at the birth of the industrial revolution now leaves British capitalism with a legacy of machinery and techniques, as well as an education system, totally inadequate to meet the international competition in the "third industrial revolution," contributing further to the decline of Britain's share of the world market.

It is Britain's position as a second rate power in this struggle which drives British capitalism with increasing compulsion to a showdown with its working class. All its economic dilemmas -- cheapening exports, the balance of payments crisis, the instability of the pound,

maintenance of profits, revolve around the central question: how to lower labour costs, meaning an attack on the standard of living of the working class. It is this driving force that compels any government seeking to maintain capitalism to make attacks on working class living standards and brings it more and more into direct conflict with the working class as a whole.

Moreover, the intensification and deepening of the struggle has begun to pull in layers of society traditionally thought of as middle class or professional, e.g. the teachers and radio and TV personnel. The teachers' strike is unprecedented in British capitalist history. Large sections of the teachers are more and more in favour of affiliating to the Trades Union Congress. The movement into the class struggle of these middle class layers which compose a massive sector of the British work force testifies to the deepening social crisis of British capitalism.

C. The Role of the Labour Government

Since 1964, the Labour government has tried to solve the problems of British capitalism -- in the interest of the British ruling class. It has cynically broken most of its election promises, allowed prices to rise, tried to introduce an incomes policy to institute a wage freeze for British workers and to ensure wide profit margins for the bosses. To maintain a balance of payments, spending in the public sector has been slashed, causing big cuts in health services, education and housing programmes, and increasing redundancies. At the same time, consistent efforts have been made to strangle militancy on the factory floor by deals between the Wilson government and the TUC bureaucracy and to institute penal sanctions against strikers. The Labour government's economic squeeze and productivity has resulted in the highest and longest period of unemployment (more than one half million over thirty months) since 1945. The Wilson government has implemented racist immigration laws against coloured immigrants, helped maintain the racist Smith regime in Rhodesia, and nurtured British capitalism's investments in South Africa to the tune of £600M a year -- 58% of all foreign investment in South Africa.

In return for economic assistance from U.S. imperialism in the form of huge loans from the International Monetary Fund, Wilson slavishly supports U.S. aggression in Vietnam. U.S. penetration of the British economy rose to £2,600M in investments last year and estimates for the extent of U.S. control of the British economy by 1980 will go up to 25%, second only to U.S. penetration of the Canadian economy. The Labour government has continually moved in a rightward direction and has been able to carry through anti-working class measures more easily than would have been possible for a Tory government.

But the Wilson government's attempts to prop up British capitalism at the expense of the British workers hasn't all been clear sailing. The unwillingness of big sectors of British workers: miners, automobile workers, dockers, to sacrifice their standard of living has left the government's incomes policy and attempts to institute disciplinary anti-strike legislation in shambles. These two features of the class struggle in Britain today; the rightward direction of the Labour government and the combativity of sectors of the working class -- must be seen together if a correct assessment of the level of the class struggle in Britain today is to be made.

D. The Present Stage of the Class Struggle in Britain

Today in Britain we see thousands of workers engaged in official and "unofficial" strikes. We see the trade union bureaucrats having difficulty convincing workers to follow their "leadership". We see a Labour government attacking the workers' organisations. We see a section of the youth becoming radicalised developing an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist consciousness. We see in the coming elections two alternatives posed before the class as a whole. The choice is between a Labour and a Tory government. There are no other alternatives posed to the average worker. What does it all mean? Is bourgeois democracy in Britain about to collapse? Are the workers who strike "to the left" of the Wilson government and the reformist labour leadership? Is the Labour party being bypassed? Is it all finished? Will the workers turn to the Tories? Is parliament irrelevant? Is Britain in a pre-revolutionary period? Is the choice in the next immediate period fascism or socialist revolution? Answers to these questions are key to a proper orientation for the IMG and for the development and education of our cadres.

For example, how is the election of a Labour government in 1964 and its subsequent rightward course to be explained? Is it enough to say Wilson is a foul betrayer caught in the grip of the bourgeois state? Is there not another side to this question?

It should be recalled that Wilson came to power with "left" credentials, on a pre-election programme of modest reforms from a pseudo-left background, in which he stood with Aneurin Bevan in the fight to retain in the Labour Party constitution clause four which calls for nationalisation of the basic means of production. He then proceeded to muzzle the traditional left MP's by bringing them into the cabinet. Unwilling to break with capitalism in the framework of social democratic reformism, Wilson then turned to the gnomes of Zurich for financial help, enlisted the help of the trade union bureaucracy in the fight to tame the factory floor militants, and more and more openly revealed his role as chief apologist for British capitalism.

Wilson's rightward dash during the last six years stands out even more grotesquely when measured beside the radicalisation of a significant strata of British youth, especially the student youth, and to a much more limited extent, working class youth. But it is also true to say that while a sector of British youth outside the mass of the working class have come to recognise the meaning of the reformism of the labour bureaucracy and the Wilson government, Wilson has had to face little organised political opposition to his reformist course within the ranks of the millions of workers who make up the trade union base of the Labour Party. We have not seen the development of a broad, fighting organised left wing with a class struggle programme inside either the Labour Party or the trade unions.

The meaning of this is clear. The class as a whole and even its most militant sectors, prepared in their thousands to down tools to defend their job conditions and wages against the economic policies of the Wilson government remain politically paralysed in the face of the reformist labour bureaucracy. The election of the Wilson Labour government in 1964 reflected a desire by the British working class for social change, but in the absence of a rooted alternative revolutionary socialist leadership, this desire remained within the framework of the general illusions about reformism and bourgeois democracy.

That Wilson and the Labour Party have betrayed them is abundantly clear to many. However, the distance between this understanding and the recognition of the necessity to build a new revolutionary class struggle leadership and a leadership organisation capable of organising the victory of the socialist revolution -- that is, a Leninist vanguard party -- is very great. To reject Wilson is not to reject reformism. To reject the Labour government is not to give up deep parliamentary illusions. In the coming elections millions of workers will vote for the Labour Party, a section will vote Tory and others will abstain out of hostility, despair or indifference. All this adds up to the biggest factor in British working class politics -- that the Labour Party -- a party based on the trade unions and organised independently of the ruling class -- a party steeped in the traditions of reformism and parliamentarianism, reflects in general the political level of the British working class. A class that has a fighting temperament and a fierce and historic class consciousness but with deep seated illusions about bourgeois democracy and the possibilities of reformism. The solution to the crisis of working class leadership, on the agenda since the early twenties, will not be found if this huge social and political fact is ignored or slurred over.

E. An Instructive Historical Example

Key to the building of the mass revolutionary party in Britain is an understanding of the workers' organisations, the trade unions and the Labour Party and for a correct orientation to them. This has historically been a problem for the British communist movement. Both Lenin and Trotsky devoted considerable energy to struggling against the deep rooted sectarianism of British Marxists, helping them understand the Labour Party, Whither Britain and Left Wing Communism are key works on this subject. Forty years after these were written the Labour Party still commands the allegiance of millions of workers and is deeply rooted in the organised labour movement while leadership rests with the right wing reformist bureaucrats.

Such a situation was not inevitable unless the labour bureaucracy is given some sort of magical powers or we conclude that the working class is incapable of producing an alternative leadership to the agents of the ruling class in the workers' movement. For example, the Socialist Labour League at the time when the Wilson government was first elected was the only revolutionary force of significant size and influence within the Labour Party. However the opportunity to build a mass left wing around a transitional programme fighting against the Wilson leadership was rejected by the SLL in the course of its sectarian degeneration.

Having in the 1950's played an opportunist role in relation to the left centrists -- the "fake lefts," the SLL in the 1960's gave up any pretence of struggle against the Labour Party leadership by withdrawing its forces from the Labour Party covering its opportunist and sectarian course with ultraleft rhetoric about "building the revolutionary party." (It is worth noting also that International Socialism which had forces in the Labour Party Young Socialists also withdrew from the struggle.) The consequences were grave. The task of building an opposition to Wilson was left to the Foots, Heffers, etc., who confined their "struggles" to parliamentary maneuvering.

While it is not possible to say categorically that "things would be different today" if the sectarian degeneration of the SLL had not

taken place, it can be said with certainty if a revolutionary leadership had at that time coupled entry work in the Labour Party with independent political activity, it would have helped in the formation of a revolutionary left wing in the Labour Party and the trade unions. At the same time, it would have given youth radicalised outside the Labour Party an understanding of its dual and contradictory character and the necessity of leading a struggle against the labour bureaucracy in the building of a revolutionary leadership for the class. If this had been done, the task of constructing this cadre and leadership would be far more advanced today.

F. On the Nature of the Labour Party

British workers learned the need for a political party the hard way, by learning that without the extension of their struggle politically through independent working class political action, gains won through strike action one day could be lost the next through anti-labour legislation. The decision to create and build a labour party was not taken lightly by the working class. It was born out of militant struggle during the employers offensive at the end of the 19th century when troops were used against strikers, shooting and killing many of them. The British Labour Party is unique in that it was created by the trade union movement. In other European countries the reverse process took place. First social democratic and communist parties were formed, then they organised the trade unions. The British Labour Party from its origins and throughout its development has been deeply intertwined with the building and struggles of British trade unions.

Lenin recognised the formation of the BLP as the first step of the mass working class organisations towards a socialist and worker based party -- a transitional step to the building of a Leninist party. Was the leadership of the BLP less right wing at that time? On the contrary, the leadership of the BLP has always been right wing and reformist to the core. The Hendersons, Snowdens and MacDonalDs had the same philosophy and acted in much the same manner as the Wilsons, Browns and Callaghans of today. A bureaucratic, anti-working class right wing leadership in the Labour Party and the trade unions is not something that has recently appeared on the scene. It has been a constant phenomena since the formation of the Labour Party and the organised trade union movement. These leaderships, part of a large and privileged layer of society with its roots in the mass working class organisations, are the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class responsible for the transmission of the values, norms and ideology of the ruling class into the working class. They can no more be wished away, either by name calling or ignoring them, than the Soviet bureaucracy.

In spite of these leaderships, the vast majority of British workers, over decades of struggle have come to see the labour party as their party, the party of the working class, the party of the trade unions; just as the identify the Tory Party as the party of the employers and the ruling class. It is this fundamental class nature of the Labour Party -- its working class base, financial, organisational and political links with the trade unions on one hand, and on the other the right wing leaderships which carry out policies against the interests of the class, that constitutes the dual and contradictory nature of the Labour Party.

Despite the leadership, the majority of

the class still identifies itself enthusiastically or unenthusiastically, with the Labour Party. Between 1952 and 1968 affiliated trade union membership has fluctuated between five and five and one half million. Total membership in this period was between six and six and a half million. Total individual membership for 1968 stood at 700,856. Just recently the trade unions increased the political levy to the BLP by 50% (from 1/- to 1/6). The idea put forward by a small number of "militants" of pulling their unions out of the Labour Party finds little support among workers. The warning given to Wilson by the trade union bureaucrats that they intend to be choosy about their support for particular candidates in the coming elections, reflects the anti-Wilson pressures in the ranks seeping into the top layers of the bureaucracy.

These examples indicate the strong links that exist between the Labour Party and the trade unions and the fact that British workers have yet to realise that independent class political action will lead nowhere unless it is anchored in a leadership and organisation which can take the struggle for socialism beyond the parliamentary framework to a broad mass struggle for state power.

The Labour Party is therefore the most important factor in British working class politics today. Historically the creation of the BLP has been a monumental achievement of the British working class. At the same time through its reformist leadership it has been and remains the biggest single block in the struggle for fundamental social change and a dangerous rock on which many revolutionaries have foundered. It is no accident that many of today's right wing functionaries of the TUC and the BLP were at one time class struggle militants. Some of them were members of Trotskyist organisations. (Heffer, Newens, Bidwell are three such examples) Because of the pressure of capitalism, social democracy, reformist illusions of large sections of the class and the lack of a mass revolutionary Marxist party the tendency to opportunism and adaptation to the labour bureaucracy has always been a danger. This same situation has consistently bred opportunism's counterpart, ultraleftism. This arises through seeing only one face of the BLP -- the right wing face of social democracy. It leads to the false position that the BLP is not fundamentally different from the bourgeois parties and a tendency for the revolutionary left to proceed as if the BLP counted for nothing to the working class.

The history of the left wing in Britain is strewn with numerous organisations, Trotskyist and non-Trotskyist which have tried to ignore the BLP, to bypass it, to act as if the struggle had advanced beyond it. They have ended up being totally ineffective, having no influence on the course of the class struggle or by disappearing from the political scene altogether. The conclusion is inescapable. A correct understanding of the trade unions and the Labour Party and the ability to put this understanding into practice, regardless of the particular conditions at any particular time within these organisations, is a prerequisite for the successful construction of a revolutionary cadre able to build a mass revolutionary party in Britain.

G. The Youth Radicalisation, The IMG and the Labour Party

The IMG is a small and relatively new organisation. Nevertheless, as the British section of the Fourth International it represents what has been accomplished over fifty years of struggle to build a Leninist party in Britain -- dramatic testimony to the difficulty of the task and the

tragic failures along the way.

Today it is the motion of a significant sector of British society, its youth, toward anti-capitalist and revolutionary socialist politics which gives the IMG its immediate perspective of increasing its cadres qualitatively, through leading youth in struggle and the building of a Trotskyist youth organisation. Through this organisation the ability of British Trotskyists to lead big struggles of large sections of the youth is on the agenda. It is from this decisive turn toward the youth -- our general orientation in the next period -- that the cadres will be won to the Fourth International. It is these cadres that will lead the coming struggles of workers against the labour bureaucracy.

If this turn to the youth is to bear fruit, the youth won to Trotskyism must come to have a rounded appreciation of the class forces within British capitalism and the way the coming British socialist revolution will unfold.

The youth radicalisation taking place outside the Labour Party and in other layers not involved in the mass workers organisations is prone to dismiss these organisations. The struggle of the youth in the universities, colleges and schools, in antiwar and anti-imperialist campaigns will contribute significantly to creating a climate for the building of a mass left wing in the labour movement. But it is absolutely essential that these youth learn that their radicalisation is a forerunner of a radicalisation in the working class which will involve big and decisive struggles within the trade union organisations AND the Labour Party against the labour bureaucracy. Out of this struggle the forces and cadres for the vanguard party will be forged. A view of the course of the struggle which does not take this into account is sectarian.

It is up to the Trotskyists, rather than reinforce the sectarian tendencies of the radicalising youth -- which contain a healthy rejection of reformism -- to turn them sensitively to a Marxist understanding of how to intervene in the struggle to create a new leadership. Part of this process is an all out struggle against those sectarian and ultraleft organisations which contribute to the miseducation of these new forces coming into the class struggle.

In the next months, in the coming election campaign, the IMG will have an important opportunity to do this. It is the IMG's responsibility to reach as many of the radicalising forces as possible in this period of heightened political awareness (two and a half million more youth now have the vote) with the Trotskyist view of the meaning of the elections and the way forward for the class struggle in Britain. Such a campaign might consist of distributing thousands of IMG leaflets and posters to students and young workers around the country. It is possible that the campaign to launch a Trotskyist youth organisation could include a round-the-country tour of leading spokesmen for the youth fraction and the IMG holding meetings on the elections. It could include a bold initiative like running a national campaign for an IMG candidate in a well chosen constituency.

Regardless of the particular form of our intervention into the election campaign our message to youth must be unequivocal and clear. Urging youth to "expose the bastards," meaning the Wilson leadership, as the Black Dwarf did in a January 30th editorial is infantile and does nothing to educate radicalising youth in

revolutionary politics. Whispering to them on the side that a Labour victory might be good because it's the best way to destroy the Labour Party is equally misleading. It is our responsibility to give the radicalising sectors the true and balanced picture, even if it does not sound as "revolutionary" as shouting epithets at the Wilson clique. This means giving a correct picture of who the class enemy is; who are the agents of the ruling class in the workers' movement, what the level of the class struggle is and the way forward to the creation of a new leadership for the working class.

It is not difficult to explain. The essence of our position should be this:

The class enemy, the Tories, must be defeated. The political party of the working class despite its leadership must be defended and returned to power. Vote Labour.

The developing struggles of youth, in the schools universities and colleges is part of, and must be combined with the struggle for a new class struggle revolutionary leadership for the working class to replace the Wilsons the Scanlons and the Browns.

This leadership must be armed with the transitional programme of revolutionary Marxism, Trotskyism, to mobilise the power of the working class to take it beyond the reformist parliamentary straight-jacket in a struggle for state power and socialism.

Hand in hand with support of the mass workers' organisations, the trade unions and the Labour Party, radical youth must understand that a victorious struggle against the labour leadership and for socialism requires the construction of a Trotskyist youth organisation and the building of the British section of the Fourth International -- the IMG -- the nucleus of the mass Leninist vanguard party essential to the victory of the fight for socialism.

This is the position we must give to the radicalising youth. It can be fully explained in our press, our leaflets in rallies at demonstrations and in a thousand and one imaginative ways. Failure to do this is misleadership.

With youth on the move in city after city around the country, with young workers looking for answers to their leaderships' betrayals, with the Tories raising the spectre of social unrest and the need for "law and order," the opportunity before the IMG to win large numbers of youth to revolutionary socialism is greater than ever before.

II. Key Obstacles to the Development of the IMG

A correct assessment of the level of the class struggle must be combined with a realistic and precise evaluation of the importance of our political opponents. We must understand what they represent if we are to know what to do about them. This assessment must be included in any projection of the way forward for the IMG. The most important political opponents in the immediate sense, leaving aside the Stalinists are those claiming to be Trotskyist or in the Trotskyist tradition; the Socialist Labour League, International Socialism and the Revolutionary Socialist League. I will deal only with two: the SLL and the IS.

A. The Socialist Labour League

The SLL is an active organisation which claims to be Trotskyist and part of an International movement building the Fourth International.

It has an impressive headquarters, modern print-shop, a five days a week newspaper, sustained generally by a membership with a high standard of dedication, commitment and sacrifice. It has international connections in France, USA, Ceylon, Latin America and elsewhere. The youth organisation of its French counterpart recently organised a rally of 8,000 young workers. Its combined French and British membership is comparable to the membership of all our European sections combined.

The SLL and its youth organisation, the Young Socialists have a combined membership of around 1,000. While there is no evidence to suggest that the membership in the SLL is increasing in any great numbers, neither is there any to suggest that it is losing more now than has been the norm throughout its history.

While the SLL is recognised by politicals generally as Trotskyist, it is a caricature of Trotskyism, incurably sectarian, prone to ultra-left and opportunist twists. Its internal life makes a mockery of democratic centralism. The atmosphere fostered by the leadership, does not permit members to question the SLL's position or actions. The treatment of its membership carries over to its relationships with sympathisers and others in the radical movement where the SLL does not hesitate to manipulate them and cynically use them. Those members who react critically to the SLL's politics and internal regime usually remain with the SLL for some time rather than leave because there is no alternative to the SLL for them to join. Because of this, over the years the SLL has been responsible for mis-educating and destroying through confusion and demoralisation hundreds and hundreds of potential revolutionaries.

The refusal of the SLL to come into the reunified Fourth International in 1963 marked a decisive and irreversible stage in its long process of sectarian degeneration. While its deepening sectarianism on all the major questions of our time: Cuba, the Black struggle, the Vietnamese revolution, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the student movement, Ireland and the Labour Party, and its consequent organisational sectarianism and factionalism give the SLL no perspective of building a mass revolutionary party, it must be recognised that the SLL stands in the way of the IMG accomplishing this task. Because it presents itself as Trotskyist, is the strongest organisation on the non-Stalinist left, and is in appearance internationalist, the SLL provides an alternative for serious revolutionary youth who turn their backs on Stalinism and social democracy.

With its position of advantage, the SLL is able to pose as the centre of an international movement -- a counter international to the Fourth International. The SLL is therefore a threat to the International Trotskyist movement. This underlines the necessity for the Fourth International and the IMG to eliminate the SLL as a contender for the leader of British Trotskyists.

This task is not a diversion from the job of building the IMG, but a prerequisite for its growth. The SLL is a much stronger force than the IMG. Rather than ignore it, or hope that we won't meet the SLL in our various fields of work (such as Vietnam or student work) we must ensure that the SLL is never allowed to get away with its false presentation of Trotskyism and is forced to answer every charge and slander it makes against the Fourth International before the radical movement in general and its own membership. Youth can have no respect for an organisation which does not defend itself. Our membership

cannot develop a sense of pride if the IMG fails to defend itself.

For example in the past period we failed to deal adequately with the SLL's attacks on our jailed Bolivian comrades. We have yet to answer the major attacks, that appeared in the Workers Press, on our years of anti-Vietnam war work. The IMG has not taken up the SLL's fraudulent line on Vietnam, Ireland, the Labour Party etc., in a concerted effort to educate radicalising youth in the meaning of sectarianism and ultraleftism. In addition our tendency to ignore the SLL has resulted in a carelessness in the presentation of our ideas in our press and has given the SLL unnecessary opportunities to further distort the meaning of Trotskyism.

During the past two to three months, we have gone through an experience that was rich in lessons on how not to fight the SLL. In December the Workers Press and the Young Socialists organised a Vietnam campaign leading up to a demonstration and rally on January 11. With its demagogic "Stop Wilson's Visit" slogan, around the theme of "take Vietnam off the streets and into the factories" to build a "working class antiwar movement," and its organisation exclusively in the hands of the SLL-YS, the demonstration was clearly a sectarian action by the SLL. It was designed to give it some prestige after years of refusal to defend the Vietnamese revolution, and to strike a blow at the VSC's projection of a mass single issue broad anti-Vietnam war movement. The action could do nothing to build the anti-Vietnam war movement.

Rather than use this opportunity to explain the meaning of the SLL's phony turn to the anti-Vietnam war movement, in our press and through our leading spokesman, we joined in the action, endorsed it with the signatures of leading comrades on the SLL's Vietnam petition, and broadened the SLL's Lyceum Ballroom platform with a leading spokesman of the IMG.

Through this capitulation to SLL pressure we failed to educate anyone about the nature of the SLL sectarianism and factionalism and gave a cover to a sectarian demonstration which was in conflict with the building of a broad anti-Vietnam war movement.

We will not remove the obstacle of the SLL in this way. Youth will never be won to Trotskyism if the Trotskyists fail to wage a consistent struggle against those organisations which in the name of Trotskyism commit crimes against the class struggle and distort Trotskyism's theoretical heritage.

B. International Socialism

The International Socialism group has grown from a handful of people in 1966 to a size of approximately 700 to 800, indicating the tempo of radicalisation of student youth over the past four years. Despite its "workerist" politics, IS is basically a student organisation. It is attractive to radicalising students because it presents itself as anti-Stalinist, anti-capitalist and on a number of questions, Trotskyist. Moreover, its organisational looseness, in the New Left and SDS tradition, and anti-democratic centralist nature, panders to the prejudices of radicalising youth against the Leninist concept of organisation.

The growth of IS has been mainly due to the lack of a Trotskyist youth organisation in this period. Wherever student struggles break out, our comrades find themselves in conflict with members of IS and often compete with them in trying to recruit the same people. Despite their misleader-

ship, at ISF for example, they remain a factor. Because of its organisational looseness and petty-bourgeois ideology, it is more prone to internal divisions than other tendencies, recruiting and losing members rapidly. Nevertheless while the IS remains stronger than us numerically, has resources and speaks in the name of "Trotskyism," we are compelled to polemicise with it in order to explain Trotskyist politics on major issues like the struggle at LSE, RSSF, Ireland, Vietnam, Palestine, "ouvrièrism" etc.

Many IS members can be won to Trotskyism and are beginning to recognise the need for a more centralised organisation with a common political line. The IMG must have a bold policy of reaching out to these critical youth and winning them to the ranks of the Fourth International. The time to do this is now. The IS presents youth with a false example of the meaning of revolutionary Marxist strategy, organisation, and tactics. The construction of a Trotskyist youth organisation in the next period, which must conduct a serious campaign against IS will ensure that this roadblock to Trotskyism is removed.

III. The Present Stage of the IMG and What Must Be Done to Build It

In order to create the leadership organisation of the socialist revolution, a mass Leninist vanguard party, we will have to overcome one of the most skillful, cunning and ruthless ruling classes in the world. With centuries of experience, the British ruling class has learned to deceive, corrupt and fight the working class and its leadership. The power to win the fight for socialism is embedded in the working class. However, the creation of the vanguard party is still in its infancy. It is important for us to have a clear idea of how from our present situation, a mass revolutionary party will be built.

It is commonly accepted that this mass party will not simply be built by recruitment in ones and twos characteristic of the present period. In periods of sharp and massive class struggle whole layers of the class along with various currents will move towards the vanguard party. Fusions and splits will be part of this process.

But key to the formation of a mass revolutionary party is cadre -- a cohesive unit of trained and tested revolutionaries able to skillfully and collectively implement in struggle the main lines of the 1938 Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

The IMG, which has only recently become an official section of the Fourth International has only begun the task of assembling cadre. We comprise the nucleus of a vanguard party in its infancy.

The revolutionary optimism that exists in the IMG and its emphasis on the tremendous openings and possibilities before us is not only justified but necessary in order to build the mass party of tomorrow. But if this optimism is to help take us where we want to go it must be tempered with a sober assessment of the present stage of the IMG.

The IMG, even with its small forces tries to function as a revolutionary party, intervening in the class struggle wherever possible to give leadership to social layers in motion. Our work in defense of the Vietnamese revolution has been an example of this. By defending and explaining the ideas of Trotskyism, by popularising them in our press, by carrying them into action where we can, with the cadres we now have, we

are able to recruit cadres and train them.

Despite our growing ability to intervene, our overall role is propagandistic. Our organisation has no roots or established authority in either worker or student layers and is unable to lead any layer of society in struggle under its own name. Trotskyist views are accepted by a rapidly growing but nonetheless tiny minority. This is why the objective effect of our work is propagandistic -- that is, limited to increasing and deepening the influence of revolutionary socialist views and increasing the numbers of our cadres.

It is through the winning and training of these cadres that we will increase our resources and influences. In order to do this it is necessary to analyse the political situation and in that context decide on a political orientation which serves this end best. In the next period this must be to the youth -- especially in the student youth. It is the cadres who are recruited and trained as a result of the implementation of this orientation, by means of a Trotskyist youth organisation, who will guarantee us a qualitative step forward and give us the strength to eventually sink roots in the working class organisations and enable us to influence the direction of the class struggle.

Key to this process is our press. The character of our press is determined by the needs of our organisation. Through all its various stages, from a nucleus of a vanguard party to a mass revolutionary vanguard party, the press will be key.

What we need is a political newspaper. It must be a paper that popularises our ideas and is a means of educating and mobilising both our membership and the broader layers of people to whom we must be able to reach. It must be able to speak not only to vanguard layers but also new forces becoming interested in socialist ideas. At the same time it must be able to promote the activities of the IMG and its youth organisation -- in other words to build the Trotskyist movement.

This paper must a) Educate, agitate and organise for the IMG in the name of the IMG. b) Report and analyse from a Trotskyist point of view, contemporary politics with an emphasis on British issues. c) Give our comrades direction and leadership on the important political questions as they arise. d) Take up in an educational manner the positions and activities of our political opponents. (A weekly would be most effective but the frequency of publication depends on our resources.

This of course can only be done if the paper is under the direct control of the IMG through its leading body, the National Committee. The NC or Political Committee must be responsible for appointing the editorial board, choosing the editor, deciding on the frequency of publication and the resources allocated to the paper (funds and personnel) as it must be for all other publications of the organisation. Our press is our most important public face. The importance of our democratic-centralist norms is most reflected in this activity.

Without a paper of this character we will be unable to present Trotskyism effectively, deal adequately with our political opponents or recruit and train the necessary cadres.

Our experience with The Week indicates that we have not fully appreciated the importance of an IMG political newspaper. For example, the

attempt to create Week circles was not based on the political needs of the IMG nor an assessment of the way The Week as a broad youth oriented radical paper could help build the IMG. It was based on the necessity to maintain sales and find new distribution outlets to keep the paper coming out.

In addition, the energies of many leading comrades, in full time capacity, were poured into The Week even though it did not serve our needs and was not under our control. Our own publication International suffered and has become difficult to sell. Clearly we empirically slid into a situation where we attempted to use The Week as a convenient substitute for the development of our own paper. A popular broad radical paper in which we are involved can be very useful for a small organisation. But expanding the circulation of a paper like The Week is not equivalent to building an organisation or developing its own press.

Nor is the possession of material assets such as a printshop or publishing house. These can represent a big step forward if they are acquired in the course of the planned development of an organisation and are used correctly. If party building was as simple as getting a printshop or a publishing house the revolutionary party would have been built -- or rather bought -- decades ago. Papers in themselves do not reflect the growth of a politically strong organisation. The SLL is attempting to build a vanguard party via a print shop and a daily paper. The whole organisation is now geared to this project and from even the point of view of the SLL's development it is a clear case of the tail wagging the dog. It is essentially a get rich quick scheme -- a substitute for politics. We must not repeat this error.

We should ask ourselves what this all adds up to. Are we not looking for short cuts when we orient the movement around a paper like The Week? Are we not looking for easy solutions when we try to ignore our political opponents? When we adapt ourselves to the sectarian and ultra-left prejudices of youth by drifting into sectarian positions on the Labour Party and the anti-Vietnam war movement are we not trying to step around the problem of training political cadres? Is there a short cut to the mass revolutionary party?

In a certain sense it is very true that humanity does not have much time left. As Trotsky pointed out in the thirties, it is either fascist barbarism or socialist revolution. Today in the 1970's with over thirty years gone by the slogan has been modified but the meaning is the same. Either nuclear destruction or socialist revolution. The pressure on all of us to find a quicker way is understandable -- but for Marxists adaptation to this pressure is inexcusable. All achievements in this framework will in the long or short run prove to be illusory.

There is no easy way around the question of building a cadre organisation. Revolutionary cadre is the link between revolutionary theory and the working masses. It is that combination in human material of a deep understanding of revolutionary politics and the ability to put it into practice. Cadre is the bedrock of a mass revolutionary party. This is what is meant by constructing a working class leadership and a revolutionary party.

The British ruling class will never be dislodged by a blunt instrument. If we can say that the trade unions and the Labour Party

represent the present of the working class, then we must have the confidence that the IMG represents its future. "Short cut" politics will not bring this about -- it is a method which builds on sand.

Marxism is a science which makes it possible for us to analyse reality and on the basis of such an analysis enables us to make the best use of our cadre force and our resources. The art of politics is not to jump impatiently from one situation to another, nor to demand from the

movement more than it can give at each particular stage of its development. The art of politics is to assess the reality, decide what is possible to do, and to do it.

March 3, 1970

Footnote: For comrades interested in reading an excellent analysis of the politics and degeneration of the SLI they should read Marxism vs. Ultraleftism -- Key issues in Healy's challenge to the Fourth International, by Ernest Germain.

The political work of IMG must be structured by our strategic goal of building a revolutionary party for the working class and by the nature of the enemy -- Social Democracy and Stalinism. The problem in relation to sectors of intervention of the Group is not: should we work in the workers' movement or should we work outside it; but: how to organise all our work in such a way as to maximize the defeats we can inflict on Social Democracy and Stalinism in the workers' movement. We continually try to intervene in particular situations where the relationship of forces favours us in order that we can in turn modify the relationship of forces in general between the vanguard and the ruling class and its allies.

While the decisive battles for a mass revolutionary party in Britain can only take place within the organised workers' movement (and while we must continue to strengthen our work within it in preparation for these battles) the unevenness of development of the class struggle has led to a situation now where the qualitative transformation of the strength of vanguard organisation in relation to Social Democracy and Stalinism lies outside or on the periphery of the organised working class.

The transformation of the vanguard which is at present on the agenda is not the breaking of large sectors of the workers' movement from the Labour Party and the Communist Party, but is the breaking of significant social movements on the periphery of the working class movement from the grip of the bourgeoisie and the working class bureaucracies, and, in providing leadership for these movements, creating a political pole of attraction for the most conscious elements within the mass organisations of the class.

Such peripheral social movements are Black and Irish workers, the women workers, apprentices and secondary school students, above all the students in higher education. The reason for making the construction of a revolutionary youth organisation the central axis of the group's work in the coming period, is not because we haven't got many industrial militants, or because we have a large number of young people outside the workers' organisations, but because this is the most effective way to modify the relationship of forces between the revolutionary vanguard as a whole and the class enemies of the proletariat. Conversely the youth organisation must act not simply as a recruitment and training office for the adult organisation appealing to young people in general, but fundamentally as a political organisation, attempting to operate along Leninist lines with a definite political practise principally in the student milieu, and in the framework of a revolutionary Marxist programme. The youth work will construct supply depots, base camps, training centres and conveyor belts, a whole supporting network for the strategic battles ahead inside the trade unions and bureaucratic parties.

Sectors of Intervention

A. The University Student Front

The universities remain the weakest link in the chain of bourgeois power: this is due to the following broad factors:

a) the crisis of bourgeois ideology, though it affects youth as a whole, is experienced most acutely by students who are called upon to glorify and perpetuate the intellectual and moral heritage of the ruling class. The technical function

of the university places it in a more exposed position in relation to the global crisis of capitalism than any other institution in society.

b) the era of neocapitalism has thrown the universities into a profound institutional crisis produced by their necessity to respond to contradictory demands from the ruling class.

c) the universities lack adequate structures of integration and regimentation. The notions of personal and financial independence, of "academic freedom" and of "character-forming" cultural pursuits, hang-overs of a previous era, provide room for political mobilisation and education, while attempts to introduce "reforms" which integrate the students more effectively into the structures of capitalism (such reforms are being voted now by the DES) threaten to produce a powerful response from the students without resolving the institutional crisis. The transitional character of the milieu further opens possibilities for political action.

d) thus the crisis of bourgeois ideology and the institutional crisis of the universities --both in the last analysis reflections of the fundamental contradiction between the productive forces and capitalist relations of production -- have produced powerful student movements exploding the traditional rules of the game, using direct actions, violence, etc. and expressing revolutionary aspirations.

Whereas in past periods the student milieu reflected ideologically the class struggle in general (the colonial revolution, the fight against fascism, etc.) and thus the role of revolutionaries on the campus was to make propaganda and agitation related to these general questions, in the period of neocapitalism the appearance of the fundamental contradictions of capitalism within the universities means that the student population can be mobilised around demands specific to the university and educational system.

But the very fact that fundamental contradictions within the capitalist system have entered the universities and thrown up a student movement means that the solution of the contradictions within the universities lies beyond the power of the student movement. If the students focus simply on the immediate phenomena of the crisis within their college they will inevitably fall prey to reformism. But if they put forward demands which fundamentally challenge the bourgeois education system they find themselves without the means to fight for those demands. This can lead them to ultraleftism -- despairing of winning victories through mass struggles on the campus, they confine themselves to abstract revolutionary propaganda. Thus the student movement is caught between its revolutionary vocation and the objective limits of the university community.

A programme for students must therefore, if it is to mobilise masses of students, be related to issues specific to the university, but at the same time must transcend the campus in its goals if it is to avoid the reformist trap. Secondly the programme must not be simply a series of demands for changes on a campus but must be a programme of struggle.

I suggest the following foci for such a programme:

- opposing all ideological manipulation

of the students.

- opposing all regimentation of student life.
- political freedom on the campus.
- breaking all connections between the university and imperialist interests; support for anti-imperialist struggles.
- break the ties of the university with monopoly capital; support for workers' struggles.
- fighting all technocratic reforms; put forward demands that link the different sectors of the education system. Free higher education for all.
- no decline in living standards of students.

The effective struggle around this programme pre-supposes the existence of an organised vanguard within the universities pursuing this theme of struggle through concrete slogans and campaigns as a subordinate part of its overall strategy.

While the need for such a vanguard presses itself on the student movement, the required commitment, discipline, perseverance are far from inherent in the unstable, unremembering university population. Hence the tendency towards student left coffee-bar circles producing all kinds of sophisticated ideologies which are simply escape routes from the fundamental task of building a revolutionary organisation. Hence also the need for the vanguard youth organisation to be not simply a university student organisation but one which incorporates students from other sectors of the educational system and proletarian youth. The organisation must therefore fuse university students with a highly developed abstract consciousness but a lower level of commitment and students from other sectors of education and young workers who will tend to have a high level of commitment but a less highly developed conceptual apparatus.

The forms which the vanguard youth organisation will give to the student movement will not be the trade union of the classical type but the political mass movement which will include different tendencies, which is structured in united front action committees at the base and which has as its field of privileged, but not exclusive, intervention the student milieu.

The building of this political mass movement within the universities, autonomous of the bourgeoisie and working class bureaucracies -- which we might term the Red Base or Red University -- is the strategic task of our militants within the university milieu.

This student movement, by its mass mobilisation, offers us the possibility of political intervention on a national level. We must provide the movement with an overall strategic perspective for the British revolution and with the tactical understanding and organisational strength necessary to deal effective blows against the bourgeois education system. It is on the basis of our growing strength within the university student milieu that we will be able to build a general youth movement incorporating secondary schools, colleges and apprentices.

B. The Lower Half of the Binary System

Whereas in some advanced capitalist countries the contradictions within higher education express themselves within a single institution --

the university -- in Britain their field of operation extends through a series of institutions divided within the binary system. The state is attempting to insulate the universities from the pressure of numbers, declining teaching resources, poor facilities, cultural sterility, etc., by concentrating most of the expansion in the non-university sectors of higher education. Students in the Polytechnics, Colleges of Education will tend therefore to be much more acutely oppressed in a material sense. At the same time, however, the students in these sectors, largely proletarian in origin, maintain a far stronger contact with their social class origin and are more directly tied to specific occupational features, and therefore the corporatism, anti-intellectualism and conservatism which is the reality of the working class under social-democratic hegemony.

All this means that the objective basis for revolt exists within the lower half of the binary system, and that in the event of such a revolt this sector presents a much more direct conveyor belt of revolutionary consciousness into the working class milieu, both through origin and destination, but at the same time the integration of the student population means that it is slower to move and is less sensitive to our politics than is the case of the university student milieu. The issues on which it will be mobilised are much less those reflecting the class struggle in general -- to which they are not highly sensitive -- than questions relating to their future role in the productive process and their education in relation to that.

Thus teachers training college students can be mobilised around questions affecting the teaching profession, day-release students around the exploitation of apprentices, both these and Poly students around the material deprivation they face. They cannot be mobilised and reached unless the specificity of their situation is grasped.

At the same time, the student movement within the universities, because of the very importance and predominance of these institutions within the Binary system, will have an impact within this sector both directly and through the NUS which, in an effort to head off revolt within the universities by moving itself to the 'left,' precipitates an ideological re-evaluation within the colleges. Such an impact is clearly already being felt, as witnesses by the first struggles within the Colleges of Education and Polytechnics and by the spontaneous emergence of socialist societies in these institutions over the last six months.

C. The Secondary School Front

The extremely repressive and authoritarian nature of the milieu, in conjunction with the school revolt against bourgeois culture and morality makes the secondary school sector an extremely explosive one. The size of the secondary school student population means that mass movements within this sector can have a profound impact on other social layers.

But at the same time the absence of basic democratic rights of students and the arbitrary power of teachers over their futures, coupled with the dependence of school students on their parents places school militants in extremely vulnerable positions (of SAU victimisations).

The struggle in the schools must be built around campaigns against regimentation and for democratic rights as well as around

general political questions, especially those brought up by teachers.

The forms of organisation should again be Action Committees (which may go under the name of SAU etc.) independent of "schools councils" etc., which combine all tendencies in actions on specific issues: the aim should be to involve the mass of students in actions against the school authorities.

But given the repressive nature of the institutions, the militants in many places are forced to operate semi-secretly: using discotheques or film clubs and debating societies as propaganda instruments. External political help is therefore of decisive importance: leaflets produced and distributed by an external body to the school students can then be explained by the militants within the school. Thus in practise the school's movement in its still embryonic stage has relied upon the university student vanguard for help of this kind. Our own student comrades should be engaged in this work attempting to build nuclei in the schools which can then initiate and lead actions.

Attitude to SAU

The rapid spread of SAU branches around the country has testified to the ripeness of the schools for political struggle. At the same time the SAU has shown ultraleftism on organisational questions and a sloppiness over tactics which has led to the victimisation of many of its militants. It has tended to substitute revolutionary phrasemongering for mass political action. Our comrades should work within SAU to win support from its members for a transitional approach to the schools.

D. The Workers Front

The youth organisation will not in the immediate future be doing SYSTEMATIC work in the working class organisations, but for two reasons it must possess a clear understanding of the perspectives needed for such work: first because it will constantly have to take into account developments inside the workers' movement; secondly because it will be involved in solidarity actions with workers struggles and must grasp the general framework of such actions. The youth organisation must be educated in the technical aspects of the workers' movement and in the programmatic acquisitions of the revolutionary movement; the experiences of IMG in the workers' movement must be assimilated by the leadership of the Youth Organisation. In the present document it is worth pointing out only a few points:

a) In this period the worker student relationship has undergone a number of important changes:

1) On the side of the students the student movement has changed the dimensions of the workers-intellectual problem: the role that was previously played by a few revolutionary intellectuals can now be played by a whole movement of young intellectuals. Thus the emergence of the student movements tends to make revolutionary ideas much more accessible to workers, both directly through contact with revolutionary students and indirectly through the outpouring of cheap literature on revolutionary socialism catering for the student market.

2) The opening of a front of struggle in the student milieu to some extent modifies the relationship of forces between the workers' vanguard and the class enemy, while the exemplary actions of the student movement can in certain situations (a rise in working-class militancy)

revive explosive forms of struggle long suppressed in the working class movement by the bureaucratic leadership.

3) The mobility of the student movement offers the possibility of direct intervention in workers' struggles on occasions. On occasions the student movement has actually influenced the line of workers' struggles.

On the working class side, new layers of the population must objectively be defined as working class, and the workers are now increasingly passing through institutions of higher education. While the precise forms of this cross-fertilisation are complex, the fact that it can take place is beyond doubt.

b) As well as stressing the modifications in the worker-student relationship, we must constantly reiterate certain basic lessons about the workers' movement which tend to be forgotten.

1) The strategic problem is not simply to recruit as many workers as possible to the organisation but to win the working class vanguard. This vanguard is the leadership trained over years of struggle in the factory and trusted by the workers. It is the section of the working class most active in the mass organisations.

2) To win a substantial section of this vanguard away from the bureaucratic leadership will require struggle within the mass organisations, based upon the struggle within the factory.

3) The working class vanguard will not break from its present leadership unless it is presented with a real organisational alternative.

The youth organisation (let alone any student organisation) will not be able to offer itself to the workers' vanguard as an alternative to Social Democracy or Stalinism. However it should be geared to:

a) assisting the IMG's nucleus within the workers' movement in every way possible;

b) trying to develop solidarity with workers' struggles within the various milieux in which it has influence;

c) developing contacts with local working class organisations and shop stewards which will enable it to draw support from them for any political activities which make links with the working class possible;

d) ensuring that any young workers it recruits are furnished with clear perspectives for work within the trade unions.

The Youth Vanguard in Britain

Internationally the youth vanguard has found organisational expression in splits from the youth organisations of Social Democracy and Stalinism in organisations more or less spontaneously thrown up by the mass movement itself, in various splinter groups that represented the old vanguard, or in combinations of these three.

In Britain the leftward evolution of NALSO occurred in a vacuum, divorced from any organic development in relation to a political base in the student milieu. When its funds were cut off by Transport House the organisation collapsed without any response from the student population. The YCL, being a youth club formation in a period

when young people were turning away from Youth Clubs to politics, has suffered a catastrophic decline over the last three years. Nationally, it has never been more than marginal to the youth radicalisation, although in certain localities it acquired an ephemeral presence in the schools' movements. The politics of the Communist Party have exercised no attraction for students, although its Trade Union base has enticed some workerist militants -- a striking example being the Cambridge IS branch.

The two youth organisations with the greatest potential for becoming the vanguard formations within the youth were the 'Keep Left' YS and the RSSF. The YS, armed with the writings of Trotsky, with the educative experience of a fight with the Labour bureaucracy and with a substantial base among youth had the opportunity in 1964 to win hegemony within the various sections of young people. But its failure to win any hold within the crucial student milieu linked with its sectarian mold has reduced it to youth club activities with little influence over the politicised elements.

The RSSF represents a polar opposite to the KLYS and was born of the vacuum created by its failure and that of NALSO and the YCL. The strength of RSSF lay in its extreme implantation within the student left, its crucial tasks were to transcend the limitations of its milieu by raising itself to an overall strategic perspective within which the student struggle could be situated and by developing a firm organisational framework able to withstand the fickleness and instability of its milieu. Instead of this, however, RSSF became the passive reflection of those weaknesses its task had been to transcend: organisational chaos and a refusal to confront the strategic problems of revolutionary politics. Far from being able to organise and lead a national student movement and develop into a homogeneous political formation it succumbed to ideological confusion and political fragmentation, united only in its rejection of revolutionary organisation, which far from expressing its future poses the threat of its own negation.

The degeneration of RSSF was not caused by any "inner sectarian logic," but by the lack of a cadre capable of providing political leadership to the organisation. When it was founded in 1968 the IMG had just begun to recruit its first handful of student comrades and was in no position to service the organisation. The great opportunity of using RSSF as a vehicle for the creation of a united student movement was presented to the IS group. But since the IS group itself lacked programmatic coherence or organisational solidarity it could scarcely provide RSSF with them. Consequently by the second conference (November 1968) RSSF, weakened by five months of inactivity in a period of great opportunities (especially the October Vietnam demonstration), fell into the hands of the NLR comrades. They were able to provide a central office and information service and take some political initiatives, especially in relation to the LSE lockout. But their programmatic vagueness coupled with and reinforced by the absence of an organisational dimension in their work meant they were unable to transcend the limits of a purely student organisation. An additional factor leading to the progressive decay of RSSF was the withdrawal from the arena of the large IS student contingent. Neither the Maoists nor the RSL were able to present a serious challenge within the student movement, the latter because it was busy in the Labour Party, the former because of, among other things, their obscure fratricidal disputes.

The IMG's Youth Work

The small resources of IMG were heavily committed to organising around the Vietnam issue at a time when the spontaneous upsurge of student struggles offered considerable possibilities of development of within the student milieu. The IMG members within the student field were the least experienced and least integrated section of the membership. While the general line of our student orientation was correct and while the group's programme gives us the necessary theoretical preconditions for playing a vanguard role amongst youth, our student perspectives were not clearly placed within an overall perspective for the vanguard, nor was there an adequate leadership for our youth comrades nor even an adequate means of internal discussion amongst our student comrades nationally to give our work a cutting edge within the universities. Our student comrades were dispersed geographically and we had no strong base on a campus or in a locality from which to establish a national presence. Neither our interventions within RSSF nor our journal Student International succeeded in drawing a periphery around us. Many other tendencies were larger or at least more vocal. We tended to operate to a great extent under the hegemony of NLR.

However in the last six months our situation has greatly improved. We have greatly extended our implantation in the student milieu nationally and in a number of places have become, or have the immediate prospect of becoming, hegemonic. At the same time the structuring of our work through local youth fractions and the national co-ordinating committee has given us the ability to discuss problems of our work and orientation, co-ordinate activities and take initiatives. We have also been able to begin the task of developing a leadership for our youth fraction. The youth fraction has started a journal which should be stabilised in the near future, and has begun to use the Week as an instrument for drawing a periphery around it.

The Need for A Vanguard Youth Organisation

The last national conference of the Group agreed on the tactic of trying to develop a revolutionary tendency within RSSF which could eventually compete for leadership within the organisation. The failure of RSSF to become a living organisation with organic links to the student base renders such a tactic obsolete. Our task now is to regroup the student vanguard under our own leadership on the basis of the principal lessons of the last couple of years. The two main lessons are:

1) A revolutionary organisation within the student milieu cannot avoid fundamental questions of revolutionary programme. These problems are posed not only in relations to solidarity actions within anti-colonial struggles and anti-capitalist struggles within the working class but also crucially in relation to the student movement itself. Such debates could be avoided within RSSF only by bureaucratically manipulating the organisation to muffle tendencies within it which had global political positions.

2) The notion that a loose federation of discussion-action circles linked to a national office could give coherent political leadership to the student movement has proved to be quite illusory. What is required is a real political organisation of revolutionaries, with definite rights and responsibilities of membership within a democratic centralist structure, built from the top (national conference) down.

We must campaign in the next few months

for a new vanguard organisation of revolutionaries within the student and youth milieux which will be able to transcend the limitations of RSSF.

This new organisation should have the following main features:

1) A global programme: Permanent revolution in the colonial world; political revolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; the revolutionary road to socialism in the imperialist countries; for building a revolutionary international

2) A democratic centralist structure

3) The main milieu of intervention to be the education system, but active role in solidarity actions with working class and anti-imperialist struggles.

4) Membership would require acceptance of the programme and a commitment to activity; the political level required from young workers would be lower than that demanded from students.

5) The organisation must have its own press, must be able to polemicise with other political organisations and must have an active political centre.

The task of IMG will be to provide ideological leadership for the organisation through a theoretical journal, and political leadership through the training it gives to the members of the organisation who are also members of IMG and in this way we must win the most advanced militants in the organisation to the Fourth. At the same time as IMG makes its central task the development of the youth organisation, it must also direct its militants not in the youth organisation to work INSIDE the workers' movement.

Steps Towards a Youth Organisation

The day after the IMG conference the youth fraction nationally should meet to reach agreement on the following points:

1) A programme to propagandise for a vanguard youth organisation.

2) Campaigns to be carried out in the summer months.

3) Election of National leadership till the founding conference.

4) Establish a general name for local youth groups, recruitment norms and membership principles.

5) Make definite plans for building the youth journal and establishing a strong political centre.

Throughout the summer months the IMG Youth Fraction should operate as an embryonic youth fraction with a semi-public face, initiating national actions and establishing definite patterns of work. Our aim in this period should be to establish ourselves as a leading force and to prepare ourselves to draw the best of the student militants into the Youth Organisation. Locally where we have one or two IMG members they should work to establish a nucleus on the university campus (through Red Mole, etc.); where we have such a nucleus (five or six members) it should acquire a public face (leaflets, literature stalls and meetings under its own name). It should try to win the leadership of the SOC SOCs without dissolving themselves into it or of polarising the situation artificially.

Once a strong base on the campus has been established, we should turn to other educational sectors. In these areas the priority is to recruit one or two activists to the youth group and then to establish soc socs, SAUs etc. This work in the non-university sectors must be done in our own name rather than that of the Soc Socs, etc.

We should have a constant perspective of establishing local IMG branches which can orient themselves to the local workers' movement as well as servicing the Youth Group. The creation of new youth groups must be under the control of the National Leadership of the Youth Organisation. The work of IMG members in the local youth group should be fully discussed in the local branch but the youth groups must be organisationally autonomous.

by Joanna Campbell

In order to evaluate our attitude to Vietnam work in the present period it is first necessary to repeat briefly the reasons for our earlier position, particularly as there are numbers of new members who did not participate in these experiences and whose understanding of our earlier position may be distorted by the very different present situation.

The late 1950's and 1960's had seen a series of setbacks for the world revolution in the Third World (a series of coups, interventions, repression etc.); in the East European countries a mistaken belief in the effectiveness of reformism prevailed (arising out of concessions following the 1956 risings) and in the industrial countries of the West the working class movement was far from on the offensive. (Analysed in a whole series of documents.) The balance of forces on a world scale was weighed against the world revolution.

The popular upsurge in Vietnam against the stooge government of U.S. imperialism, (belatedly taken up by the Communist Parties of Vietnam), contributed to the changing of this situation, and by 1964 the battle was directly and openly joined between social revolution and the greatest imperialist power in the world. No longer was imperialism waging class struggle through puppets, stooges or other powers, but nakedly, with its own forces. The Vietnam civil war had developed into a direct confrontation between revolution and imperialism and it is for this reason that we made solidarity with the Vietnamese the priority for the International. It was not because Vietnam was "the only place things were happening" (this was why we put all our forces into this work, not a proportion of them), but because this struggle represented the highest point of the international class struggle at that time. In the then circumstances, a victory for U.S. imperialism would presage defeat for an indefinite period of time for the world revolution. A victory for the Vietnamese revolution (even prolongation of the war) would aid and encourage revolution in other parts of the Third World, help defend the Cuban Revolution etc. -- not to mention the probable effects on the other two sectors of the world revolution. The continuing Vietnam War became a symbol of, and contributed to, a change in the position for the world revolution. As internationalists, our world view obliged us to direct our efforts to building a movement of solidarity with the living revolution, the Vietnam war being not a separate issue, but an integral part of the international class struggle.

It must be said that we did not qualify our support for the Vietnamese struggle because of the bureaucratic nature of the Vietnamese CPs or because of past massacres of Trotskyists in North Vietnam, or because the CPs declare their intention of pursuing a policy of "peace and neutrality" when the war is over. We gave our unqualified support to the popular revolution against landlordism, and imperialism; and insofar as the CP and DRNV's elite support and lead that struggle we gave them too our unqualified support. In principle we support any fight against imperialism. In the event of a direct attack on a workers' state our position is even more clear. We defend without reserve the gains of the revolution, regardless of bureaucratic deformations -- for if such a fight is lost, certainly the bureaucracy is overthrown, but so also are all the giant strides made by the overthrow of capitalism etc. This is our position regarding the defence of the Soviet Union and the East European states. We

continually draw attention to the degeneration of the USSR, and attempt to build the forces that will bring about the political overthrow of the bureaucratic elite. But should a workers' state be directly attacked by imperialism, we stand full square behind the forces opposed to this attack in defence of the social basis of that state and the gains made by the workers and peasants. To do otherwise is to line up with imperialism. This is the case regardless of the intentions of those who believe they are holding to their principles in refusing unqualified support to "degenerate" leaderships in such a struggle. These comrades are ignoring the fact that a popular revolution develops a dynamic of its own: that events and movements develop at such a speed that the bureaucratic leadership can only remain the leadership insofar as it responds to this dynamic, reflects the aspirations and actions of the people, in short, insofar as, in a revolutionary situation, it tends to "debureaucratise" itself. In short, the bureaucracy, in order to maintain its own privileged position, can only do so in the event of an attack by imperialism insofar as it acquiesces in the beginning of the political revolution. It must maintain the leadership of the popular movement which it can only do by a move to the left, in order, when the struggle is won, to be in a position to retrench itself, to re-usurp from the people the political power they will have gained in the course of the struggle. From this it is clear that the way to support the political revolution in North Vietnam is to give unqualified support to the anti-imperialist struggle, to strengthen the revolutionary forces and defend the revolutionary aims of the struggle, to build a massive world-wide movement of solidarity (through specific campaigns and through advancement of the revolution in other parts of the world) such that the leadership will be unable to regain their privileged position. To qualify our support for the Vietnamese struggle with criticism of the bureaucratic leadership therefore is to act against the political revolution, to find ourselves amongst the Mensheviks and the sterile sects. (I am not at all saying we should pretend these deformations etc. do not exist. Indeed, it is a great pity that the promised article in the monthly did not appear. We should of course explain the nature of the workers' states etc. continually -- but in the campaign of solidarity with the revolution our support is unqualified.)

The Effects of the Vietnam Work on the IMG

Having decided to build a campaign of solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution we embarked upon this with the "United Front" method of organisation. This was no accident -- the united front campaign has an enormously important role to play in the process of "regroupment" of the left -- the fact that the VSC has lost its united front character (due to a whole number of factors) should not lead comrades to sneer at this type of organisation, for if we do not understand the need for and the role of the united front there will never be a regroupment of the left which is essential to the building of the revolutionary party, and we might as well stop now and go to the pictures. The building of the revolutionary party depends on the working class breaking with its traditional organisations whose leadership is inextricably bound to the system. Increasingly in the coming period different sectors of the class will be involved in struggle, and all kinds of "ad hoc" organisations will tend to spring up in these different sectors, without

the direct control of the traditional leaderships and appealing to those not attached to their organisations as well as those who are so attached. If the Stalinists and "left" social democrats organise, and maintain the leadership of, such new forms of organisation, it is to head them off, to prevent their becoming a direct challenge to the system as such. Our job is to involve ourselves in the creation of such forms of struggle in the different sectors (e.g. women, apprentices, etc.) but basing them on the appropriate principled demands which can mobilise the masses -- demands which reflect the present consciousness of the workers involved but which tend to lead to a clash with the state. Such demands are not generally acceptable to the Stalinist and social democratic reformists, and in appealing to their organisations for support for particular campaign, to the extent that we gauge our demands correctly and gain the support of their rank and file and do not gain the support of the Stalinist and social Democratic leaderships, we are aiding the exposure of these leaderships in the eyes of the workers and contributing to the regroupment of the left under a revolutionary leadership.

Thus to have attempted to build a united front campaign around solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution, calling for support from the revolutionary groups, youth organisations, the Communist Parties and Labour Parties, etc. should be seen in this light -- and indeed the campaign did cause many (particularly the youth) to break with the reformist ideology and leadership. It is in this light too that the inviting of TU and CP militants to speak on "solidarity" platforms must be seen -- not as "prostituting the campaign to win TU militants and CP support," but as part of the process of winning the militants from the CP etc. Unless this perspective for work in the mass movements is clearly understood, and our activities in these movements geared to it, we will get nowhere (regardless of how devoted, patient, hard, disciplined, organised etc. our work may be). Not to understand this strategy is to find ourselves willy-nilly in the sterile backwater of sectarianism, along with the IS, SLL, etc.

The IMG's leadership in the formation of VSC in early 1966, on the principled basis of solidarity etc. and opposition to US imperialism (not on the question of troop withdrawals) as against the Stalinist position of peace and back to Geneva, gave the IMG its national identity. It should not be forgotten that IMG had been in existence a relatively short time, that our forces were small, that we had only fairly recently acquired a London centre, that we were employing the tactic of entrism and had no significant open sector. It was through debate within the Vietnam movement, through the attitudes towards us of other groups, that the IMG became an identifiable and serious tendency amongst the revolutionary left. Through our work in ad hoc committees etc. where the VSC joined battle with the pacifists and their Stalinist allies, the debate was widened and gradually the VSC gained the hegemony of the antiwar movement, forcing the CP and YGL to the left as it became clear that their pacifist friends represented nobody and the militants were turning towards our position. Thousands of young people were brought to an anti-imperialist consciousness (reflected in size of demos rather than membership) and in some areas significant support was gained from the labour movement. However, although VSC gained hegemony over the antiwar movement, IMG did not gain hegemony over the VSC itself. Other groups worked in this field for simple recruitment purposes, we were forced into alliances with petit bourgeois elements which obscured our differences with them, the bulk of the day to day work fell to our comrades so that we

were identified with VSC in the eyes of the new youth forces, while other groups kept their own identities, expressed their full platforms, and made gains amongst the youth brought into revolutionary politics by our work. That we did not gain recruits on a larger scale is not because this is inevitable in a single issue united front campaign, but because of the factors mentioned above, and the fact that we did not fully discuss these problems at the time and work out a strategy to overcome them. The lesson is that when in this type of situation we must analyse it fully, analyse all the forces involved, and overcome the tendency for us to create members for other groups where we are carrying the burden of work (a situation liable to recur in view of other groups' inability to organise united front campaigns). For example some will be involved in the day-to-day work, whilst others will be in the campaign fully supporting it and representing IMG as such, making attempts to involve new people in other fields of work, putting across our programme, recruiting etc. -- which is difficult for comrades involved in the bureaucracy of such campaigns to do.

The retaining of the IMG identity separate from these comrades has two aspects: a) of making clear our support and leadership of the campaign while at the same time enabling us further to develop the consciousness of others involved and b) of aiding our comrades involved in the bureaucracy to maintain their general perspective. To the extent that we gain recruits amongst young and other workers who may be heavily involved in Trade Union struggles this approach becomes more vital (the youth organisation will play an important role here). I am not suggesting of course that we put forward the full IMG platform within a united front campaign itself, but that our comrades are aided by this approach to do so around the activities etc. of the campaign. We were not able to work like this in VSC in the past for the reasons given, but the lessons of this experience are of importance in any future united front campaigns we become involved in.

The Changing Relationship Between the Three Sectors of the World Revolution

The facts of Cuba, the breakup of the Russian monolith, the Sino-Soviet dispute etc. all coalesced around the growth of the Vietnam antiwar movement, to produce on a world scale a new radicalism amongst youth, whose ideology was without the traditional Stalinist and social democratic moulds. In the Third World new struggles began, encouraged by the Vietnam struggle, and with the sympathy of the youth in the imperialist countries. In the US the growth of the antiwar movement contributed in part to the growth of the Black movement and the interrelationship between the two forces led to a growth in revolutionary consciousness in which our comrades played a large part. The consciousness of the youth in the industrial countries was at first directed primarily towards the Third World, but France May 1968 saw a significant change. May 1968, triggered by the Vietnam movement, exacerbated by repression against the students, coincided with the first upsurge of the working class against what was to become the tendency of the capitalist class throughout Europe, the attempt to attack the standard of living and organisation of the working class. The bourgeoisie needed to stop the activities of the students (albeit on Vietnam), else they could not expect the workers to acquiesce in attacks on themselves. They were too late. Economic developments on a world scale, the levelling of technical development of the European countries, the inability of

the bourgeoisie to use the traditional methods of combatting inflation etc. etc. were felt particularly strongly in France, where the pressures of the common market were forcing down France's protective barriers and facing her with an unfavourable competitive position vis a vis the other countries of the Common Market. In the "strong state" of France there existed no "buffer" to ameliorate the anti-working class measures vital to the French bourgeoisie in this situation. The attacks on the students triggered working class opposition to these measures -- the sequel is well known. The workers' struggles, occupations, the tendency of economic to turn into political demands etc. put revolution in the advanced capitalist countries back on the agenda, re-affirming the Trotskyist position. The widespread effects of May, the ideas which came out of it, are fully documented -- Czechoslovakia, Italy, even Britain (where student occupations etc. though to an extent "artificial," their aims etc. based on a wrong analysis of what had happened in France on spontaneism etc. nevertheless showed the beginning of a new trend, of a belief that revolution was still possible in the advanced industrial countries). In this context the 1969 Liverpool strike attempt where occupation and workers' control were raised (even though defeated) is of some significance, along with the increased interest in workers' control.

Developments since 1968 in both the Eastern European sector and in the industrial countries have been fully analysed elsewhere -- suffice it to say here that in the industrial countries we have entered a period of increasing working class struggles, of attacks by international monopoly capitalism on working class living standards and organisations, a period of potential pre-revolutionary situations.

Clearly the relationship between the three sectors of the world revolution has begun and continues to change. No longer is the struggle clearly in the Third World. Both in the Eastern European countries and in the industrial countries great struggles are approaching and we ignore this fact at our peril.

October 27 as a Sign of the Changing Relationships

The huge October 27 demonstration must be seen as part of the process of change outlined above. It is simply not correct to believe that the demonstration was about Vietnam, that it represented the legitimate peak of the Vietnam movement. The demonstration's focus was Vietnam -- in this it was a triumph for our work in this field, and represented the developing anti-imperialist consciousness of youth in particular. However no one in the body of the rally in Hyde Park could fail to relapse that the enthusiasm and tension there (despite later feelings of anti-climax) were not attributable solely to solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution, the Tet offensive, the forcing of the US to the Peace Talks etc., but to solidarity with the French May, to the understanding that the French May could happen here, to the desire to see it, and to the expectation (so heady after years of unbelief) that it would be soon.

Had it not been for May, probably 50,000 would have participated. This would have been a success for the Vietnam movement. But because the demonstration was in the sense above about the "British May" and because the heady enthusiasm (justifiable) was based on an incorrect understanding of the French events, the participants in the demonstration and thus the VSC itself, suffered inevitably from anti-climax and this, combined with the dulling effects of the Peace Talks contributed to the decline of the VSC. Those who had participated (including revolutionary

groupings) moved on to preparations for the British May, to university occupations etc. The reactions to this of the authorities helped to radicalise even more youth -- but this movement grew to a great extent because those involved had seen students on the barricades and France brought to her knees, but had not understood the reasons why the working class had stood up and why this would not happen automatically here (e.g. parliamentary system, the conservative tradition of the labour movement etc. as buffers to the attacks of international monopoly capitalism against the working class).

The October demonstration thus was at one and the same time both an extraordinary manifestation of anti-imperialist consciousness, and also the sign that the relationship between the three sectors of the world revolution had changed, that events in an industrial country could inspire the youth of Britain, that campaigns other than anti-imperialist ones would soon come into prominence.

Unfortunately, our own group was not unaffected by the general euphoria, and as a result our turn to the youth was marred by over-emphasis on student work in a vacuum, concentration on student issues as such, too close an alliance in this work with the NLR group (without full discussion of our differences). The concomitant of this was a decline of our work in other fields, particularly the Vietnam field -- and this (plus Peace Talks etc.) led to the virtual disappearance of VSC. Had we been alive to this situation, and particularly if we had carried out our decisions on Vietnam work taken at the VSC Conference early in 1969, we might have been able to maintain the campaign, and also counter the ultraleft tendencies in the student movement.

Our lack of recruitment in this period can be seen as arising out of both the objective situation and our lack of activity in the Vietnam field (assuming we should have been more aggressive about this than in the past -- possibly because of the disappearance of other tendencies, although this brought about other major problems) and also because of the incorrect approach to the youth -- or more correctly, the lack of a clear notion of how we should approach the youth. Our unique internationalism was not a feature of this period. Many comrades, even in the leadership, allowed themselves to be misled by peace talks, Nixon doctrines etc. into declaring that the war was as good as finished.

Fortunately our orientation to the youth was subsequently (summer 1969) fully discussed, and the need to build a revolutionary youth organisation with a broad political platform (as opposed to a programme based on the demands of a sector of the youth, the students) was agreed on, and is now being built.

The Present Relation Between the Three Sectors

-- Vietnam Still a Priority?

Since we maintain that the relationship of the three sectors has changed it is obvious that our evaluation of our Vietnam work and of the Vietnam War, must correspondingly be developed.

In the Third World in the early sixties, the Vietnam struggle, along with Cuban developments, represented a change from the defensive to the offensive on the part of the world revolution. At the present time, a whole series of struggles against imperialism are going on in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. In all these struggles we give our support to

the fight against imperialism. Is there any reason why we should single out Vietnam from these struggles for special attention? In all these struggles, imperialism is deeply involved, but working through agents: either through other powers (Israel, Portugal etc.) or through the stooge governments, giving "aid," weapons, "advisers," CIA guidance etc. But in Vietnam, the US imperialist forces are directly involved, to the extent of half a million troops. The US intervention has escalated into neighbouring Laos, where 5,000 ground troops are stationed (Sunday Times January 3, 1970) along with usual paraphernalia. Bases in Thailand etc. are being developed -- clearly far from ending US involvement in the war. "Vietnamisation" merely releases growing forces to deal with the growing revolution in neighbouring countries. Both the revolutionary and the imperialist forces are expanding the battle areas. The direct confrontation between social revolution and imperialism is expanding. Nixon's "new policy" is to be seen in deeds not words for home consumption. Thus, far from the Vietnam struggle being less extensive than it was, it is more so! There has been an intensification of the international class struggle in the Third World and the Vietnam war remains the highest point of the international class struggle, the focal point at which the forces of revolution and reaction are locked in physical battle; the Vietnam revolution thus remains the priority of the International.

At the same time we should recognise that the increasing consciousness of the youth in the industrial countries in relation to imperialism's manifestations, its mysterious ways, means that we can mobilise the youth in response to its actions in almost any country at particular times: i.e. that we can initiate and participate in a number of actions and campaigns which will be conscious and militant but which will not have a mass character (i.e. involve the working class as such). For example, on Bolivia, Palestine, and in Britain at present, Ireland. The concomitant of this is that we cannot expect the revolutionary youth of their own accord to organise and participate in the single issue long term Vietnam campaign since their understanding has progressed beyond this, although we can expect them to respond to such a campaign in particular circumstances (e.g. a gigantic escalation). In France, because of the growth of consciousness amongst both youth and the working class, arising out of the lessons learned from the experience of the pre-revolutionary situation, the tendency of the youth just described has spread to the working class itself, and to the extent that the links between the Third World and their own bourgeois state are more clearly understood, there is increasingly no need for a separate Vietnam campaign, though a need for actions on Vietnam, to which the whole class will respond (or rather the most advanced sectors of it) -- e.g. recent demonstration in France initiated by LC, bringing 4,000 onto banned streets. In other words, because Vietnam is the highest point of the international class struggle, the defence of the revolution is a priority for the International -- but the form of this defence, whether separate campaigns or integrated actions etc. depends on the level of the class struggle in the particular country. To the extent that in Britain we progress towards the regroupment of the left, our Vietnam work will tend to develop in the direction of the French comrades' work rather than US (unless British support of the US goes onto a new level). I will return to this point later in connection with our Vietnam work in Britain.

Having shown that the Vietnam struggle is still a priority for the International, we should consider whether the changed relationship in the

three sectors is such that there exists a point of direct struggle between international capitalism and the working class in the industrial countries, or between the bureaucratic elite and the revolutionary forces in the East European states, an actual prerevolutionary situation which would mean us giving immediate priority to this rather than to the existing revolution in Southeast Asia.

Clearly, at the present time, the answer is no. In the workers' states there is a growing awareness of the need for change, for the overthrow of the elite. But this awareness is in embryonic form and is largely confined to intellectuals, minority nationalities, and (in Czechoslovakia), to a relatively small number of workers (which is not to underestimate the importance of these groups in building the new party). The mass of the people are reaching to knowledge of and explanation for their repression, but there is not a widespread recognition of the need to take power: there is no situation at present comparable to the revolutionary war in Vietnam.

In the industrial countries a situation of uneven development exists. There is a growing consciousness, particularly amongst the youth, but the sway of Stalinism and (decreasingly) Social Democracy is still strong. In the intermittent periods of strife in the different countries the tendency for these movements to be bypassed is growing -- but forays into capitalist power, in each of which an increasing number of workers reject the traditional parties, can the revolutionary party be built. Prerevolutionary situations will arise, and in such situations of course Vietnam work is not the immediate priority for the International: our priority is to participate in the movement, to inject transitional demands into the platforms of whatever sectors are in struggle, to build the transitional programme of the revolutionary party. A part of the preparation for this period is, in Britain, the building of the revolutionary youth organisation, which, through its young workers, is our entry into the working class. This is a matter of urgency in either the case of a Labour victory in the General Election (when an alternative must be available for the workers who become finally disillusioned with Social Democracy or in the case of a Labour defeat (when we will have to fight against the revitalising of the so-called "left" or alternatively against the total collapse of the political movement of the workers).

However, at present a pre-revolutionary situation does not exist in Britain, and whilst we must continually and urgently prepare for this eventuality in the manner outlined above, at the same time we must give urgent and special attention in our work to the ongoing revolutionary process in Vietnam. This work is a priority in its own right therefore.

The Relation Between Vietnam and Other Work

The logic of the changed relationship between the three sectors is a change in the balance of our work in Britain. Whereas in the 1960's we put all our forces into Vietnam work, we must now come to an arrangement which reflects the priority of the ongoing Vietnam revolution, and at the same time the priority of building the revolutionary youth movement and the revolutionary party. We must divide our work in such a way as to carry out both these tasks, which are not separate from, but complementary to, each other. The tendency in the industrial countries is toward revolution, but the struggle is also intensifying in the Third World. One is not

becoming more, the other less important -- both struggles are intensifying and growing closer together. This is a major point. The links between the Third World and the industrial countries are becoming tighter -- events in one sector affect the other areas more quickly than in the past. The necessity of fighting an expanding imperialist war has had economic effects on international capitalism unimaginable a decade ago, and contributed in large part to a sharpening of the internal contradictions of capitalism. Because of the costs of the Vietnam war, it is impossible for the US to make the necessary concessions to sidetrack discontent at home, particularly amongst youth, Blacks, Chicanos, American Indians, etc. The international monetary crisis, the coming recessions, the need to rationalise industry, etc. will lead to increasing unemployment. The first sections of the working class to feel this will be the national minorities who identify with liberation movements elsewhere. The fact of the involvement of these minorities in the front line of the US forces in Vietnam, while at home they are doubly exploited, has aided their understanding of the nature of the system. The effects of this process are reflected in the working class in general, where the point is beginning to be taken that they are the fighters of the bosses' battles (again Vietnam) but are suffering lowering of standards at home like the minority groups. Thus we see an increasing working class participation in the antiwar movement in the US, at the same time as rising militancy in the unions (miners, dockers, GE etc.), and an increasing awareness of the international nature of capitalism (extension of grape boycott to Canada and Europe, extension of GE fight, growing international contacts between the Unions albeit at bureaucratic level and confined largely to industrial countries).

The growing internationalisation of capital (involving open transfer of work to "trouble free" areas) plus the growing economic crises exacerbated by the Vietnam war, are forcing an increased internationalism into the labour movement for its own self defence (vide Reuther's moves to form an autoworkers international of a rudimentary kind).

In the US the capitalist class was so well aware of this trend towards an understanding of the class nature of the international capitalist system, that it was obliged to delegate whole sectors of the ruling class and its stooges into the Vietnam movement last autumn (moratoria), to attempt to give the movement a "good American" rather than an internationalist perspective, to try and head off the trends described above.

The actions of our own comrades in the current GE strike are instructive as a counterattack to the programme of the "liberal face" of capitalism. The students are deeply involved in the strike, picketing, leafletting, giving general support. But they make it clear they are doing this in respect of GE's complicity in the Vietnam war. They are not telling the workers how to run the strike, but taking the opportunity to expose the GE firm in all its ramifications. Their actual support of the strikers is duly appreciated, and the relationships resulting from this approach has led to an increase in the workers' understanding of the international nature of capitalism, of the links between the Third World and the industrial world, and of the common nature of the liberation struggles and the working class struggle in the US itself. At the same time, other comrades are trying to inject transitional demands into the struggle itself -- thus deepening the class struggle on several levels. The consciousness of the unity of interests between the working class of the industrial countries and the

workers and peasants of the Third World is a prerequisite for the successful advancement of the world revolution, and one of the tasks of the revolutionary vanguard is to encourage the development of such a consciousness.

In Britain, as in America, the defence of the Vietnamese revolution as well as being a priority in its own right, has an important though somewhat different role to play in the deepening of the internationalist consciousness of the working class. At the present time the VSC barely exists, and the initiative is once again with the Communist Party and its allies whose work for "British dissociation" and for the British government to do x, y and z to bring about peace is, despite the addition of "US Troops Out of Vietnam," anti-internationalist in character. To call on the British government to find a solution, to abrogate the responsibility of the people to build their own forms of support for the fight against imperialism, is to undermine the understanding of the real nature of the war, of the world class struggle. We now have to fight this battle against the reformists again.

However, to call for British dissociation is a reasonable slogan when used to expose the nature of the British government's relationship with US imperialism, the nature of the British state -- i.e. when this slogan is used alongside "Solidarity with the Vietnamese People/ Revolution," "US Out Now," "Victory," etc.

One of the differences between the early days of VSC and the present time is that the working class as a whole has developed an attitude towards the Vietnam war. Recent polls show six out of ten opposed to US actions in Vietnam. Although VSC has virtually disappeared nevertheless the opposition to the war has increased, and it is partly due to the lack of a solidarity movement that this opposition has tended to remain at the level of humanitarianism (though tending to develop from this) rather than developed an internationalist outlook. It is dangerous to assume that because revolutionaries are tired of the Vietnam war, the working class is also tired. It is to underestimate the intelligence of the class to assume, as do the sectarians and the bourgeois sociologists, that because people are fed atrocities etc. on the television night after night, they become inured to the horrors of war and reluctant to take any action about it. The present response of the TUs to the Co-op and BCPV campaigns indicate that this is not so -- as do the increasingly partisan responses of ordinary people in pubs. Responses such as: "It's not going to the Yanks is it?," "The Yanks shouldn't be there at all," "Leave the people in peace" are increasingly commonly heard on Medical Aid collections. Increasingly there is a recognition that this is a peoples' war, that the US is in Vietnam for other motives than the defence of freedom. The BCPV are tail-ending the least conscious elements of the working class, preventing the development of a correct understanding of the forces involved.

It is vital that we rebuild an alternative that will correspond to the most conscious elements, which will develop internationalist attitudes that will in turn complement the consciousness arising out of struggles on the home front and contribute to the development of a real consciousness of the unity of the workers of the world.

In this connection, the question of slogans is of some significance. In the US the slogan "Bring the Troops Home Now" is clearly the most appropriate (corresponding to the demand for self-determination) to organise masses of people

into the movement, since it is the sons of the US who are fighting and dying in this war. "Bring Them Home" corresponds to the deepest fears and anxieties of the American people, and at the same time has the content of the victory of the Vietnamese people. Britain however is not fighting this war directly, is not emotionally involved in the same way, and the slogan "Take the Troops Home" cannot be a mobiliser on such a scale as in the US. For the same reasons, we cannot expect to build mobilisations, a campaign, on anything like the US scale in Britain -- and in addition to this, because of the changed relationship of the three sectors of world revolution. On the one hand, the students and youth will support particular anti-imperialist actions, though not give continuing support to the particular campaign on Vietnam, while on the other hand many different sectors of the working class will be increasingly involved in struggles immediately affecting themselves, and Vietnam (while consciousness about the war may be rising, and we should work to accelerate this process) is a long way off. To project the building of a truly mass movement on the American scale is to mistakenly project the US environment onto the very different British situation. Our slogans should be those which reflect working class vanguard thinking, which is already at the level of "US Out Now" and direct it into support for the social revolution itself. Thus: "Solidarity With the Vietnamese Revolution/People," "Victory to the Vietnamese People's Fight Against Imperialism" etc., alongside "US Out Now" and "British Dissociation." These slogans should be explained and reinforced in leaflets, meetings, pamphlets, demonstrations etc. We should aim to hold demonstrations making special play for the vanguard working class elements (based on these slogans) -- others will come to express their general opposition to the war, and educative work on these people is done by the demonstration itself in addition to the usual methods. It is not true to say that VSC in the past aimed at the working class in particular (the Trade Union pamphlet was an exception) except in certain areas such as Scotland (and this was not followed up as it should have been). The VSC aimed at the fast radicalising youth, the sector which could most quickly come to an understanding of the forces involved in Vietnam, of the nature of imperialism. This is why VSC grew to the extent that it did, and it is also part of the reason for VSC's decline.

A New Orientation for the Vietnam Work?

The rebuilding of the Vietnam movement, though of necessity not at the level of the past, must be specifically oriented towards the working class. The developments outlined earlier have led to the growth of a vast milieu of radicalised youth who can very quickly become revolutionary. The building of the revolutionary youth organisation will draw many of these into our movement on the basis of our general programme and our activities in a number of fields where youth are involved. The Vietnam campaign is a part of the process, is one of the fields from which we gain our youth cadres -- but these same contacts can to a large extent be made in other spheres too, so the directing of the Vietnam campaign specifically towards students and youth is unnecessary. For at the same time, the Vietnam campaign should be raised in all the youth fields by the youth organisation for the purpose of developing an internationalist perspective and gaining activists for the work of defending the Vietnamese revolution. The youth organisation, through its young workers, will be able to enter the working class movement, to train its cadres to raise the appropriate transitional demands to further the class struggle and also to raise the Vietnam

question within the movement parallel with the work of the Vietnam campaign from outside.

The working class in general is still under the control of the Social Democrats and Stalinists. Our task is to encourage the bypassing of these forces, but unfortunately we have at present few comrades who are involved in that movement. The youth organisation will be one method of influencing the movement -- another is to take it from the "outside" a campaign which is without control of the reformists, and which has a revolutionary content, while reflecting the present consciousness of the workers. A whole number of such campaigns will develop, many from within the working class movement itself. The Vietnam defence campaign should be seen in this light. To the extent that the links between the Third World and industrial countries continue to become more explicit, the divisions in the consciousness of the workers between the Vietnam issue and "their own" struggles will become less: "Vietnam consciousness" will become "anti-imperialist consciousness," and the division between the work of comrades in the Vietnam fields and the other fields will tend to disappear. (The French comrades because of the results of May are further in this process than we are in Britain.) The fields of work will finally merge in the building of the revolutionary party, with its internationalist revolutionary programme. When the class begins to understand the need for the seizure of power, there is no longer a need for a separate campaign on a single issue to illustrate the nature of the system, or any better way to defend the revolution elsewhere.

During this process there will in any case be considerable overlapping of roles of IMG members in all fields. As TU activists are drawn into the Vietnam work, they should also be drawn into our general perspectives, and similarly, youth contacts made in the course of specific struggles would be educated into our attitudes and activities on the whole range of issues, including Vietnam.

Thus the Vietnam work is not counterposed to other work, or considered more important than other work -- it is not a "fetish of those who have been emotionally involved in it for years," but it is an integral part of the process of building the internationalist revolutionary youth organisation and the world revolutionary party. The fields of work, whilst "distinct" at the present time, complement each other and will merge with each other to the extent that we progress towards our objectives.

Practical Application of the New Orientation

The practical problems arising out of this position are how to arrange our forces in order to carry out the immediate tasks outlined above:

- a) the building of a modest campaign of support for the Vietnamese revolution, oriented towards the working class, and
- b) the building of the youth organisation and IMG through work in all fields. Areas must be considered separately as conditions vary widely. For instance, in a Northwestern market town, where we have two or three isolated comrades, two possibilities arise. On the one hand, as in the actual example, the opportunity may arise of immediate work in the working class movement, with all the dividends this implies. Here the relationships etc. built up through such common action makes relatively simple the process of initiating Vietnam activity at a later date (this needs the existence of a national organisation), though sensitivity is

necessary. On the other hand, where there is no ongoing local struggle, the initiating of a Vietnam movement through the leafletting of meetings of the labour movement, Trades Councils, getting to know leading local militants etc. and finally calling a meeting to establish a campaign is a way for the comrades to establish themselves as serious people, and there should be positive after effects in terms of other issues. In addition, such a campaign would act as a focus for youth in the area, and could lead to Weekly circles etc.

In branches outside London, at least a part of the youth fraction, plus a member of the TU fraction and a suitable number of other comrades should be allocated to a Vietnam fraction which meets regularly to draw up plans for the building of a Vietnam campaign primarily directed to the working class. The comrades allocated to Vietnam work should make this their priority (not their only work) and for the burden of organisation should involve non-IMG members as far as possible. These should incidentally be regarded as potential recruits. The Vietnam fraction should have the support of the whole or a large part of the branch in any public actions, meetings, demonstrations etc. undertaken (in the manner described in section two near the end). In this way the IMG and youth organisation will be turned outwards, will become known as organisers and supporters of the campaign and will at the same time retain a separate identity, be in a position to gain recruits etc.

In London, things are more complicated. A national centre is vital, and we should aim at an office and a full timer. The centre should issue press statements, produce the excellent bulletin, coordinate activities throughout the country through an elected national council.

However, since this paper maintains we should turn to the working class, the London comrades allocated to Vietnam work should not be "hangers-on" of the centre (though having a close relationship to it), but should take specific parts of London and attempt to build modest organisations there, concentrating on Trades Councils, etc. and trying also to involve local youth (which could lead to a Week group). The division of the London branch will facilitate this process.

It must be understood that in the changed circumstances we cannot expect demonstrations of the earlier size. In the provinces modest demonstrations of 1,000 to 1,500 should be aimed at, and in London 3,000 to 5,000 is a realistic target. These figures should improve slowly as we proceed with the work, and would be added to by the youth gradually brought into the youth organisation and the radicalised youth in general, given a specific happening (sudden escalation). This may be considered by some to be "limping from demonstration to demonstration" -- but what we are aiming at is a change in the composition of the demonstrations -- from primarily student to primarily working class (plus our own youth) in the ongoing campaign. To the extent that we succeed in this we will be contributing to the development of internationalism in the working class and to breaking that movement from its traditional leaderships.

It has been suggested that we embark on a mass campaign of harassment of government minis-

ters on the Vietnam issue. This case has been overstated, and again arises from the projection of the American scene onto the British. The involvement of the US government representatives is direct and the people's response to the anti-war movement arises from that direct involvement. In Britain the government ministers are indirectly involved, and the people's response is correspondingly different from that in the US. On the one hand, the British working class can come to understand such slogans as "solidarity" etc., on the other, because they know that the roots are not here, harassment of government ministers is unlikely to mobilise people on a large scale, particularly in a period of increasing class struggle when such harassment is liable to be based on other issues. Similarly, because of the general radicalising of youth, we are unlikely to be able to build specific Vietnam campaigns in the schools etc. -- the youth will be brought into our own youth organisation, on our programme insofar as it corresponds to their immediate priorities. (These youth can then of course be directed to do Vietnam work in the schools, in conjunction with the Vietnam fraction -- but this is rather different.)

Realistically, we should initiate harassment of government ministers on several fronts. The Vietnam fraction should involve what people it can in leafletting the meeting -- attenders plus all other demonstrators, slogan shouting, etc. and involving other group members to the extent necessary. At the same time the other youth organisation and IMG members should be there under their own banners, and expressing our views on some of the other issues which people are demonstrating about. Thus we would make contacts, get our views known on a number of fronts, whilst also illustrating the unity between the British government's policies and US imperialism. This may seem in contradiction to my earlier statement that the Vietnam fraction should have the support of the whole or a large part of the group in public activities -- in a sense it is, but open air meetings and smallish activities of this sort I would not include, except in the sense that in the "harassments" all group members should be there and could shout about Vietnam while holding a placard on women's rights e.g. and vice versa.

In addition, when holding public meetings we should seek to involve as speakers on our principled platform, local TU militants, while always being sure to have our own speaker to develop the less conscious arguments of such people. To refuse to involve such people on the basis that they are CP or not on our line, is to misunderstand the nature and purpose of our work in the mass movements. The involvement of such people, respected for their militancy in the Labour movement, on our platforms, is an important factor in enabling us to reach that movement with our internationalist perspective to aid the breaking of that movement from the traditional leadership and ideology.

To conclude. The Vietnam work, as well as being a necessity in its own right, is an integral part of the process of building in Britain, the revolutionary vanguard and the revolutionary party. As such it is not in opposition to but complementary to all our other work.

March 5, 1970

LETTER TO MEMBERS/URGENT

BLACK DWARF/RED MOLE

As comrades will know the Black Dwarf has now become the Red Mole and the latter is completely under our control. It is regrettable that it was not possible to inform comrades of this step in advance, but it was a question of security and it was important that nothing was put down on paper.

BACKGROUND

Ever since the publication of the article criticising the ANC the Proprietor of the newspaper (Clive Goodwin) and the group around him which includes A. Barnett (NLR) have been waging an anti-IMG campaign. The main political difference was the difference between their concept of a newspaper and ours. They preferred the Dwarf to be a tailist, passive reflection of the struggles taking place -- a commentator. We wanted the journal to initiate actions, to be involved in them -- an organiser. The struggle between these two concepts resulted in a sustained anti-IMG hysteria on the Editorial Board.

TIMING

The IMG Dwarf caucus held an emergency meeting and after a long discussion lasting several hours came to certain conclusions. Virtually all the members of the PC were contacted and their approval sought before we carried out our plan. The reasons for speed were the following:

1) It became clear to us that the newspaper could not continue to function in the existing atmosphere which was more of a bear garden than an Editorial Board. What was in question at the meeting where we split was the IMG's Editorship of the journal. The measures which the opposition were proposing would have paralysed both the Dwarf and our work on the new premises.

2) It was obvious that the Proprietor would use financial pressure on the Board to have some of our fulltimers removed and also that he would not pay the costs of printing and composing which would mean a loss to the press which we own.

3) The conjuncture we are at organisationally and the general conjuncture of the student movement was a further factor in our decision. It should be added that the Political Committee has now approved our decisions and has also confirmed its support for the setting up of the Red Mole.

The PC will be preparing a detailed document on Journals for the National Conference, but in the meantime it is extremely important that comrades make it a priority to sell as many copies as possible of the first Red Mole. A special effort should be made to really push the paper hard. Where possible street selling should be organised.

Camillo
6 March 1970

* * *

The essential points of this letter were approved by the Political Committee on March 6. The PC also adopted unanimously a resolution, the text of which appears below.

POLITICAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION -- March 6, 1970

The PC endorses the action of the comrades of the former Black Dwarf caucus in splitting from the paper Last Friday February 27, 1970.

The PC endorses the launching of the new paper and the general perspective of working with other forces in bringing it out.

The PC endorses the perspective of working through "Red Circles" to hegemonise the paper's supporters, for the politics and organisation of the IMG and the FI, and calls on all branches and members to take immediate steps to implement this perspective.

The PC affirms that the tactics carried out, although showing unsatisfactory features in that the PC was not able to discuss and endorse them first, nevertheless were in line with the general strategy for this work as agreed by the two previous NC meetings.

Now that our relationship to the new paper is clearer, the work of our comrades in the Red Mole caucus will come much more directly under the control of the PC since there will be fewer complicating factors (i.e. operations of political opponents).

The above points constitute a provisional policy determined by the new situation. The whole question will be decided by the National Conference which has the final authority to continue or change it.

STATEMENT OF THE POLITICAL POSITION OF THE TENDENCY FORMED AROUND THE GENERAL LINE OF PRE-
CONFERENCE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS NO'S 5,7 & 10 FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE IMG, 1970

The political resolution submitted by the Political Committee "From a Propaganda Group to a League for Revolutionary Action" stresses the big possibilities for the building of our movement in the next immediate period and lists a number of goals and projects that the movement should aim to achieve. The spirit of the resolution calls for a bold push forward to take advantage of the increasingly favourable position before us. With this spirit and this outward thrust there can be no disagreement. It is based on real possibilities.

But the building of the Trotskyist movement requires more than the listing of inspiring targets. It requires a clear political orientation on the broad class struggle and a clear perspective on building the IMG.

The political resolution as well as the other documents submitted by the Political Committee, on youth work and journals, in our opinion fails to do this. Two organisational projections substitute for a political orientation and a political line is developed which undermines our ability to move forward boldly to build the Trotskyist movement -- a line which presents a course around centrist formations and a centrist press.

The following excerpts from the documents and the editorial "Where to Begin" in issue No. 1 of the Red Mole illustrate what we mean:

A) From the Political Resolution:

(16) ...What then is the central focus which will enable us to intervene in all these fields and yet not just dissipate our efforts? This focus, I would suggest, is the concept of our need to go from a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary action. The means to express this focus should be twofold: a) The rapid creation of a youth organisation; and b) the building of the large circulation weekly newspaper. (But with the rider that there should be a continuous campaign to recruit people to the IMG and to build new branches.)

(17) ...In the main our interventions in mass struggles will be mediated through the youth organisation, which will go directly to those engaged in struggle....

(18) ...There is huge scope for such a paper (the weekly) providing it is well written, technically good and organised properly. This makes some form of collaboration with other forces essential until we have grown (and recruited these forces).

B) From the Political Committee resolution appendix:

...We must never pose things in terms of competition with other tendencies as a basic motivation. We must stress time and time again that we are not THE revolutionary party and all our members, especially the new ones, must be trained in this spirit.... We must stress that we have not got the monopoly of political wisdom or revolutionary spirit....

...With the launching of the political weekly...the International can more and more move towards becoming an analytical journal....

...In general it can be said that the extreme fragmentation of the left will not be reversed until an authoritative and dynamic formation appears on the scene....

C) From the Political Committee Resolution

Youth Work:

...Conversely the youth organisation must not act simply as a recruitment and training office for the adult organisation appealing to young people in general but fundamentally as a political organisation...the youth work will construct supply depots, base camps, training centres and conveyor belts, a whole supporting network for the strategic battles ahead inside the trade unions and the bureaucratic parties.

...The task of the IMG will be to provide the ideological leadership through a theoretical journal, and the political leadership through the training it gives to members of the organisation who are also members of the IMG and in this way we must win the most advanced militants in the organisation to the Fourth....

D) From the Red Mole editorial "Where to Begin":

...We will not be a sectarian paper and will leave the task of theoretical debates and abstract polemics to the different journals of the revolutionary groupings in this country....

...the long term aim should be...a revolutionary youth organisation taking its own political initiatives and training people to accept the ideal of being a lifelong revolutionary -- a Bolshevik.... through youth as a whole lies the way into the working class for revolutionaries....

... our message to comrades...it is quite simple. It is to build red circles....

We believe this is where to begin -- to attempt to construct one of the fragments that will one day join together to form the revolutionary party to make the revolution in Britain.

* * *

The picture before us then, is a youth organisation (never described as Trotskyist) which will lead all our struggles. This organisation will not be imbued with the spirit that Trotskyism and Trotskyist cadre are key to the success of the socialist revolution -- an organisation building spirit -- but with the spirit that we are not too much different from other political tendencies. This spirit is to be expressed through a broad "political weekly" produced "in collaboration with other forces" -- the key instrument of our intervention into the youth arena.

Where this goes is not a matter for conjecture. It is spelled out concretely. Building the IMG is a "rider," an afterthought. The IMG's paper International is to be scrapped. In its place a six times yearly theoretical journal. All this is designed to produce an "authoritative and dynamic formation" which is apparently a youth organisation which will lay the basis for "the strategic battles ahead inside the trade unions and the bureaucratic parties."

The IMG is relegated to the backroom to provide "ideological" and "theoretical" leadership through "theoretical debates and abstract polemics." The "long term aim" of our work in the youth is not to bring them to working class politics and the proletarian party but to a "revolutionary youth organisation" which will provide a way for revolutionaries "into the working class." The "message" to the radicalising

youth is not to join a Trotskyist youth organisation and help win youth in struggle to the building of the proletarian vanguard party -- the adult leadership organisation of the socialist revolution, existing in its infancy in the IMG -- but to build "red circles," "fragments" of some future abstract revolutionary party.

The line of the Political Committee political resolution, its resolution on youth and on journals becomes concrete in the Red Mole perspective. We are forced to ask. Where in this perspective is the IMG, the British section of the Fourth International? Where is Trotskyism concretised in the perspective of building the proletarian party? Is the IMG to become a semi-secret behind-the-scenes force giving theoretical lessons to a selected list of high level revolutionaries? Is it to be a hidden power behind some broad "red circles"? Are the red circles some kind of youth organisation -- possibly the public face of a Trotskyist youth organisation hidden in the background? If red circles are "fragments" of some future revolutionary party then what is the IMG -- another "fragment" or part of a "fragment"?

Rather than orient the radicalising youth by means of a Trotskyist youth organisation to the fundamental task of building a proletarian party -- the British section of the Fourth International, the IMG, this line blurs this essential aspect of Trotskyism behind a screen of red circles and the Red Mole. In this way it is hoped we will rapidly increase our numbers, artificially leap over the general propagandistic limits of our work and become an "authoritative and dynamic formation." The resolution's formal and false separation of propaganda and action expresses this basic weakness of the resolution.

It reflects an opportunistic adaptation to the radicalising youth. Rather than posing the youth with the fundamental question of the Leninist party, by openly striving to lead them with open Trotskyist organisations and an openly Trotskyist press leading them to working class politics and a working class organisation, the line of the PC pushes this to the background to more easily meet youth's elementary radicalism and elementary Trotskyism.

But shortcut politics have a logic of their own. Adaptation to the youth means adaptation to its weaknesses, not its strengths. It requires an ultraleft and sectarian political line -- ultraleft and sectarian in that it rejects a sensitive orientation to the Labour Party and projects bypassing the task of constructing an alternative Trotskyist working class leadership with a youth organisation.

If this perspective is adopted it poses the gradual liquidation of the IMG into the youth radicalisation -- into centrist circles around the Red Mole -- a centrist paper by virtue of the simple fact that other forces on the editorial board, by their presence determine the political line of the paper -- not the IMG. The most concrete expression of the direction of this line is the proposal to liquidate the IMG paper International into a theoretical journal.

In our opinion this is not the way forward for Trotskyism in Britain. It denies the possibilities that exist today to build a Trotskyist party. In Britain where we have many political opponents, clearly defined and in sharp competition, it is absolutely essential that the IMG put forward its political position on all issues in the class struggle clearly and unambiguously. It is essential that we have our "Rouge" and that our movement is oriented around a paper of

our organisation, with our politics -- a paper which gives our views on all the issues in the unfolding class struggle, a paper which sensitively argues against the ideas of our opponents, which reports on the activities of our movement and in its total impact builds the Trotskyist movement.

This paper must speak to workers, to the class as a whole to those forces like the students now entering the class struggle. It must be a socialist and proletarian paper projecting the necessity to build an adult vanguard party. This ABC of the socialist and working class movement is in the finest tradition of the Russian revolutionaries.

To respond to the youth radicalisation, to build a Trotskyist youth organisation, to win these youth to the IMG requires this paper now -- not at some unspecified time in the future. Anything less is a retreat from the task of moving boldly, openly and confidently to win the newly radicalising forces to revolutionary socialism -- Trotskyism.

In our opinion documents 5,7 & 10 express the correct direction for our movement in the next period. They are respectively: "The Case for an Independent Revolutionary Socialist Youth Organisation in Britain," "Rebuilding the Anti-Vietnam War Movement -- an IMG Priority," and "An Alternative View on Key Aspects of the Political Resolution." The general line of these documents taken together gives the movement a political orientation on the biggest issues of the class struggle and clearly outlines the thrust of our work in the next period. In doing so they give us the framework we need to take advantage of the big openings before us to build the Trotskyist movement and to take a big step towards the construction of a mass vanguard party.

In summary these documents outline the following position:

A) The IMG, the British Section of the Fourth International is the nucleus of the mass proletarian vanguard party. As part of the Fourth International, embodied in its theory, programme and cadre are the lessons of over a century of class struggle and the traditions of the Bolshevik movement anchored in the October revolution. In this sense, while the British Labour Party -- the mass party of the working class -- represents the present of the working class -- that is its general level of political consciousness -- the IMG represents its future.

B) There has never been a greater opportunity to build the Trotskyist movement in this country, that is to build the IMG and eliminate all those forces who fraudulently claim to be building Trotskyism. Three decisions must be taken if we are to rise to these opportunities:

1) We must orient to the youth by building a Trotskyist youth organisation, student oriented, in political solidarity with the IMG and geared to lead the developing struggles of radicalising youth.

2) We must return to our orientation of actively defending the front line of the class struggle on a worldwide scale -- the Vietnamese revolution. We must take the leadership of the struggle to build a mass action-oriented single-issue movement to defend that revolution.

3) Our work in all fields must be tied together in building the IMG. This requires an IMG political newspaper, a revolutionary socialist

paper in the Leninist Tradition.

4) Because our thrust in the next period will be to the radicalising youth it is even more important that our political line -- our political orientation -- on the broad class struggle is precise and rests on an accurate assessment of the level of political consciousness of the British working class.

This means recognising that the British Labour Party, the mass party of the workers, reflects the general level of political consciousness

of the working class.

It means openly calling for a defeat of the ruling class party, the Tories and the victory of the Labour Party in the next elections. It means sensitively and skillfully tying this position with the necessity to struggle against the reformist Labour Party leadership and with our full programme expressed through our transitional programme as a means of winning youth to the commitment of building a new revolutionary socialist working class leadership through the IMG.
March 15, 1970

* * *

EXCERPT FROM "LETTER TO MEMBERS. MARCH 17, 1970"

Tendency declared

Comrade S. Williams has announced the formation of a tendency. The political basis of this tendency is support for the general line expressed in three of the preconference documents. They are bulletins 5,7, and 10, respectively "The Case for an Independent Revolutionary Socialist Youth Organisation in Britain," by T. Philips, "Rebuilding the Anti-Vietnam War Movement -- an IMG Priority" by S. Williams, and "An Alternative View on Key Aspects of the Political Resolution" by S. Williams. This will permit the comrades who support these positions to discuss together how best they can put their case to the conference and will mean that delegates to the conference should be elected on the basis of support for one or another of the two general positions, by proportional representation.

The comrades in the tendency state that they are not a faction, do not challenge the leadership, and will probably dissolve their tendency after the conference.

The formation of the tendency means that comrades in support of the political position of the tendency as outlined in the documents and its statement [above] are entitled to place a motion on a branch floor to adopt the general line of the tendency position before the election of delegates in order to determine the proportional representation. This does not prevent the branch from voting on the relevant documents separately.

The tendency is entitled to choose its own delegates on the basis of its proportional strength subject to approval of the branch.

by John Keats and Colin McPherson

1. This paper has been drafted as a contribution towards IMG's orientation and tactics in the year 1970-71. Last year's conference decided that it was a political priority for IMG to defend the Vietnamese revolution through solidarity action.

The very fact that the May 10th NC resolution changed our attitude towards Vietnam work, or rather took cognisance of the fact that our attitude had already changed, are grounds for a rather deeper analysis/criticism of Vietnam work than we have seen in the past.

It should appear obvious that the whole nature of Vietnam work has changed in two distinct but complementary ways. Firstly, the significance of the Vietnam struggle is qualitatively different than it was before May 1968, and secondly because of the downturn/decline in the British solidarity movement, the IMG is placed in a very different position vis à vis VSC than it was up to October 1968. It is on these two basic premises that this paper bases its case.

2. The war in Vietnam has certainly contributed the main political stimulus of the sixties (but the question remains of the seventies). It's (the Vietnam war) influence on the objective side re. accelerated inflation, increased tensions in the international monetary system, etc. and on the subjective i.e. massive antiwar demonstrations, inspiration to the Afro-American struggle, etc. cannot be questioned. The heroic courage of the Vietnamese is the most important factor in the upturn of the world revolutionary movement which we can expect (and have already seen) in all three sectors of the world revolution. Having said that does not mean that we should degenerate into a sentimental petit bourgeois attitude of allowing the unquestionable courage of the Vietnamese to cloud our political judgement on the question of solidarity activity. This sentimentality surrounding the Vietnamese revolution has grown up in the period when the whole world revolutionary upsurge hinged on Vietnam -- gross bureaucratic defects in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam were ignored, the Menshevik programme of the NLF of "carrying out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality" forgotten, and the traditional Trotskyist demand for a political revolution in a bureaucratically degenerated workers' state was sidetracked.

It is not the purpose of this document to analyse the various subjective factors (e.g. Ho Chi Minh, his relations with the Comintern in the past and his relations with the workers' states today) or the objective factors (e.g. the qualitative difference in the national liberation war after the agrarian revolution in 1953) which combine to make up the Vietnamese revolution, but it is enough to state that a competent analysis has never appeared in any of our journals. This leaves us wide open to attack by other tendencies, especially the state capitalists -- please no pious platitudes about "standing with imperialism."

In the past i.e. between the victory of the Cuban revolution and up to 1968, it could be argued correctly that the defects and shortcomings of the Vietnamese leadership could be ignored because of the strategic importance of the Vietnamese counterattack to imperialism during its period of success in countering the colonial revolution. The entire world revolutionary process hinged on the heroism and courage of the Vietnamese fighters, but if one uses the simile of

"the turning of the tide" (a concept which is familiar to comrades who have read "The New Rise of World Revolution"), then the tide has turned -- A crude way of pointing out the strategic position in the world revolution once held by the Vietnamese revolution now lies in the heartlands of Western imperialism. The pre-revolutionary upsurge in France, May 1968, the political crises in Spain since 1969, the end of political passivity among the West German working class, and, the pregnant social and political crisis in Italy all contribute towards the perspective of rising class struggles in Western Europe, while the struggles of Afro-Americans and youth in the USA combined with the inevitable attack on the living standards of the white working class in the face of the 1970/71 recession could result in the first important class battles among both the Black and white youth and workers in postwar years.

This is the perspective of world Trotskyism today and needs no further elaboration from the authors of this paper. Although we would argue that the perspective (an immediate one in Italy at least) of pre-revolutionary situations in Western imperialist countries is more important and more meritorious of our political work than solidarity with the so-called "real" revolution in Vietnam, we would not counterpose the two directly: i.e. either solidarity activity or TU work, etc. Vietnam work should be seen as complementary to the task of building a revolutionary youth organisation and increasing the cadre force of the IMG, but not as political activity in its own right as has been the case in the past. The Vietnamese revolution occupies a qualitatively different role in the world revolutionary process than it did until 1968/69 and from this it must be argued that our tactics and strategy towards building a solidarity movement in this country must be different.

3. Since the October 1968 demonstration there has been a decisive downturn in solidarity action on Vietnam. The position now stands that IMG (with the exception of spasmodic and localised YCL assistance) is the only tendency doing any work on the question of Vietnam. We feel that this can be explained by two principal factors. Firstly, the subjective one, i.e. the behaviour of other tendencies, noticeably IS, and secondly the objective factor of the declining strategic importance of the Vietnamese revolution. If one accepts these conclusions, one is forced to admit that there is no real prospect of an upturn in the solidarity movement from either of these factors in the near future (at least as it would affect united front activity). With the downturn of the movement the whole of the united front character of the movement has disappeared and it is in this context that we must reexamine our work in the Vietnam field.

Through work on Vietnam, IMG has built itself up, and many of our cadres were recruited through Vietnam work. We established ourselves as a defined revolutionary tendency and have gained some credit in localised labour movements. All this is true, but it is futile to parrot these facts when we are faced with an entirely different situation in the solidarity movement today. Because of the smallness of numbers involved in Vietnam activity recruitment potential is very small, especially as our traditional lethargy towards recruitment from supposedly united front organisations still prevails in some quarters. This tendency of lethargy in recruitment is accentuated by our own submergence in VSC, despite

the fact that it is only a paper organisation, kept alive by the efforts of our own comrades.

The point is often made that through Vietnam work our comrades have built up liaison and political credit with the Labour movement and that in the future this could be one method of a breakthrough of our influence into the British labour movement. There are two erroneous ideas in this justification for continuing Vietnam work at its present level. Firstly, any political credit IMG has won with the Labour movement did not arise especially from Vietnam work, but by the hard and consistent political work done by our comrades in this particular sphere. Certainly in the past, solidarity with the Vietnamese was an issue on which we could approach TU militants and work beside them, but this field of work is not the only field open to IMG in our efforts to win TU militants to us.

The second point is that in many areas TU militancy is synonymous with CP membership and that in "courting" TU militants, working with them on united front issues like Vietnam, too often in the past they have exploited our willingness to work with them, the result being that IMG does all the organisational work for demonstrations, etc. and the TU militants who speak at these demonstrations give the CP and "Morning Star" all the credit. This is not to say we should ignore or constantly attack the many sincere TU militants inside the CP, but in the past we have tended to prostitute the Vietnam campaign merely to win TU militants and CP support.

4. With the new nature of both the Vietnamese revolution and the solidarity movement in this country it appears obvious to us that the defence of the Vietnamese revolution should no longer be seen as a priority for IMG in the year 1970/71. This is not to say that we are suggesting that IMG changes its traditional unconditional support for the Vietnam struggle against US imperialism, but we have to take cognisance of the changing strategic role of the Vietnamese revolution and the state of the solidarity movement in this country, as regards the working of IMG. Vietnam work must not stumble on from demonstration to demonstration as it has done in the past. If we accept the perspective of rising class tensions and struggles in Britain and Western Europe then we must integrate our tactics with regard to solidarity activity into our general political work, not dominate it as has been the case in the past. We must realise that the days of mass October '68 demonstrations are over for the immediate future at least, on the specific subject of

Vietnam solidarity.

Vietnam activity should be restricted to a propaganda role e.g. meetings for Vietnamese speakers, exposing British complicity etc. and demonstrations should be seen more in the light of political gains for IMG as a tendency. In the past, because of the united front nature of the solidarity campaign, we were very hesitant about aggressive recruitment and the example of IS in the VSC in its later stages should serve as a good example of how not to behave in a united front organisation, on this very question of recruitment. But with the united front nature of the solidarity campaign in shreds, we must view recruitment in a more aggressive manner -- this is especially important if we see Vietnam work being integrated into the general perspective of a vanguard youth organisation.

What then should be our position as regards VSC? Unfortunately the perspective for VSC is not a very bright one -- as an organisation it is very weak and no great political advances for IMG can be seen in nursing this sick body of VSC. A similar position should be taken towards this as is taken towards RSSF, when we decided it should die in peace. If for some important reason, there should be a phenomenal upturn in Vietnam activity some coordinating organisation or activity could be improvised easily and quickly. (A notable exception to this is in London where VSC through the actions of our own comrades is still able to mobilise a few people for demonstrations. In a situation like this it would be foolish to be dogmatic, and a more flexible policy should be evolved in order to consolidate our roots and link with VSC members and to be more aggressive towards recruitment.) It is ridiculous to argue that VSC members are thus lost to the influence and possible recruitment by IMG as if these contacts are not already close to IMG after 3 or 4 years of intensive work in this field then they should be regarded as lost.

This paper should not be looked at in isolation. It must be seen in the context of an expected increase in the size of the IMG and a vanguard youth organisation in Britain. This contribution toward a correct evaluation of Vietnam work in the coming period 1970/71 should be seen as an attempt to work out one component part of the many tactical considerations needed to build IMG and a vanguard youth organisation and further the politics of revolutionary marxism.

February 25th, 1970

Submitted by the Political Committee, IMG

The IMG has produced, participated in and been connected with more journals and publications than any other revolutionary organisation in Britain, possibly in the world. Someday the history of all this experience will be written, but the author of this document, not having six months to spare, wishes merely to point to one general conclusion drawn from this experience. This conclusion is that we have never attempted to impose a rigid plan or set of criteria on this work, the result has been that although we have made a number of false starts, and wrong estimates, nevertheless the flexibility with which we have approached this field, has allowed us to take advantage of a number of opportunities, and at the same time break easily with projects which could have compromised us politically (i.e., the Voice abominations). The time has come, however, to project a much more clearcut perspective for this field. This is both necessitated and made possible by our increased size and influence, and consequent greater ability to play an independent role, and cooperate with other forces on our own

This document is in basic agreement with the PC document and appendix "From a Propaganda Group to a League for Revolutionary Action" and should be seen as supplementing them.

The Little Dark Stranger

We got involved in the Black Dwarf in the best traditions of the IMG -- by accident. The paper was started by a group of lefty intellectuals and trendys; as editor they eventually chose the current target of abuse by the Daily Mail -- Tariq Ali, who was already a member of the IMG. This gave us a strategic position in the paper, however, for some time we did not realise the importance of this and the opportunities which we had. In fact we were rather sceptical about the future of the paper. It soon became clear however that The Dwarf had caught on. It established itself as one of the most popular papers on the left and the only one with a revolutionary socialist line to break fresh ground in circulation and support. The reasons for this are not hard to discern. The launching of the paper coincided with the May-June events in France, the flowering of VSC and the first stirrings of the student upsurge in Britain; a whole new layer was coming into revolutionary politics and the Black Dwarf with its imaginative journalistic style, its unrestrained anti-capitalism and lack of sectarianism spoke to them and became identified with their strivings.

However, a process of political differentiation within the group of people bringing the paper out was inevitable. It is important to establish the fact that from shortly after its launching there was a constant process of political struggle on the editorial board. The first issue of the paper was not distributed because of the opposition of the majority of the editorial board to the political line which it carried. Then came a split with a small group who had been seduced by the delights of Healyism. They were unimportant since they did not wish to influence or control the paper. More insidious, however, was the influence of a tacit alliance between IS and other centrist elements. Lacking imagination or political clarity they turned to IS's panacea -- the factory gate. The Workerist/centrist orientation of the paper became more pronounced with Tariq's long trip to Pakistan and the ascension of a non-political political to the editorship. Tariq's return precipitated another political struggle on the board which ended with a couple of resignations, Tariq back in the saddle, and a much more

serious attitude to intervention in the paper on our part. We succeeded in recruiting one or two of the staff and in getting other comrades onto the staff, until we had the complete staff in membership of the IMG and thus also an important bloc on the editorial board. We further consolidated our position when one of the comrades we had recruited laid plans for establishing a printshop and premises. We succeeded in turning the paper much more towards the new layers of revolutionary youth.

However, despite the improved position a number of contradictions remained. These stemmed basically from the relationship between the paper and its readership. The Dwarf had been taken up by a new layer of young revolutionaries, it had helped to politically educate them, but it had not been able to offer them an organisation or any perspective beyond reading and selling the paper. A large number have joined IS but there still remains a whole milieu who are looking for an organised expression for their revolutionary aspirations. We can expect that if we do not resolve this contradiction by drawing them towards the IMG it will be resolved by other tendencies or spontaneously developing currents.

This contradiction was expressed in very concrete ways in problems for the organisation of distribution, and collection of money from sales. The actual paid circulation of the Dwarf was a very low proportion of its total circulation, and a large part of this was represented by sales of IMG members. So of course the paper was in debt, in fact it would have folded altogether if one of our comrades had not been in a position to lend it a lot of money. The simple reason for these problems was the fact that the paper did not have an organisation behind it to give it a stable selling force.

It was in this context that the NC decided to take a much more serious attitude and consistent attitude to the Dwarf to attempt to draw some of its base towards us through Dwarf circles, to increase our commitment to selling it and have the long-term strategy of making it directly our paper or taking over its milieu with another paper.

No fixed timetable was adopted for this and a great deal of initiative was left in the hands of the comrades directly involved -- the Black Dwarf caucus.

The inevitable result of our setting out on this course was the precipitation of a new political crisis on the editorial board, particularly when we made it plain that we were interested in the legal ownership position. The new crisis was brought to a head by the publication of an article which made severe criticisms of the African National Congress. Despite the fact that it had been pointed out on the editorial board that it was an extremely controversial article, none of the non-IMG people read it before approving it for publication. When the storm broke over their heads they immediately raised a hue and cry against our comrades, and the relationships deteriorated severely. There was a temporary cooling off when we agreed to Anthony Barnett of the NLR becoming joint editor along with Tariq. We agreed to do this because we understood that this would be a nominal arrangement which would not cramp our style. However, it became more and more clear that we were heading for a major blowup. The others took up a very suspicious attitude towards us, culminating in their reluctance to have the main article in the Lenin

centenary edition written by Ernest Mandel and their pressing for Barnett to become a joint editor in more than name thus facing us with a "dual power" situation in the editorship.

It was evident to the comrades on the Black Dwarf caucus that they were in for an extended recriminatory political struggle with the petit bourgeois elements who opposed them and there was no prospect of getting ownership of the paper since the ownership of the name was held by a particularly hostile individual. So they decided to split from the Dwarf and found a new paper. The timing of the decision was determined by the favourable situation which existed for a short period. The Dwarf had moved out of its offices prior to moving to Pentonville Rd. and was preparing to be printed on Prinkipo Press, thus the opposition was in a weak position materially and psychologically and we were in a strong position. If we had allowed them to become established in Pentonville Rd. it would have been more difficult to dislodge them later, and the prospect of them running up debts on an already indebted paper (but this time to our comrade's press) was not an attractive one. It might have been worth it if we had any real prospect of taking the paper over, but this was clearly impossible.

The tactics employed by our comrades have come in for some understandable criticism on two scores, one that the split came as a surprise to most of our comrades, who heard of it first from the bourgeois press and the other that the decision to split and launch the new paper was not discussed in or endorsed by the PC prior to its being put into operation.

On the first score: it is regrettable that our comrades should have been excluded from knowledge of our strategy, but the extreme delicacy of the operation we were involved in in the suspicion of us politically by hostile elements on the Dwarf made tight security a necessity. Thus we had to restrict a lot of information to the NC. This is one of the necessary features of democratic centralism and we can only ask comrades to bear with it and understand the reason for it.

On the second score: It is perfectly true that the whole matter should have been decided by the PC first. We have to take the fact that it was not, very seriously indeed. However this does not mean that it was a wrong decision or that it was possible for it to be taken in the correct way. Comrades should understand the basic problem of the PC. It meets once a week, has an overwhelming amount of business to discuss and is heavily dependent on the National Secretary preparing its work efficiently. What we really need is a core of professional revolutionaries who can deal with the day-to-day problems of the group, relieving the PC to guide the political work of the group. Instead the PC is bogged down in routine matters, and never devotes enough time to thinking about the long term problems facing the IMG. It really should have seen the opportunity with which this conjuncture presented us and laid plans for it some weeks before the event but it couldn't. In addition the absence of the National Secretary due to illness caused a breakdown in the already unsatisfactory work of the PC.

So it was in this context of the paralysis of the PC that the comrades in the Black Dwarf caucus took their decision. Comrades who say that they should not have done so without the PC's approval are saying that they should have adapted to the conservatising effects of our weakness of leadership. In fact of course they consulted a majority of the PC before going ahead. The responsibility for the negative aspects of the oper-

ation does not lie with the comrades of the Black Dwarf caucus, who have acted in a disciplined and responsible way in a very trying situation, but with the whole of the IMG which has not yet developed an adequate leadership.

The PC has subsequently fully endorsed the actions of the comrades and asserted that their actions were completely in line with the strategy that the two previous NC meetings had outlined and has called on the group as a whole to support the Red Mole.

Of course any comrades who are dissatisfied can try to change this line at the National Conference.

If we make a general assessment of the Black Dwarf experience we must say that it was very successful, the most successful project that we have carried out in fact, apart from VSC. We succeeded in getting FI material to a larger audience than it would otherwise have had and helped to establish some of our comrades on the wider left. We have recruited a number of people, some of them top line cadres, it has given us a wide network of contacts for our comrades in various parts of Britain and has been particularly useful for isolated comrades.

We come out of the end of the experience with a press, premises, a group of comrades capable of producing a first class newspaper and the real prospect of making a breakthrough for the Fourth International in Britain after a long and very difficult period. Without doubt, if we had let this opportunity slip by we would have condemned ourselves to a future as a small propaganda group with little prospect of getting the leadership of the vanguard youth.

The Mole Breaks Through

The principal issue on which we split from the Black Dwarf was over the role which a revolutionary paper should play. We insisted that it had to become an organiser, the others were satisfied with a commentator role. The main task which the new paper the Red Mole will take up is the development of an effective revolutionary agitational paper.

The precise operation we wish to carry out is to win for the new paper a sizable part if not the whole of the young people who were supporters of the Dwarf to aid them in their struggle, to educate them politically and through transitional organisations to win them to the projected youth movement and the IMG itself. It is this task which determines the initial nature of the paper. It will be very much in the tradition of the Dwarf -- imaginative, non-sectarian, committed to the struggle of youth particularly in the Universities. For this reason too it is not at this stage being presented as a directly IMG paper and we will work with non-IMG elements in bringing it out.

This does not mean that it is simply a repeat of the Black Dwarf experience. The whole orientation of the paper will be toward drawing people around us through red circles and the youth fractions. Our cooperation with others will help us present the paper as broadly based and overcome the suspicion of political groups which the sectarian groups have engendered. But this cooperation will be very much on our own terms and we are in a much stronger position than we were when we went into the Dwarf.

We are then entering a transitional period when we will be trying to through the paper to transform the consciousness of a whole layer of

youth, and fuse them with our organisation there- by transforming the IMG itself. It is impossible to set a time scale for this process, but when it is accomplished, the role of the paper and its relationship to the IMG will have undergone a qualitative change, it will become directly the paper of the new league we are trying to build.

In this transitional period, however, we must prepare for some big changes in our political practice, brought about by a new relationship to the new paper. We were getting more and more involved in selling the Dwarf but this had been very much supplementary to our general work, and have been very uneven in development, (for instance the Scottish comrades used the Dwarf very successfully, but almost no London comrades sold it apart from those who worked on it). We must consciously turn the group to selling the Red Mole on demonstrations, meetings, street sales, etc. It must become our major task in the field of journals with other publications playing a secondary and supplementary role.

In some areas we had used the technique of the Black Dwarf circles with some success and in others we had barely begun to think about the opportunity this afforded us. Now we must see the creation of red circles as an important field of work.

Precisely how these can be related to our existing youth work and where they should be set up is really another discussion and we will still have to develop a body of experience before we can give precise answers to some of the problems they pose.

International

If we are going to make the Mole our main commitment in the field of journals this naturally raises the question of what to do with International. There is no getting around the fact that International was never satisfactory. It was launched at exactly the same time as Black Dwarf but in contrast to the latter it never achieved a very high circulation. To understand the reasons for this it is necessary to examine the conditions of its birth.

We created International after it became obvious that the old Week had become untenable. We faced up to the fact that we did not have the capacity to bring out a weekly publication and that it did not have any future. We were unwilling to try to bring out a monthly agitational journal like the RSL ("Engineers will strike," three weeks after the strike was called off), but we could not sustain a purely theoretical one either, so we compromised. Early editions could almost have been called "the Monthly Week," and despite our

gradual orientation toward more analytical and theoretical material the magazine has been consistently inconsistent. Circulation has been quite unsatisfactory, and the magazine has been difficult to sell on demos, at meetings, etc., which has been rather demoralising for the comrades, and has led to a resistance to selling by many. We have found, however, that where we have been able to establish the IMG as a serious force with something important to say, interest in the magazine has risen. In other words, instead of International creating interest in the IMG the reverse has happened.

These problems stem very much from its hybrid nature. We will not make a success out of it until it is given a precise role. Obviously from the perspective outlined above for the Mole this must be to turn it into a genuine theoretical magazine. We now have the resources in the form of a press to improve it technically and a number of comrades capable of producing first class theoretical work. If we can establish International as a magazine which carries useful material we will resolve a lot of our problems. In order to do this effectively we should change it to a bi-monthly, with a new larger format and completely redesigned. The obvious time to do this is the May edition, when the magazine will celebrate its second birthday. This issue should be carefully planned and we should promote it as a new departure, a step forward, etc.

Future editions should carry all the FI statements, provide a public face for the IMG during the Mole's transitional period and generally be a sort of English language Quatrième International.

Bridge Journals

We are involved in a number of publications for specific spheres of work (Vietnam, Socialist Woman, etc.). To some extent these have developed due to the inadequacies of International and to some extent due to the needs of the work. They are in general excellent. Socialist Woman in particular has enormous potential. They do tend to be produced, however, without much central direction, and are not keyed in enough to our general orientation.

The incoming NC should instruct the PC to set up an editorial commission to keep an eye on the whole range of journals and introduce an element of rationalisation and division of labour among them. This should consist of PC members along with comrades who have some expertise in the field. Such a body could also contribute to the quality of this work.

March 9, 1970

by Susan Williams

We prepare for our first national conference of the '70s in a period of increasing crisis for world imperialism. The Vietnam war remains the central issue in world politics and is a key part of American imperialism's offensive against the world revolution. Because of its international repercussions the war is the focus on a world scale of the counterrevolutionary power of US imperialism and the rising power of the world socialist revolution. The international antiwar opposition and the sharpening of social tensions in America due to the war are important factors in limiting the US capitalist class's ability to continue the war as it would like. The consequences of the Vietnam war have shown the basic relationship of class forces on a world scale is less and less favourable to the imperialists.

Economists throughout the world are in agreement that a generalised recession now faces the imperialist economies. We can expect in this next period a sharp rise in the tempo of class struggle like in Italy for example. However the attacks which will be made against the living standards of the masses come after a period of rising standards and an upsurge in combativity of increasing sections of the class in the advanced capitalist countries. At the same time US imperialism's counterrevolutionary assault in Vietnam continues to be blocked.

News of opposition currents in the Soviet Union involving many thousands of persons, the big opposition movement and demonstrations of the Czechoslovaks are reflections of developing struggles against the bureaucracies in the workers' states.

Throughout the world we see a continuing youth radicalisation -- which is anti-imperialist, anti-social democratic, anti-Stalinist, sympathetic to and open to be influenced by Trotskyist ideas.

In Britain the ruling class is in crisis. British capitalism's place in world imperialism has steadily declined since the beginning of the century. As it struggles to get a greater share of the world markets, British capitalism will be driven to a showdown with the working class. Any government which seeks now to solve its main problems within the framework of the capitalist society is forced more and more into direct conflict with the working class as a whole.

I am confident that we are all agreed that the situation for us in Britain right now is probably the best that has yet confronted British Trotskyists. There are real opportunities for us to make big gains in the next period. Greater opportunities for our ideas to be sympathetically heard by bigger layers of people. Situations increasingly more open to us to move in and give leadership, particularly on the universities. We want to get the most we can from these opportunities. We want to recruit many new cadres to the IMG, we want to improve our organisation -- our centre -- we want more fulltimers -- professional revolutionaries, we want our own newspaper -- in all we want to move out in a bold way to make full use of all these opportunities. This is the task that faces us -- how to function and take advantage of opportunities -- to make the greatest possible gains for the building of the revolutionary mass party in Britain -- to win the radicalising youth to Trotskyism and to the Fourth International -- for us in Britain that means to the IMG -- the British section of the Fourth International.

What does a small propaganda group need to achieve this task?

1) We need a clear, correct political orientation which gives our ideas on the broad aspect of the class struggle and guides us to intervene in these struggles and increase the strength of our cadres. A political line in itself is not sufficient -- it has to be implemented -- it has to be transmitted to the broadest layers of people who move into action.

2) We need a paper -- an IMG paper -- to speak to sections of the class as they move into struggle. This is a key question in the building of the movement. Leninism teaches us that we cannot separate the organisation from its paper.

3) We need a core of revolutionaries trained and educated to put our ideas into action, to intervene directly in struggles, giving leadership and propagating our ideas.

The purpose of the political resolution is to set the general political orientation and guidelines of the IMG for the next period. The effectiveness of the work of the IMG in this period will be directly related to the clarity and correctness of the orientation and strategy of the resolution. This underlines the seriousness of the discussion. In my opinion the PC resolution fails to pose clearly the political orientation of the IMG in the next period and moreover, in a number of key areas makes serious errors, which if not corrected will have disastrous consequences for our movement. Instead of getting the maximum from the opportunities facing us and making big gains for the IMG, the line of the PC resolution if adopted would result in the liquidation of the IMG. That's the direction of the PC resolution. It leaves out the question of the working class, it does not recognise the IMG as the nuclei of the revolutionary mass party, it changes International into a theoretical journal which will come out every two months thus leaving us without a paper to intervene in the broad day-to-day struggles of the class.

My document "An Alternative View on Key Aspects of the Political Resolution" is not presented in a bid for the leadership. It is not a challenge for the leadership, though it is of course a challenge to the leadership. It is presented for the purpose of posing some alternative positions on some key questions for the building of a mass revolutionary party in Britain. To say to comrades, think very carefully where some of the ideas presented in the PC resolution will take us. Let's make some corrections instead of going in a direction which will achieve the opposite of what we all desire. That's to make use of all the opportunities facing us, and make real progress towards the building of the mass revolutionary party in Britain.

The key question for us in the building of this party is an understanding of the workers' organisations, the trade unions and their political expression, which right now is the Labour Party, and for a correct orientation to them. It is wrong to confuse an orientation with a field or area of work, as the PC resolution does in paragraph 16 on page 8 of the PC resolution. We have to have an orientation, but an orientation does not have to be an area of work. It may be, but again it may not be. Right now, the Labour Party is not an area of work for us, and I am certainly not advocating it should be, but

this could very quickly change -- even in a matter of months. That would depend on what is happening in the class. Important upheavals and struggles by big or major sections of the class cannot but be reflected in the Labour Party, the organisation through which the class gives political expression. We would like that party to be the revolutionary party (that's why we are all here today, because we understand the necessity for such a party) but that is not yet the reality. In spite of the rotten, rightwing, reformist leadership of the Labour Party and the anti-working class actions of the Wilson government, the class as a whole has not rid itself of its illusions in social democracy and opted for the revolutionary party. The editorial in the Times today shows through a recent poll that the gap between the Tories and Labour is narrowing in favour of the Labour Party. The current issue of the Economist indicates the possibilities that the Labour government will be re-elected. We have to say that the Labour Party reflects the level of consciousness of the class -- this will not be static, it will reflect the ebbs and flows of the class struggle. During the 1960's the Labour Party has been through a passive period. The right wing were able for quite a time to hold the workers back through wage restraint, etc. and in the absence of a left wing in the party to lead a struggle. That can very quickly change -- in a period where capitalism is unable to expand its economy and buy off the workers with concessions. Already we can see a ferment in the class. If we do not understand the nature of the Labour Party, that its roots are in the class, that it was consciously formed by the class after a hundred years of bitter experiences which taught the workers that economic struggles were not in themselves and that they needed a party to safeguard any of the gains made through their organised strength, the trade unions, then we do not understand that the revolution is going to be made by the working class and not by rebel students however revolutionary their aspirations may be.

A correct and sensitive orientation to the Labour Party does not demand that we have to be active members in the party at all times. It means that as long as the workers identify with it, regard it as their party, we must have a sensitive orientation to it, otherwise we will become isolated from the masses. The problem we are faced with as a small propaganda group, striving to build the vanguard party, is how to make the best use of our limited resources. Where can our cadres make the best gains for the party -- in an area where there is passivity or where forces are in motion? Of course we all agree on the latter -- that is why we all agree on the need to turn towards the radicalising youth, in particular the student milieu -- because that is where we can make the best gains right now. It is not because we have any illusions about the historic role of the working class, but nor does a turn to the youth mean that we have to dump our orientation to the Labour Party and that is what I think is the PC's position as expressed in the resolution. If we do not correct this we will be turning our backs on the working class and isolate ourselves from the class.

Lenin recognised the importance of the formation of the British Labour Party as the first step of the mass working class organisations towards a socialist and worker based party -- a transitional step in the building of the Leninist party. The Labour Party remains the most important factor in British working class politics today. Historically the creation of the Labour Party has been a monumental achievement of the British working class. At the same time it remains the biggest single block in the struggle for

fundamental social change. Because of the pressures of capitalism, social democracy, reformist illusions of large sections of the class, and the lack of a mass revolutionary marxist party the tendency to opportunism and adaptation to the labour bureaucracy same situation has consistently bred opportunism's counterpart, ultraleftism. This arises through seeing only one face of the Labour Party -- the rightwing face of social democracy. It leads to a false position that the British Labour Party is not fundamentally different from the bourgeois parties and for the revolutionary left to proceed as if the Labour Party counted for nothing to the working class. This is a particular problem to us right now when a youth radicalisation has taken place outside the experiences of the class. This leads to an ultraleft sectarian position on the Labour Party. This has always been a problem for the left in Britain since the formation of the Communist Party and Lenin found it necessary to devote a lot of time to this question (see for example Lenin's Left Wing Communism). The history of the left wing in Britain is strewn with numerous organisations which have tried to ignore the Labour Party, to by-pass it, to act as if the struggle had advanced beyond it, and have ended up totally ineffective, having no influence on the course of the class struggle or by disappearing from the scene altogether.

All the more reason then that we should understand this and recognise the necessity to educate those moving towards a revolutionary socialist position, that a correct understanding of the trade unions and the Labour Party and the ability to put this understanding into practice, regardless of the particular conditions at any particular time within these organisations, is a prerequisite for the successful construction of revolutionary cadres able to build a mass revolutionary party in Britain. Any other course is sectarian. We could become a small party but unless we have a correct orientation to the Labour Party we can break our backs and will not be able to build the mass revolutionary party.

In my view the positions put forward in the PC appendix, page 7 -- Immediate Political Problems -- reveal a sectarian attitude that if not corrected is going to prevent us building the revolutionary party. I will take them point by point.

1. "Defeat for Labour in the coming election would represent a marginal defeat for the working class in a historical and international sense..." What does this mean -- a "marginal defeat"? Its ambiguity leaves the door wide open to saying that we are for a Labour defeat -- a Tory victory, a position that is held by Comrade Camillo. At the same time as Comrade Camillo holds this position he is able to support this formulation of the PC document. It takes us in the direction of seeing the labour fakers as the main enemy instead of the capitalist class, and has elements of third period Stalinism. (The first sentence of the PC document on youth states in fact that the "enemy is social democracy and Stalinism.") We have to be very clear and say that a defeat for Labour would be a defeat for the class. We are for a victory for the Labour Party and we should say so unequivocally, not whisper it around. This is the political leadership we must give to all those young people who are getting the vote for the first time and to any demoralised sector of the class who see abstention as a way around facing up to the problem of the Labour Party.

2. If workers defeat the Labour Party we have to ask, is this a left defeat? If so why wouldn't they vote for our candidate? If they defeat the

Labour Party in the absence of an alternative then we have to say that it is a right defeat. It would show that the workers were moving out of the political arena and retreating to the economic struggles. We have to ask ourselves why do workers still support the Labour Party. I think it is because they understand the magnitude of the tasks before them. A worker experiences the power of capitalism everyday, with the bosses or their agents breathing down their necks every single day of their life, and this has a conservatising effect on them. Workers' conservatism is based on a knowledge gained from their own experiences and not because they are stupid. "...the rapid building of a revolutionary leadership" is something we all desire, but how will it be built other than through conflict with all other tendencies and currents around the question of the Labour Party and other issues on which the class is in action.

3. "The activities of the vanguard in general and ourselves in particular will have very little (and certainly not a decisive) effect on the result of the election." We don't intervene in bourgeois elections to win. We make use of the opportunities to put forward and explain a working class programme -- a revolutionary socialist programme. Why are we for Labour to power? -- because we want to identify ourselves with the aspirations of the class -- if we don't come out and support them by unconditionally calling for a victory for the Labour Party, we will isolate ourselves from the class. What about the radicals and militants who want only to attack the Labour Party? That is our job to educate them on this question and not adapt ourselves to the pressures from those who within or without the movement do not understand the workers' organisations. Our job is to teach them to be class politicians. We cannot substitute wishing for the facts, and comrades must understand the Labour Party in order to make the revolution in Britain. There are no shortcuts.

4. "...using the heightened political interest in the period of the election to spread revolutionary ideas...." We are agreed on this concept. How are we going to put this into practice? We say we are for a programme that will meet the needs of the workers -- for a revolutionary socialist programme for Labour. We have to counter dissatisfaction that may be expressed about the Labour Party by posing the need for such a programme and what has to be done to get it. It means taking on the bureaucracies in the trade unions and the Labour Party. We would also say to those who are dissatisfied "join us comrade, because the Labour Party cannot carry through such a programme, and make the revolution, so come and join us and help build the party that will, the mass revolutionary party." The Labour Party will only be destroyed in the process of struggle and not by attempting to bypass it.

5. Anyone who has read Left Wing Communism knows that it was never Lenin's idea that revolutionaries put candidates forward in bourgeois elections for the purpose of winning. The Labour Party is not going to be removed from the scene through bourgeois elections. To run candidates or not to run candidates is not a principle -- just an opportunity of getting our ideas of a working class programme to more people than we might otherwise reach. Could there be any disagreement between us that if we put Comrade Camillo as our candidate against someone like Enoch Powell that he would not make a powerful appeal to and win the support of large numbers of people, particularly the more militant immigrant workers. At the same time the ideas of the IMG would be popularised to thousands and possibly millions

of workers. The PC resolution's position is that "...the putting up of candidates would be...an extreme waste of time. To spend the election period working night and day to get a few hundred votes would be unproductive and demoralising." In my opinion this position is incorrect and leads directly to the ultraleft position of non-participation in bourgeois elections.

6. This paragraph again suggests that it does not matter too much who gets in at the next election. During the election campaign we try to explain the revolutionary programme for Labour, at the same time we work for the historical defeat of the Labour Party -- can we do this if we say it does not matter who gets in? The PC resolution states "Certainly we are not going to work for a Labour victory." I would agree but at the same time add that we must be for a Labour victory.

7. What do we mean by "counter-rallies at election meetings." Does this mean breaking up election meetings and preventing the right wing from speaking? I am opposed to any such concept. We should attend the Labour Party election meetings and challenge the candidates on the Labour government's complicity in the Vietnam war. We should say to them "stop smearing the Labour Party by using its strength to back up American imperialism's attempt to smash the Vietnamese revolution. Use the strength of the working class to demand of Nixon that he end the war by getting the American troops out now. The British workers will not be used to hold down the revolutionary forces in Vietnam or anywhere else."

8. This paragraph suggests again that we are misunderstanding what reformism is. Can we say that the Labour bureaucracy are conscious agents of the capitalist class. Are they the main enemy? I think that we have to say that because they lack confidence in the working class they see only the conservatism of the class. This was made clear to me at the time of Bevan's capitulation on the H bomb. Jennie Lee said that Bevan was convinced that he did not have the majority of the class with him and that it was important that every militant in the Labour Party should make their position clear to him. It is true that the Labour bureaucracy are the Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class and through them bourgeois values, norms and ideology are transmitted into the working class. However they can no more be wished away either by name-calling or ignoring them, anymore than the Soviet Bureaucracy can.

I believe these positions of the PC are wrong, they don't allow us to come to grips with the organised working class. A sensitive orientation to the Labour Party is essential if we are to build the revolutionary party and break the class from the ideology of social democracy.

Now I want to take up the question of what we are. The PC document 8a Appendix says on page 5 "We must stress time and time again that we are not the revolutionary party...." Of course we don't say we are the revolutionary party, but we certainly say that we are the nucleus of it. If we do not have this concept how can we develop pride in our organisation and make the sacrifices demanded of us as is pointed out on the last page of the document. If we are not the nucleus of the mass revolutionary party, then who is? What are we doing in the IMG -- shouldn't we be elsewhere? It is true to say that we are a party in ideology -- nobody else has our programme -- if they have why don't we fuse with them? We have to understand that all other tendencies are alien

and have to be consciously destroyed by us -- social democracy, reformism, Stalinism, and all distorted forms of Trotskyism. That is why we have to have a correct assessment of the SLL. Pride in our movement can only come through an understanding of this -- through defending our Bolshevik heritage. Healy not only says the SLL is Trotskyist but that it is the British section of the Fourth International. That is why it is necessary to answer every major attack he makes on us. Of course we aren't going to write the kind of smear articles that he is so expert at and which appear regularly in the Workers Press.

The PC document states that the SLL is not a competitor for us in the fields in which we are working. I don't believe that the SLL does not pose a problem for us in our task of winning the radicalising youth to Trotskyism. It may be true to say that the SLL doesn't see the student milieu as an important field of activity right now, but that doesn't mean that it cannot quickly change its orientation. I'm sure it will as soon as there is evidence that we are making recruits from and having greater influence in the student arena. Healy is far from stupid, and can be most flexible -- in fact we can learn a lot from him in this respect. What about all the new forces that will be moving towards us in the next period, will they not need some explanation as to what the SLL is and why they should join us if they want to help build the revolutionary party. The very fact that the SLL exists, with a membership several times larger than ours, with a daily paper, a youth organisation with its own paper, presents us with a problem. It is wrong to say that the SLL is not an obstacle for us right now. As long as the SLL represents the mainstream of Trotskyism in this country it is a block to our building the revolutionary party -- we have to wage an irreconcilable struggle against Healy and the SLL.

The PC document reveals that we are not going to have a paper in which to take up and answer Healy's attacks upon us nor to deal with the issues confronting the working class. There is a lack of

clarity in this document but the journals document clearly shows that we intend to try to build the revolutionary party without a paper. It is a basic principle of Leninism to have a paper and it is key to the building of the revolutionary party. Throughout the world, however small the Trotskyist organisations might be it is the norm to establish a tendency paper. The plan of the PC is to liquidate our paper International and to replace it with a theoretical journal which will come out six times a year. We cannot build a strong, viable section of the Fourth International on this basis. We need a paper that deals with the ongoing struggles of the working class, strikes, rent struggles, women's struggles, apprentices' struggles and students' struggles, etc. Red Mole must become our voice now not in the future. Right now it isn't a Trotskyist paper -- it is a centrist paper -- it will collaborate with other forces who are hostile to some of our basic concepts. The theoretical journal cannot comment on strikes, struggles and political problems facing the class. It has a different function to perform. It cannot be seen as a substitute for a tendency paper. We need a paper like Rouge, Militant, Labour Challenge, Bandiera Rossa, etc. that can popularise our ideas and act as an organiser and recruiter for the group.

I submit that there is no basic political orientation in the PC document and is generally liquidationist of what we have built. There is no appreciation for a clear unequivocal and sensitive orientation to the Labour Party and thus leaves out the working class in our reckonings in the building of the revolutionary party. We fail to come out clearly that the IMG is the nucleus of the revolutionary party and our press is to be liquidated. Some organisational proposals are presented for a substitute for a political orientation. For these reasons I have submitted the document "An Alternative View on Key Aspects of the Political Resolution."

Report given March 19th, 1970

by P. Price

The purpose of this document is to sum up the discussion on what kind of paper our organization needs. What I propose to do is examine the Political Committee document on journals which shows clearly the proposed direction for the movement. Four key paragraphs express the line of the Political Committee:

"We come out of the end of the experience (with the Dwarf) with a press, premises, a group of comrades capable of producing a first class newspaper and the real perspective of making a breakthrough for the Fourth International in Britain after a long and very difficult period. Without doubt if we had let this opportunity slip by we would have condemned ourselves to a future as a small propaganda group with little prospect of getting the leadership of the vanguard youth."

"The precise operation we wish to carry out is to win for the new paper a sizable part if not the whole of the young people who were supporters of the Dwarf, to aid them in their struggle, to educate them politically and through transitional organisations to win them to the projected movement and to the IMG itself. It is this task which determines the initial nature of the paper. It will be very much in the tradition of the Dwarf, imaginative, non-sectarian, committed to the struggle of youth, particularly the universities. For this reason too it is not at this stage being presented as a directly IMG paper and we will work with non-IMG elements in bringing it out."

"We are then entering a transitional period when we will be trying through the paper to transform the consciousness of a whole layer of youth, and fuse them with our organisation thereby transforming the IMG itself. It is impossible to set a time scale for this process, but when it is accomplished, the role of the paper and its relationship to the IMG will have undergone a qualitative change, it will become directly the paper of the new league we are trying to build."

* * *

The Political Committee thus makes it absolutely clear that the thrust of our work in the next period will be around the Red Mole and red circles -- these transitional organizations. The IMG paper International is to become a 6 times a year, theoretical journal. Underlining the fact that Red Mole is not to be an IMG paper, the PC documents make it clear by stating that future editions of International (not the larger circulation Red Mole) "should carry all the FI statements, provide a public face for the IMG during the Mole's transitional period and generally be a sort of English language Quatrième Internationale."

What is the meaning of this proposal?

The nature of the paper to be used by our movement is made quite clear in these paragraphs. It will be a paper produced in collaboration with non-Trotskyist tendencies, it will be "non-sectarian." That is, the paper will not carry the point of view of any one organization -- it will be a centrist paper around which our movement builds red circles -- organizations called euphemistically "transitional organisations" -- in reality, centrist organizations. The Mole will not make itself "sectarian" by carrying political statements of the FI, or will it in any other way identify itself openly with the organized Trotskyist movement in Britain.

Out of this "precise operation" around which the entire movement is oriented in the next period, it is hoped that the IMG will be able to "transform" itself into a League for Revolutionary Action.

The question is: is this perspective meaningful in our present situation? Is it correct to orient the movement around a paper which cannot present the point of view of our organization -- since it must be "non-sectarian," with the hope that at some time in the future, for which "it is impossible to set a time scale," we can fuse the youth gathered around this broad paper with the IMG transforming it into a larger League for Revolutionary Action?

In my opinion, the answer is No! The Political Committee obviously thinks that with a press (acquired with resources which do not reflect the financial strength of our movement, but the Not Unlimited resources of a generous comrade) and by adapting to youth's lack of political experience and youth's initial prejudice against Leninist organization, we can somehow find a shortcut for the rapid growth of IMG which bypasses the process of accumulation and training of cadres.

This projection is conservative and expresses a lack of confidence in the ability of our movement to join the radicalising youth in struggle and win them directly to Trotskyism. We are in a period when Trotskyist organizations are expanding all over the world. Why does the Political Committee then want to hide Trotskyism behind "non-sectarian" red circles and a "non-sectarian" non-IMG paper?

On the contrary, we need a paper which expresses the ideas of our movement, which presents our program and our organization to the youth. Trotskyism is attractive to radicalising youth. Their rebellion tends to take them to Trotskyism, in this sense the radicalising youth are pro-Trotskyist. Is this not one of the reasons the "non-sectarian" Black Dwarf immediately after the split with our comrades, identified itself openly with some of the broad positions of the Fourth International?

Why can we not go directly to the youth in struggle with our ideas clearly expressed through our own press? The IMG, being a section of the Fourth International, expresses the world Trotskyist position in Britain. Trotskyist politics are not sectarian. They represent the historical experience of the world working class as a whole. We have a program, coming out of the history of the class struggle, which can lead the working class and its allies to a mass struggle for state power. This is our transitional program -- our full program -- which has its most concrete meaning in the building of the Trotskyist movement, not any other movement. We need a paper then, that speaks to students and workers, and all those engaged in the struggle, and which, in its total impact, gives them this message.

Comrades should remember the struggle we had to carry in the Vietnam movement against the positions of political opponents in order to win the Vietnam movement to our positions. We had to argue against Peace News, the Stalinists, the Healyites, etc. Will not this same kind of battle take place within the youth arena and in the

working class movement as a whole? Of course it will. To explain our ideas seriously on the day-to-day issues before those in struggle, we need our own paper -- not a centrist paper which can only give our line at the risk of losing its broad cover and the PC's entire perspective of a period of transitional organizations.

What should the IMG political newspaper look like?

Will this paper be like Healy's Workers Press? No. Workers Press is the paper of a sect. A sect can only justify itself and its sectarian politics by carrying factional and slander-out attacks against its opponents in an attempt to avoid the political questions before the working class movement. The paper of a sect deals in ultimatums, declarations of its correctness and purity, and cannot sensitively develop a political line and intervene in the ongoing struggles.

Is it a question of putting on the front page that the paper is the organ of the IMG, and ending every article with a call to join the IMG? No, of course not. Common sense simply tells you that a paper with that kind of tone cannot win anybody to a particular position or organization.

But it is a question of a paper which can be sold to both workers and students, which comments and gives direction on all aspects of the national and international class struggle, which carries the editorial line of our organization, which sensitively reports on the activities of our movement, which can circulate widely the declarations of our world organization, which can deal effectively with the positions of our opponents -- all of them (including tendencies like New Left Review and figures like Robin Blackburn, who comrades are trying to get on the Mole editorial board, and is now being attacked publicly in our New Zealand press for trying to fuse Maoism and Trotskyism) -- and which, in its total effect, tells readers that the IMG has the answers and that activists should join it, if they want to contribute to bringing about the British socialist revolution. Rouge (France) The Militant (USA) Labour Challenge (Canada) are the kind of papers I am talking about. Without a paper like these, we cannot bring youth to Trotskyism and our organization.

For example, picture in your mind the following conversation between a comrade who is selling Red Mole and a young student at a university occupation:

Question (student): Who puts out this paper?

Answer (IMGer): It is produced by members of the IMG, New Left Review, and some other people.

Q. Yes, but what organization is behind it?

A. No organization. It's a non-sectarian paper.

Q. Well, do you belong to an organization?

A. Yes, the IMG.

Q. That's interesting. What's your position on Warwick, Vietnam, and the general election? Have you got a paper that tells me?

A. We don't really have a paper. We use Red Mole. But we have a theoretical journal. The next issue will be out in a few weeks with articles on Marxist theory and statements by the Fourth International. Buy the Red Mole. It has articles on Warwick, Vietnam and the general elections.

Q. But I want to know what your organization says, not the Red Mole. I've seen the Workers Press and Militant. What does your group say?

A. Our line is in the Red Mole. You see, the NLR people and others don't really control the paper. We must don't want to say it yet. We are carrying out an operation. When we get larger, we will turn the Red Mole into our paper. What you should do is come along to a red circle meeting and start to work with other Red Mole supporters.

The Red Mole perspective of the PC puts Trotskyism and the IMG into an infrequently produced theoretical journal and places us in the position above. With the political competition that we have, hiding our politics and organization from the youth with a "transitional" paper and "transitional" organizations will not turn their receptivity to Trotskyist ideas into solid commitment and understanding of the Fourth International.

What the direction on journals should be

Turning a centrist paper which our movement had control of into our own paper could be a reasonable proposition in a particular set of circumstances. It would be a thought out and planned development of a paper for the IMG from the beginning.

But I want to emphasize that this is not the course outlined by the PC. We have created a centrist paper and the PC is projecting a course around this paper with centrist organizations in a period when such organizations will be blocks to winning people to Trotskyism. Of course setting up red circles is not a question of principle. But these circles are not viewed as educational forums where you come to hear an interesting speaker but as "transitional" organizations. Transitional to what? To our yet-to-be launched youth organization? To the IMG? For what reasons do we need such organizations?

Do we not have a transitional program which can lead people in struggle to our movement? The youth organization we build, if it is open to the youth and not hidden behind red circles, will be able to lead big sections of youth, especially its student sector, in struggle around a program of democratic and transitional demands, in other words around our full program. Is it not reasonable to expect that such an organization will be able to recruit large numbers of youth to it? Isn't this the meaning of the struggles in the universities against political files? And isn't it reasonable to think that if these youth collaborate with the IMG and are able to read its press regularly -- a press which gives direction on the class struggle as a whole and gives them an orientation to the workers' struggles -- that the best of them will be won to being cadres of the IMG and the Fourth International?

Isn't this why we are optimistic today? What then is the perspective of the Political Committee when it poses the indirect building of our movement through "transitional" organizations and papers (centrist in character), but an expression of timidity, conservatism and lack of confidence in our ability to intervene in the struggle with our program and win the youth? What is it but an adaptation to some of the prejudices and misconceptions of youth about Leninism and Trotskyism? What is it but an attempt to take a shortcut around the key problem of cadre building in the building of the IMG?

For these reasons I think this perspective should be rejected. We have about 6 comrades now working on the Mole. Think what this would mean for our movement if the energies and talents of these comrades were turned to producing an adequate press for our movement.

To sum up:

The "transitional" period projected by the PC for our journals and our organizations is not what we need. We need:

-- to go to the youth directly in struggle with our transitional program -- the program of Trotskyism. We can do this through a youth organization, open to the youth and in political solidarity with the IMG.

-- while the youth organization should have a paper of its own oriented more to the struggle of youth -- the building of our movement in the next period requires an IMG paper -- a political newspaper which speaks for our movement, deals with the class struggle as a whole -- orients workers and students to building the Trotskyist movement and a revolutionary socialist working class leadership. There will be no lack of space

in these publications to deal with the theory of the working class movement.

This is the perspective we must have now. Whether Red Mole should change its character and become the IMG paper, whether International should become the IMG political newspaper, or whether Red Mole should retain its youth orientation and become the paper of our youth organization are practical questions which would have to be decided on the basis of an overall political line -- I suggest on the perspective I have outlined. The main point is to recognize that Red Mole in its present form along with the PC perspective will not take us forward.

What will take us forward is confidence in our ideas, and a bold initiative in intervening in the struggles of youth with our program expressed through a Trotskyist press -- a press in the Leninist tradition. Now...not later.

March 22, 1970

by J. Peters

In all the world the British working class is the one most steeped in parliamentarism, compromise and reformism. The attitude of the British working class towards parliament has been determined by the historic role of Britain as the first, and for a long period, the foremost imperialist power. Nevertheless, even prior to that time the mass movements were still oriented toward Parliament, for example, the revolutionary Chartist movement -- which brought about the 10 hour working day -- had as its main aim the democratization of the Parliament of the day.

British capitalism was able to use the "surplus" profit sweated from the colonies to buy off the militancy of certain sections of workers -- so that, quite early on there emerged a whole layer of opportunists inside the organized labour movement. The emergence of this labour aristocracy gave a firm material base for the penetration into the working class movement of petty-bourgeois theories of reformism and gradual evolution so ably expressed by the Fabians.

However, in the 1880's the employers were forced to launch an attack on the working conditions and standards of living of the class as a whole. A long series of court cases were fought which questioned the legality of picketing and other aspects of trade unionism. A national organization of blacklegs was formed and used. A great deal of anti-trade union propaganda was put about. In 1896 an employers' federation was formed to defeat the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in the infamous lock-out of the following year.

It was against this background that the TUC passed the resolution at its 1899 Congress to found the Labour Representation Society to "...devise ways and means for securing the return of an increased number of Labour members... in Parliament." This was a defensive reaction against the employers' offensive; the Labour Party was founded to protect the Trade Unions against an employers' attack which threatened their continued existence.

When the Labour Party was proposed for affiliation to the Second International, Lenin, while supporting this move defined it as "...the first step on the part of the really proletarian organizations of Britain towards a conscious class policy and towards a socialist workers' party."

"Left Wing Communism..." 1921

Thus, right from its inception Lenin appreciated that the Labour Party was no socialist party, but in that the Trade Unions had been forced to found it and finance it through a levy of their members they had entered politics.

Lenin expounded on this appraisal in his famous Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder, (which all comrades should read carefully). He argued for participation in the elections and critical support for the Labour Party, that the attitude of any Communist Party to parliamentary elections be based on a correct appraisal of the level of consciousness of the working class. "...you must soberly observe the actual state of class consciousness and preparedness of the whole class (not only of the Communist vanguard), of all the toiling masses (not only of its advanced elements)."

"...participation in Parliamentary elections and in the struggle in parliament is obligatory for the party of the revolutionary proletariat,

precisely for the purpose of educating the backward state of its own class,...As long as you are unable to disperse the bourgeois parliament and every other type of reactionary institution you must work inside them...otherwise you run the of becoming mere babblers."

"...the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long or a short period, but to what extent the broad masses of the toilers are prepared (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet regime and to dissolve the bourgeois democratic parliament."

Lenin also argued that "...in the interests of the revolution the revolutionaries in the working class should give these gentlemen (the L.P. leaders -- J.P.) a certain amount of parliamentary support." "If we want the masses to follow us...we must...help the majority of the working class to become convinced by their own experience that we are right, i.e. that the Hendersons and Snowdens are utterly worthless, that they are petty-bourgeois and treacherous and that their bankruptcy is inevitable...."

...And today

Lenin's appraisal has been amply confirmed by the betrayals of the successive Labour Governments -- Ramsay MacDonald openly going over to the class enemy, Attlee sending troops into the docks and channeling the potentially revolutionary postwar upsurge into paths safe for the bourgeoisie, and in Wilson with his support for the Johnson-Nixon policies in Vietnam and his attacks on working conditions and living standards at home.

But, due to the lack of a truly revolutionary party, the opportunities to expose these class traitors -- and to show the true nature of the Labour Party -- were lost. Thus we cannot yet talk about a qualitatively different relationship between the working class and the Labour Party and Parliament than that which existed in the '20s and '30s.

Certainly we see before us a situation never before experienced in Britain -- the Labour Government attacking the very base on which it was founded, and creating the largest number of permanently unemployed for twenty years to help it in this task. (See "A Socialist Policy for the Trade Unions" for a much fuller analysis). We also see a situation in which there is the possibility of mass action against Wilson's policies -- especially on Vietnam -- of strikes fought not only against the employers but also against the union leaders, of an increasing radicalization of (especially) sections of the youth, of the largest ever number of workers contracted out of the political levy, and even political strikes -- May 1, re. the BUA-BOAC takeover, re. dock nationalization.

But it would be foolish to interpret these actions as a repudiation of parliamentarism or reformism (which in the end is represented by the L.P.) by any significant or substantial section of the working class. Take, for example, the organization of the May Day strike against "In Place of Strife." This was to a great extent organized by people who were and still are -- members of the Labour Party. At no time during the whole struggle was any demand put forward to break with the L.P. either organizationally and certainly not politically. On the contrary, the whole ethos was for the struggle to be con-

tained within the lower echelons of the Trade Unions and the Labour Party. Indeed, because there is no alternative seen to the Labour Party, no Trade Union has attempted to quit it. Thus even after its attacks the Labour Party is still rooted in the Trade Unions.

We must not confuse a rejection of the politics of Wilson, and a determination to wage struggle to maintain wages and conditions built up over 20 years, with acceptance of revolutionary methods or ideas.

Whose Party?

Generally, the working class sees the Labour Party as THEIR party. Of this there can be no doubt. Their grandparents founded it, their mothers and fathers voted for it -- financed it through the political levy and, most important, expressed their hopes and aspirations through its ranks. Today, because of the lack of any real alternative, the vast majority of the politically conscious will do the same -- with the same results.

In this respect the Labour Party has a dual nature. On the one hand it represents the working class as its political party, but on the other it is a tool of the bourgeoisie for containing the workers' struggles. The Economist, for example, wanted a Labour Government for its own reasons; workers wanted a Labour Government for THEIR reasons. It is our task to draw out these contradictions. However, the failure of any left to develop within the Labour Party, and the absence of a revolutionary party with any real base, has meant that Wilson and social democracy have not been exposed on a political level. Thus the militants retreat into the Trade Unions and to a syndicalist level -- they do not see any alternative to the two-party system.

We have to adopt tactics and a strategy which will give us a path to our class comrades. As Lenin said, "At the present time the British Communists very often find it hard to approach the masses and even to get them to listen to them. If I as a Communist come out and call on the workers to vote for the Hendersons against Lloyd George, they will certainly listen to me. And I will be able to explain in a popular manner...that I want to support Henderson with my vote in the same way that a rope supports one who is hanged -- that the establishment of a Henderson government will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will accelerate the political death of the Hendersons and Snowdens."

We must recognize that the broad masses of the working class cannot be convinced by arguments if they are not convinced by their own experience. It is experience that teaches. Our intervention will -- for a considerable period of time -- be to draw out the lessons and open contradictions inherent within social democracy due to a Labour Government.

To a certain extent it could be said that there is a timelessness about the above analysis -- and within certain definite limits this is true. The above position would have been equally correct in 1925, 35, 45, 55, 65 and today, the reason being that the essentials of the situation have not changed. That is, the Labour Party to this day holds political hegemony over the class, there is no real or credible alternative on the scene, and these two hurdles have yet to be overcome.

Thus we must ask ourselves: will the working class learn more about the nature of social democracy with the Tories or the Labourites in office?

We have only to cast our minds back to the "13 years of Tory rule" to answer that. If the Tories were elected the Wilsonites can go back to posing as a left alternative. We would have to repeat the lessons of the past six years all over again -- but in a new situation in which the present crisis of capitalism would have developed, and in which the time factor could be of crucial importance.

Also, of course, the election of the Tories would call into question the whole dynamic of the present situation. They would be elected on the basis of a campaign for "Law and Order," anti-trade unionism, and racialism. It would mean that the employers having assessed their strength vis à vis the working class had decided that they could confront the basic proletarian organizations and win! Their victory would have a consequent demoralizing effect on the class.

For these reasons the election of a Tory Government would represent a massive setback for the working class.

IMG, The Coming Elections, and After

It might be argued that the IMG of today is not the embryo Communist Party of 1920-21. This is certainly true, especially as regards the Labour Party. Our specific weight is many hundreds of times less. We do not have the tremendous prestige of a recent October revolution and the active support of its leaders, nor do we have anything like the numbers. Instead we have to compete with many other groups (most much larger) claiming OUR living heritage. Thus we are in no position to follow Lenin's advice to "enter into a 'compromise' election agreement," and then share out the seats in proportion to a special ballot.

Nor will we have any substantial or decisive say in how large numbers of workers or youth cast their votes. If we did, we should certainly "take part in the election campaign, distribute leaflets advocating Communism, and in all constituencies where we have no candidate urge the voters to vote for the Labour candidate against the bourgeois candidate." (Lenin) i.e. to actively participate and work in the election campaign for the return of a Labour Government.

The IMG is, today, a very young group still in the process of the primitive accumulation of cadres. Our tactics and strategy in the coming period must be based on the prime consideration of how to recruit and educate the maximum number of new members.

We must be realistic and recognize that we will have little, or no, effect on the outcome of the election. Yet it is still essential to have a correct orientation to the Labour Party, both to educate our members and our periphery and to prepare the group with a correct perspective for the coming period.

Many (perhaps most) workers condemn the actions of the Labour Government, large numbers may abstain in the coming elections, yet where the Trade Unions remain affiliated to the Labour Party it is inevitable that their political aspirations will find their expression in it. Until the class breaks with reformism, their organic links with the L.P. will always bring them back to it, no matter what episodic conflicts they have with it. This is especially true with the Labour Party in opposition.

Consequently, what perspective is posed as regards the Labour Party?

a) In the short term we must call for the election of a Labour Government -- but explaining why. Nevertheless, on no account can we neglect our work in those spheres where we are recruiting new comrades. This means any intervention we make in the election campaign (even a candidate?) will be essentially propagandistic, through our journals. An intervention the aim of which is to educate the class.

b) In the longer term, the question of en-

trism is again posed. Although, because the political opposition to the government comes mainly from the Trade Unions, and the absence of any left opposition within the Labour Party itself, this entrism may not be of the "classical" type. For example, if the L.P. is again elected and is forced to introduce even harsher anti-trade union legislation there is the possibility of some unions breaking away -- how we handled that type of situation would have to depend upon the concrete situation at the time.

March 20, 1970

APPENDIX TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION --
"FROM A PROPAGANDA GROUP TO A LEAGUE FOR REVOLUTIONARY ACTION"

An Article from the Economist

(The following is a leading article from the January 17, 1970 Economist.)

* * *

Head Above the Tide?

The future of statutory wage controls in Britain will not depend on what politicians and others say between now and the general election. It will depend on the facts of the economic situation. By now those facts are sufficiently glum for one prophecy to be made, even although cabinet Ministers will be very cross about it.

If a Labour government is voted back at the election of 1970 or early 1971, it will reintroduce statutory wage restraints within a few months of returning to power. The memorandum that Mrs. Castle has circulated to the employers and trade unions -- presaging a final scrapping of the last statutory controls -- is pure pre-election hogwash.

If the Conservatives come back to power, they may take rather longer to reintroduce statutory wage controls -- culpably so. But within six months they will have to determine to resist strikes in the public sector rather than allow wage increases above about 4%. And it will then seem madly unfair (as well as probably be unworkable) if they do not move towards establishing at least some delaying mechanism for any pace setting wage rises in private industry -- holding back the most dangerous by government order until some equivalent of the prices and incomes board has reported them.

This is not because any politicians want to fix anybody's wages by government decree but because the present pace of wage inflation will leave them no option. Indeed the interesting question now is whether really unpopular action -- of a sort that will make the trade unions furious -- can be delayed until after October, 1970, or the spring of 1971, which are generally assumed to be Mr. Wilson's choice of election dates. The question in short is whether Mr. Wilson will have to bring the election forward till this spring. He will certainly strain his guts and the country's prosperity in his struggle to avoid this until the opinion polls show, as they are certainly not doing now (see page 16), that the political tide is turning his way; but study of the fact figures and developing pressures in the situation suggests that the strain could be acute.

The facts were put accurately last week by Mr. Aubrey Jones, the retiring chairman of the prices and incomes board, in terms that surprisingly, were thought to be novel. Mr. Jones said that the government's failure to curb strikes had weakened its position in dealing with incomes; and that the situation is "quite serious" because costs per unit of output in Britain, are still rising faster than in our main competitor countries such as Germany, Japan and Italy. The latest published figures show that between last August and October, Britain's monthly earnings index was 8% higher than a year before: while production rose over the same 12 months by only 1%. Since October a wave of even bigger increases must have pushed the current annual rate of rise of the earnings index rather higher; and the best guess is still that production will rise by only rather over 2% between end-1969 and end-1970.

The result is that Britain is now stuck in a situation where costs per unit of output are rising by rather more than 6% per annum. This is a worse inflation than in our immediate competitor countries, and the effect on exports is bad. Even before the latest wage increases worked their way through, the sterling price of British exports rose by some 12% in the two years after devaluation wiping out too much of devaluation's effects. In consequence Britain's share of world trade still seems to be falling. This appears to have happened even in the supposed miracle years of the recovery of the balance of payments in 1969. The best estimates are that the value of world trade probably rose by over 15% during 1969; the rise in the value of British exports was about 12%, although the counting in of exports previously unrecorded made it look like 14%. The main factor that brought Britain's trade figures to surplus last year was that we had the smallest rise in the value of imports of any major country: about 4-3/4%, even though other people were expanding their imports by 15% and the price of raw material imports was rising. The chief reason for our import restraint was that tight monetary and fiscal policies were keeping the growth of total real demand and production in Britain down to only 1% between end 1968 and end 1969.

There is no conflict in the fact that Britain kept down total real demand in 1969 and yet had a runaway wage inflation. The general secretary of the Trades Union Congress was saying last week that if the Chancellor does not restimulate demand in his budget, the unions will be right to restimulate it through getting larger wage increases. Unfortunately such a policy would have the opposite effect to what the TUC proposes. The economic explanation is quite simple. If wage and salary increases are £1,000 million larger than the rise in production (which is broadly what happened in 1969), rather less than £800 million is likely to be added to immediately disposable incomes and over £200 million to be taken in automatic extra tax; but the whole £1,000 million is later added to prices, unless profits drop and investment is curbed, so that real purchasing power is actually cut. Naturally the matter is complicated by time lags; broadly, Britain now tends to have a rise in consumption in the second half of each year as wages go ahead of prices, and then a cooling off consumption in the first half (or at least the second quarter) of each year as prices catch up. But over the course of a year wage inflation leads towards recession, not boom even in a closed economy; and the consequences are still worse in the economy that is open to world trading.

The main effect of the present wave of wage inflation will again be to reduce Britain's share of world exports. In a year like 1969, when this merely means that exports rise by less than 15% this may not seem to matter. But in 1970 when there are fears of an American recession, most people's forecast is for a rise of only 5% and 10% in world trade. If Britain's exports rise by the lower of these two figures in 1970 so that we get less than half of the 12% rise in the value of exports that was the one genuinely expansionist force in the British economy last year, there could be noticeable effects in increasing unemployment. Hitherto, the government's intended strategy for this pre-election year, has probably been to meet this threat of export-lead unemployment by some restimulating of home demand in the

budget and a loosening of the Bank of England's monetary policy. This would cause a rise in imports and thus a weakening of the balance of payments, but Mr. Jenkins may have felt until now that he could rely on several protective cushions for any politics he plays. There is hope that the capital and invisible accounts will again be good this year; imports are still being kept down by import deposits; there should be real aid for Britain in 1970 arising from the up-valuation of the German mark; the balance of payments is currently in a healthy position anyway and any deterioration from this robust health would hardly be noticed before an election in late 1970 or early 1971. Had it not been for one new fear the government might still have counted on getting away with this strategy.

The new fear is that the explosion of wages may lead to an explosion of strikes. The latest bout of wage inflation dates back to the day when the Prime Minister withdrew his anti-strike legislation at his talks with the TUC last summer. The impression soon spread that the government now did not intend to do anything new to annoy the unions before the general elections: and that impression was strengthened by the surrenders to the Dustman's strike and anyone else who took direct action. The most unusual people have now come to assume that strikes, demonstrations, or other shows of rude militancy will automatically bring bigger wage increases than can be won by sucking doves. Thus the mild-mannered teachers' union is now running guerrilla strikes in quite plain breach of its contracts; groups of hooligan gentlemen farmers have come near to wreaking mob violence on traveling cabinet ministers and even inspectors of income tax have been banning overtime (this last being a form of demonstration which the public heartily approved), but the Inland Revenue has fortunately bought them off. More important, the national union of Seamen has tabled a wage demand which has been advertised as a claim for a 50% increase. Even although this advertisement is exaggerated, the Seamen are asking a rise which they know the employers will not grant. Whatever offer is made, they may then hold a strike in the expectation that it will force the employers a bit higher. And strikes by car workers, postmen, dockers and others are all more than possible.

The Prime Minister has a particular phobia about seamen's strikes. He believes that the seamen's strike of 1966 did much to blow his economic policy off course at the very beginning of this dying parliament. And it is true that a seamen's strike is difficult to beat: the men come off the ships with plenty of money in their pockets and are mobile enough and accustomed to seek temporary jobs ashore. Before there is a seamen's strike of 1970 the government may at last feel it necessary to take some demonstrative action to dispel the current assumption that all strikes are worth calling because victory in them has become a government-assisted pushover. That demonstrative action may take the form of stoutly resisting the teachers' strike or de-

laying some major industrial wage award until it has been scrutinized by the prices and incomes board. Mrs. Castle may have wanted this week to delay the gasmen's or building workers' awards, but been deterred because it is still her colleague's policy to do nothing to infuriate the unions until after polling day. If it becomes clear that the infuriation of the unions cannot be delayed, or if there seems little chance of averting a seamen's strike in the summer, then that is one circumstance in which Mr. Wilson might bring forward the election date to this spring.

Whatever the election date, new statutory curbs on wages will have to be introduced soon after it. It is no good Mr. Heath or Mrs. Castle saying that they reject the idea of any such curbs, but will rely respectively on tougher "demand management" (a euphemism for higher unemployment) and a voluntary incomes policy. Since the beginning of 1967 -- when the Labour Government's brief six months of wholly effective statutory curb on wage rises ended -- Britain has had a pretty tough demand management (with unemployment up permanently at between 2.2% and 2.5%) and a voluntary incomes policy. Britain has also had the largest wage inflation in its history, with the monthly earnings index rising by around 22% from January 1967 to October 1969 while total production has risen by only between 7% and 8%.

A trading country cannot simply allow its costs per unit of production to continue to rise by around 5% or 6% a year unless it is going to have a devaluation approximately once every parliament. The fact that Britain has had such a rate of cost inflation in the last part of the Callaghan period and throughout the tough-budgeting Jenkins period shows that there is an element of monopoly bargaining in the British trade union system that keeps wage inflation in being even when demand management is reasonably tight. The cure has to be sought in some sort of anti-monopoly action. Possibly it will be enough for the long term to make it clear that wage rises in the nationalised industries and public services will never be allowed to rise above some annually stated figure even if strikes there have to be resisted until every public service trade union is bankrupt. Plus the introduction of some delaying power over private sector wage increases which exceed that stated annual limit; plus a proper law of contract applied to trade union affairs. But in the short term once this election is out of the way, the odds are that something tougher will be required. And there is no point in saying that no politician would countenance anything tougher or the unions ever accept it. Just before the General Election of March 31st, 1966, one did not hear politicians talking about statutory wage curbs either, by July 20th 1966, a full freeze on incomes was in being; and during that freeze the number of strikes did not increase. They increase, instead, at a period of sycophantic government appeasement like the present when it is obvious that anybody who calls a strike has a lush chance of gaining from it.

by A.D. Scott

Unlike other groups, the IMG has always had a very clear perspective of how a mass revolutionary party would be built in Britain -- a perspective which takes into account the unique historical ties between the working class (via its organizations) and the Labour Party.

Precisely because of the political hegemony the Party exerts and has always exerted over the class, we have held the view that "...a split in the ranks of the social democracy, involving necessarily in Britain a really significant section of the trade union movement" was a prerequisite for sections and layers of the class to move beyond their parliamentary illusions towards a revolutionary perspective. The form of such a "split," what layers, etc. will turn towards the vanguard party and in what situation, is necessarily conjunctural. But only when the class has consciously -- through decisive struggles inside its own organizations -- come to grips with the labour bureaucracy will such a reformist hegemony be broken.

The past period has amply borne out this view -- if in a negative sense -- in the recent upsurge in the workers' movement which is the culmination of over four years of vicious government attacks on its work practices and living standards.

The present wave of militancy in the class -- which has seen such sharp explosions as the miners' strike and the extended teachers' stoppage towards the end of last year -- indicates a deepening radicalization process which may appear, on the surface, to have "by-passed" both the Labour Party and the union structure. Section after section has moved into conflict with the government to defend the gains it made during the post-war boom. Strike figures alone would suggest an industrial militancy unparalleled since the year of the General Strike, half a century ago. But it would be a major mistake to confuse in any way this increasing combattività at an economist level with a step forward in the political consciousness of the class.

Strikes to retain the gains of the past against Wilson's offensive in no way signifies a "move beyond" social democracy -- the Labour Party -- which remains in the eyes of the vast majority of the class, because of the lack of an alternative with roots in the mass organizations and capable of leading a political struggle against such a leadership, its political party and its political level. It is precisely here that the "residual strength" of the party lies.

This is not to deny the very real combattività of the class during this past period which is gradually overcoming the "boom-time" fragmentation -- and not only of the traditionally "militant" sections either: more conservative elements such as white collar workers (teachers), firemen, train guards, have played an increasingly vanguard role -- as have women workers around the issue of "equal pay." It is a combattività which increasingly limits the room to manoeuvre of the union hierarchy and smokes them out into the open as agents of the government in its attempts to sell productivity, speed-up and redundancy, etc. This has been particularly true of the "lefts" who have played quite scandalous roles, like Daly in the miners' strike and Hugh Scanlon in the Fords dispute, and who have repeated the bankruptcy of reformist politics in a period when reforms are no longer possible.

But such a militancy, while by-passing the leadership to retain economically the gains of the past (high living standards, work practices and relatively low unemployment figures) remains politically captivated within the same reformist straightjacket as its opportunist leadership. If the class feels the need to take action to protect wages and conditions against both a government of the offensive and a capitulating leadership -- which has pledged itself to "police" its own leadership -- it has not yet seen the need to translate its militancy at an industrial level into a deep political struggle within its own organizations for a new leadership.

The limitations of this militancy are perhaps best reflected in the struggle against "In Place of Strife," the most important event of the past period in that it mobilized over 500,000 militant trade unionists in a political fight with the government.

Despite the response such a campaign evoked among the vanguard of the class -- particularly the print workers -- the action remained essentially defensive, and resulted in the TUC's compromise to police its own militants (the Programme for Action) because it found no determined political reflection inside the labour movement which could carry this fight forward on an offensive platform against the vacillating union leadership and the Wilson leadership. (At the same time, the very fact that Wilson was prepared to agree to such a compromise shows his keen awareness of the need of the Labour Party not to go too far -- not to completely jeopardize its credibility before the unions, perhaps provoking a split.

Our organization has explained the economist level of class struggles at the present by the absence of a left wing -- particularly inside the Labour Party -- which would translate the shop-floor militancy into a political challenge to the government. This certainly does not excuse, but it partly explains the abrupt capitulation of the "lefts" who have limited their opposition to the government to a few militant speeches at Labour Party Conferences or the TUC. This situation has, in part, led the class to believe, through its disillusion with Wilson, that the solution to its problems lies in a purely industrial militancy. But it is important that we are aware of the political limitations of such a militancy, that it forms part of a defensive action (which, at one extreme has resulted in the withdrawal of the political levy by isolated sectors of militants) and which has nowhere moved positively beyond a reformist outlook.

If indeed hostility to Wilson was synonymous with hostility to the politics of reformism, that would be a very positive step forward. But as we stressed at our last Conference, such a step "would have seen the most thorough-going fight within the Labour Movement in which the left would have sought to prevent Wilson from taking over entirely the party machine." Such a struggle has not yet materialized: the apathy, disillusion and outright hostility of the class has sought expression in an industrial militancy -- a militancy which is not a side-stepping of, but a prelude to the decisive struggles that will take place inside the labour movement.

The working class will not "move beyond" reformism and will not "by-pass" it: it will have to politically struggle with it. How this will express itself -- either through struggles inside

the Labour Party resulting in splits or between sections of the trade union movement and the Party on certain issues -- we cannot yet say. But a realization that the class is politically tied to the Labour Party -- why else would the unions have remained with Labour after the latter's attempt via "In Place of Strife" to integrate it into the state? -- and will remain tied to Labour until its reserves of combativity are reflected in an internal struggle for a new leadership inside the labour movement, is an absolute prerequisite to an understanding of the present trends among the class.

It is interesting to note, for example, that the political strike by the dockers -- like Clive Jenkins' outburst -- are forms of pressure on the government to extend its policy of nationalization. Such developments -- together with the increasingly improved by-election results for the Party as at South Ayreshire -- reflect the historic hold the Party still wields over the class.

It is very important that we understand this hold the Labour Party has over the class and that we do not confuse its industrial militancy with a political radicalization of a decisive nature -- otherwise we can completely misunderstand the dynamics of class action and put forward wrong positions on key issues, such as the coming elections. If indeed, we were to consider that the radicalization of the class has in some way "bypassed" the Party, thus making a "defeat" for Labour a relatively insignificant event, we would be making nonsense of our whole political evaluation up to the present which repeatedly acknowledged --

"If Wilson leads the party into electoral disaster which accelerates the present process of

decay without provoking a real fight from the left to re-invigorate the labour movement, the working class will have suffered a major defeat which will lead to the dominance of reaction for a whole period."

A defeat for Labour would be a defeat for the class precisely because it would give the historic initiative to the class enemy while strengthening the stranglehold grip of social democracy over the unions (even if in a "left" variety).

The coming period will undoubtedly see very big struggles opening up inside the workers organizations -- struggles that will most probably be reflected inside the Labour Party. It is the task of IMG to assist these struggles, by a correct utilization of transitional demands and a sensitive appreciation of the history of the labour movement, and to give them a correct orientation. It is obvious that at present our influence in these organizations will only have a marginal impact, at best: our immediate task is the creation of a Trotskyist youth movement. But it is vital that we educate this movement in proletarian politics so that at a later date they will be able to intervene in such historic struggles, drawing towards the vanguard party the necessary forces and cadres. Confusion on the question of the movement of the class today can lead to a false orientation tomorrow.

March 22nd, 1970

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1. National Committee Draft Document on the Labour Party (November 26, 1968)
 2. *ibid*
 3. *ibid*

by K. Hardie

The task of a revolutionary party is to win over the overwhelming majority of the working class, coordinate their struggles and prepare them for the seizure of power. As long as there is no such party, the task of the revolutionary Marxist is to engage himself in the task of building that party.

I do not think that any Trotskyist worthy of the name would disagree with the above statements. But agreement with such generalities is not useful in analysing concrete situations and working out tactics that correspond to the needs of the concrete problems. That is why the document of Comrade Peters (On the attitude to the Labour Party -- J. Peters; Conference bulletin No. 15) is not very helpful.

For example, I am in general agreement with his broad historical analysis on Page 1 of his document. I can also generally agree with statements like:

"But due to lack of truly revolutionary party the opportunities to expose these class traitors...were lost." (Page 2.)

"Generally, the working class sees the Labour Party as their party." (Page 3.)

If one ignores these generalities, Comrade Peters' document contains precious little and what is left is not only erroneous but also full of confusion and contradiction. Due to the problem of time, I will only deal with two major questions:

(a) At the end of the document Comrade Peters advances the perspective of "entrism" though he stresses that it would not be of the "classical type" of "entrism." He neither explains this "non-classical" type of entrism, nor the specific reasons why we should adopt entry tactic in the coming period. In fact this conclusion does not flow from his own analysis. It seems as if Comrade Peters is incapable of shedding formulas and tactics that served our needs yesterday but are no longer appropriate today. He confuses the dialectical method with a set of formulas. In the past we went into the Labour Party to win the necessary cadres. Today most of the cadre and particularly the youth have left the Labour Party. The process of youth radicalisation has opened up new opportunities for us. Therefore, we say we must turn to the youth in a serious way and hence the efforts to build a youth organisation. To say, for example, "Yes, we must win this youth, but immediately afterwards direct them back into the Labour Party" would be a mechanistic application of a particular tactic we adopted yesterday. The tactics of tomorrow cannot be based merely on the basis of an appreciation of the balance of forces that existed yesterday. To talk of entrism now reveals an inability to understand the concrete reality of today.

(b) Comrade Peters states that the election of a Tory Government would represent a massive setback for the working class. This argument runs as follows:

(1) Labour Party continues to hold political hegemony over the class, and there is no real alternative to it on the scene.

(2) If the Tories win the Wilsonites could once again pose as friends of the class and we should have to repeat the old lessons of the last six years.

(3) If the Tories came to power they would win on the basis of anti-trade union, law and order, etc. platform, and this means that the bosses have decided they could confront basic proletarian organisations and win.

(4) A Tory victory would demoralise the class.

Comrade Peters is right when he says that the working class, in the absence of a credible alternative supports the Labour Party. However, Comrade Peters fails to draw the logical conclusions from it. Furthermore, he states that if the Tories win, we will have to repeat the lessons of the past six years all over again. Yes, absolutely so. As long as there is no revolutionary alternative, the workers will cling on to social democracy. This would not change even if we make a general appeal to the masses to vote Labour (with qualifications, etc.) because we are not a credible alternative. As long as we do not build the party, as long as we dissipate our energy on mere propaganda activities, the working class will have to learn the "lessons of the past six years" again and again and again. A tiny propaganda group persuading the class to vote Labour (in order to expose them) at the present time will not advance the consciousness of the working class even by an inch. Such a tactic can be useful only if we could offer to the class a real credible alternative.

It is not clear what Comrade Peters means by a "massive setback." Even if one overlooks the indeterminate character of his terminology, it would be a gross over-simplification to say that an election defeat for the Labour Party would demoralise and disarm the working class. Abstract speculations about how the working class would react in general are of little use. On the basis of such abstractions one could advance arguments that prove the opposite view. It is quite easy to argue that defeat of Labour would spur the class into action and that even the rightwing labour leaders would become less hesitant to mobilise the class for united struggles.

However, it is more important to analyse realities of the present stage of development. The working class has gone through a period of wage freeze; it had gradually built up the militancy of the working class. They have begun to come out of their defensive shells and launch offensive struggles. And in this period if the ruling class decides to launch further attacks on the class, it would be idle to think that the workers would take such blows lying down.

It is clear that, whether it is the Tories or Labour, whoever wins the next elections will be forced to deal new blows on the working class. Therefore we are moving into a period of sharper class struggles. The inevitable result of this would be radicalisation of new layers of the working class. Of course this does not mean that the class as a whole will break with reformism or parliamentarism. This means that tremendous opportunities will open up for recruitment of working class militants.

In order to win over the working class militants tomorrow, we must win over the radicalised youth today. That is why it is impermissible for us to either dissipate our energies in purely propaganda work or resumed "entrism." The worker militants cannot be won over unless we have a viable organisation, and we can only build such

an organisation today by turning to the youth.
Therefore we should discard the old tactical formu-

las which have no relation to the concrete tasks
today.

by Peter Peterson

I first want to make it clear that I address you as serious and devoted comrades whose loyalty to the Fourth International is not in doubt. All of you have a good record of activity and have been engaged in important political work. This is in sharp contrast to the 1969 minority many of whose members were obviously non-serious and disloyal to the IMG. However, I think you sadly mistaken in forming a tendency and this letter is an appeal to you to disband it immediately. I am sure that you will examine my arguments in the same serious spirit as that in which I make them. My grounds are:

(1) Regarding the manner in which the tendency was formed.

The news of the formation of the tendency was given to the Political Committee just two weeks and one day before the Annual Conference date. This is extraordinary: the formation of a political tendency is a serious business and should not be lightly entered into. The effect of forming this tendency, at this stage will mean that the national conference will be largely taken up discussing the pros and cons of your positions. The rest of the group has imposed upon it -- with just two weeks notice -- a discussion which will dominate its conference. Other political discussions will tend to be pushed into the background, and there will be a polarisation around the issues you raise. The rest of us are entitled to ask: why is it that you waited so late before forming your tendency? How come that we have been able to work together for years without these differences becoming apparent before. It is up to you to prove that the PC majority (and without doubt the NC majority) has changed its line. Our line is a continuation and development of previous policies. You have not challenged us before on the slogan "Victory to the NLF"; you have not called for an orientation to the Labour Party before; and you have never before demanded that we answer every major attack of the SLL.

What has happened? You have to think very seriously about this question. A tendency should be formed only after a serious discussion of differences. Comrades forming a tendency should do so because they have come to the conclusion that (a) they share a common platform; and (b) that the differences with the rest of the group are so important as to justify the formation of a tendency. Obviously these two prerequisites require a discussion around documents over a considerable period of time. Unless you go through this experience you cannot be sure that you have not got differences amongst yourselves. Unless you are sure that your platform is deeply understood by all the members of the tendency you run the danger of sticking together on the basis of personal loyalty rather than deep political agreement, thus running the risk of cliquism. A tendency pre-supposes a much wider agreement about politics and tactics than the membership of a political group.

It is no secret that a high proportion of the members of your tendency received their political training in another section. You should be extremely careful to avoid making two serious mistakes: (a) keeping together because of a subjective feeling of loyalty to each other; and (b) mechanically applying the tactics of another section to a very different political situation. I think you will agree that it is better to be frank about such problems.

(2) The essence of your political platform

I will deal with more detailed questions elsewhere but the essence of your political platform can be defined and contains an extremely serious error of approach. In para three of your statement we read:

"Two organisational projections substitute for a political orientation and a political line is developed which undermines our ability to move forward boldly to build a Trotskyist movement -- a line which presents a course around centrist formations and a centrist press."

"Organisational Projections"

Your approach is out of keeping with the whole argument underpinning the Transitional Programme. The Fourth International exists because its founders were profoundly convinced that the essence of our epoch is a crisis of leadership. This crisis of leadership means that the number one priority facing mankind is the construction of mass revolutionary parties to enable the working class to overthrow capitalism. The alternative being barbarism. This is the highest form of politics.

The PC resolution argues that the stage is set for us to make a qualitative leap along the path of building a revolutionary party. It argues that there are possibilities for doing this and that we have to make this leap in the coming situation because otherwise a historic opportunity will be missed; and that the consequences could well be disastrous. The document goes on to argue that the means to achieve this leap are the creation of a youth organisation and the launching of a political weekly newspaper. If you regard this as merely organisational projection then we must answer that everything the Fourth International has been doing since 1938 is organisational projection. Wasn't the launching of the International itself an organisational projection? Isn't our constant endeavour to form new sections of the International organisational projection?

One manifests a distinctly pragmatic and opportunist tendency if one defines politics as being purely day-to-day campaigns. Opportunists have always argued along these lines saying that the marxists' concentration on the final objectives "interferes" with today's struggles. It was no less a person than Bernstein who said: "The end is nothing, the movement is everything." We need to constantly stress that all day-to-day campaigns are subordinate to the continuing constant in our activities: that of laying the basis for building the revolutionary party (another organisational projection, according to you).

You will not understand anything we are doing unless you grasp this concept. The building of mass revolutionary parties has become an urgent necessity; before we can build a mass party we have to through the stage of being an organisation which intervenes (rather than comments). People who sneer at the PC resolution because it distinguishes between a propaganda group and an action group should read Cannon's careful explanation of the difference in his History of American Trotskyism.

Owing to more favourable objective and sub-

jective conditions this leap is now on the agenda for the Fourth International in a number of countries. In fact, this was one of the main themes of the Tenth World Congress. The PC document is an attempt to apply this to Britain. Without articulating it in those terms you seem to represent a mood which is resisting making this leap. You should think very deeply about this question.

"Centrist formations and a centrist press"

Again we have in the ideas you put forward a revision of the marxist method. Centrism was defined many times by Lenin and Trotsky (see in particular Lenin's "The Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade," and Trotsky's writings on the ILP.) They always defined it in political terms. Now you come along with an organisational definition which has far-reaching consequences. Centrism, in fact, represents a whole spectrum of political tendencies which vacillate between revolutionary marxism and bourgeois ideas (social democrat, anarchist, liberal, etc.). In class terms it represents the pressure of the petty-bourgeoisie upon the working class. (In passing it needs to be said that the most important thing about a specific centrist formation for us is the direction in which it is moving).

You say that the Red Mole is "a centrist paper by virtue of the simple fact that other forces on the editorial board, by their presence determine the political line -- not the IMG." (We leave aside the obvious absurdity that other forces by being on the editorial board can determine the political line; but the IMG can't even though it is in the majority.)

In place of a political assessment we are served up with an idealist metaphysical definition of a centrist paper. The argument neither stands up in terms of theory nor practice. Let us consider a few facts:

(a) several members of your tendency work on Socialist Woman and Bullseye. Other forces exist on the editorial boards of these papers; are these papers, therefore, "centrist" in the political sense? It would be obvious nonsense to say this. Both papers are revolutionary marxist by virtue of the fact that they put forward marxist ideas in particular fields.

(b) at various times in the history of the Fourth International sections have adopted the entry tactic. In many of these cases the sections concerned have converted their papers into centrist papers (or created new entrism papers). When the Americans entered the Socialist Party, under the direct guidance of Trotsky, they stopped their paper and organised around a local SP journal. In all these cases there were a few sectarians who accused them of liquidationism. Were these sectarians right? The movement has always said no. Yet the logic of your argument about centrist papers is to say that these sectarians were right.

(c) the general secretary of the Fourth International also happens to be editor of a paper which is produced in collaboration with other forces. Is this a centrist paper? If so, why haven't you complained before about the secretary of the Fourth International being the editor of a "centrist" paper?

I raise these questions to challenge the underlying assumption of your argument that there is only one model for a Leninist paper. This was not Lenin's view nor his practice. In his long revolutionary experience Lenin had various relationships with political newspapers, determined by the concrete political circumstances, commencing

with his collaboration with Struve et al in his "legal marxist" phase. Comrades wishing to study an account of this can read Krupskaya's "Memories of Lenin," just published by Panther (I should warn, however, that this book is not entirely reliable about everything -- it was written after the death of Lenin.)

The present relationship with Red Mole as projected by the Political Committee's resolution on journals is a temporary one, determined by the need to consolidate the periphery we have inherited from Black Dwarf and the disparity between our size and resources and the opportunities opened up by the potential Red Mole circulation and periphery.

Talk of liquidating International as a paper, apart from its OO7 undertones, indicates, quite frankly, an almost hysterical approach. International has straddled two positions: that of an analytical journal and that of an agitational one. This is why it has been so difficult to establish -- not because some of our comrades were working on Black Dwarf; would Comrade Williams have preferred them to work for capitalist bosses? (because that was the alternative). It is proposed to publish in the bi-monthly International all the important statements of the Fourth International, analytical resolutions of the IMG, etc. Is this liquidation? The truth of the matter is that it is not possible to have a monthly agitational paper which you propose. A weekly can only just about play this role. Even in this case it is a colossal strain on a small revolutionary organisation unless it has many trained writers. We lack the latter and will have to train them in the coming period through writing for Red Mole.

Red Mole will be our paper in the political sense: it will help organise our campaigns; it will publicise our activities and reflect our ideas.

To return to the Leninist concept of a paper: you are correct in your stipulation when referring to the paper of an established party. But when one deals with small groups still accumulating resources and cadres the paper has to be subordinated to that task. In differing circumstances different models of papers will be used -- one cannot always have an Iskra, although one must always be working towards one. The experience of the Fourth International is rich with all kinds of papers adjusted to suit particular tasks. To give an example of one such paper I have reproduced as an appendix the editorial of the first issue of Labour Challenge, a paper recently launched with the support of the Canadian Trotskyists. I do not know if other forces collaborate in its production -- I doubt it (I must stress that I am neither criticising the paper nor supporting it). You will observe that the editorial does not call the paper Trotskyist nor does it call for the building of the Canadian Trotskyist movement. The activities of the Canadian Trotskyists are publicised in the form of adverts (just like Black Dwarf).

Would you say that Workers Vanguard was liquidated? Would you say that the Canadian Trotskyists have, by not calling for building of the LSA in the first issue of the Labour Challenge have denied "the possibilities that exist today to build a Trotskyist party"? I don't think you would, and neither would I. But you must answer these questions before you accuse us of being liquidators.

Liquidationism

Your statement's most remarkable charge is

that of us being liquidationist. We publish a document entitled "From a Propaganda Group to a League for Revolutionary Action," which has as its main theme the need for us to rapidly develop our forces, to double our size, to establish an open face in the trade union field, to establish caucuses to enable us to intervene in various fields, etc., etc., etc., and you attack this document as liquidationist!!!

What kind of logic is this?

The whole thrust of the Political Committee document is the need to quickly build the group because in the coming period a small propaganda group will be unable to intervene or influence the course of events. The document diagnoses that our failure to do all we should have done in the past was mainly due to our small size and lack of resources. I ask you to read the document again (in fact one can suspect that you have not read it properly in the first place -- otherwise you would not make such ludicrous charges). Perhaps you think we are tricksters who say one thing but mean another. If you think this you should say so. You will find this very difficult to substantiate. Our words are matched by our actions. The same National Committee majority which supports the document is the same one which adopted the group-building campaign for the period leading up to the conference. This same majority has, by and large, worked very hard in the campaign which has resulted in the winning of a good number of recruits and a drastic improvement in our financial situation. I wish I could say the same for some of you who now accuse us of liquidationism. The record is very clear for anyone who wants to check the facts.

I must say, quite frankly, that your logic in accusing us of "liquidationism," based upon quotations torn out of context, is very reminiscent of the tortured reasoning of Cliff Slaughter and other sectarian writers of the SLL. They accuse the Fourth International of liquidating itself because it refuses to adopt the sectarian policies of the SLL in relation to the Cuban Revolution, etc. It is sad for me to have to say this but comrades can themselves check the methodology.

Black Dwarf circles were in existence for some time in certain areas. In most cases these are already Red Mole circles. We can assure you that in no case has this resulted in the "liquidation" of the IMG, on the contrary. In Glasgow we have been able to recruit young workers through Black Dwarf circles. Is this "liquidationism"? The West London comrades have laid plans for a Red Mole circle as part of their moves to establish a West London IMG branch. Is this "liquidationism"?

Comrades, before you fling about such terms, which have a precise meaning in marxist methodology, you should be at least sure of your facts. Instead you use the term as a political swear-word à la the SLL's use of such terms as "revisionism" and "centrism." The IMG has never used these kind of methods which discredit marxism. The term "liquidator" refers to one of the worst (if not the worst) enemies of revolutionary marxism. Lenin in his struggle against liquidationist tendencies was ready to form a bloc with a section of the Mensheviks (the so-called party Mensheviks) and even Plekhanov. It is irresponsible in the extreme to lightly use the accusation. If you wish to be taken seriously you should desist from such methods.

(3) Be Honest -- Tell Us Where You Stand.

Your statement finishes with a summary of the political positions of your documents. This summary is most peculiar because it either leaves out the essence of your political positions or stops short of the political conclusions about action which your arguments necessarily imply. This is a terrible method and would indicate that you either want to kid some people into supporting you by keeping quiet about your more unpopular ideas, or that you have some differences amongst yourselves which you wish to hide. Let us go through these points:

Our attitude towards the Labour Party.

We read: "...the Labour Party represents the present of the working class and the IMG its future." And later: "The British Labour Party, the mass party of the workers, reflects the general level of political consciousness of the working class, this means therefore, openly calling for the defeat of the ruling class party, the Tories and the victory of the Labour Party in the next elections." (In passing, it could be said at one time that the Liberals represented "the general level of political consciousness of the working class." Would we "therefore" have said vote Liberal.) In branch discussions supporters of your tendency have said that defeat for Labour would be a "disaster for the working class" and that our attitude towards the Labour Party in the next election must be like that of our attitude to the workers' states (i.e., opposition to the leadership but support for the class conquests they represent). In Comrade Williams' document we read the pearl:

"The class enemy, the Tories, must be defeated. The political party of the working class despite its leadership must be defended and returned to power. Vote Labour." (my emphasis.)

If one is consistent only two conclusions can be drawn from all this:

(a) that we should re-enter the Labour Party and work like hell for the return of Labour in the next election; and

(b) that Lenin was wrong when he said we should support Labour like a rope supports a hanging man.

If the Labour Party reflects the general level of consciousness of the working class we are isolating ourselves from the class by being outside. But is your statement true? If the Labour Party does reflect the general level of consciousness of the working class one would expect to find in its ranks some reflection of all the militant struggles we have seen in the last year or two. Comrades I put it to you bluntly, show us the reflection of the Fords strikes in the Labour Party, of the teachers' struggle, of the growing women's movement, of the dockers who struck for what they thought was more industrial democracy, of the building workers who seized their union headquarters because their leadership wasn't militant enough, of the airport workers, of the miners -- the list is a long one. On the contrary -- as more and more workers have gone into struggle the general drift in the Labour Party itself has been to the right. Just one example: at last year's Labour Party conference, Barbara Castle, architect of the anti-union legislation came top of the poll in the constituency elections for the NEC. Before you lecture us speak to those who are active in the Labour Party.

If defeat for Labour in the next election would be a disaster for the working class isn't it our duty to work all-out for its victory? For the working class to be faced with the prospect of a disastrous defeat and for us not to go all out to prevent this would be class treachery. If words have any meaning this is the only interpretation that can be put on what you say. To answer, as Comrade Phillips did, that nothing is happening in the Labour Party is to contradict your central thesis.

Lenin's and Trotsky's attitude towards the Labour Party can be studied in many publications. Lenin regarded the Labour Party as a bourgeois party because of its programme and social function (see in particular "Lenin on Britain.") Of course he paid great attention to its unique structure and advised communists to take advantage of this. But he said very clearly that these links with the trade union movement did not make it a workers party in the political and programmatic sense. Trotsky regarded the Labour Party as the mass party of the working class only in the sense that the workers voted for it and had illusions in it. In the programmatic sense he described it as a plebian, middle class, pacifist party (see introduction to The First Five Years of the Communist International).

Both these great thinkers regarded support for Labour in an election as a tactical question designed to expose the Labour Party. Lenin in Left Wing Communism... drew an analogy between this tactic and that of the Bolsheviks in calling for "All Power to the Soviets" whilst the latter were dominated by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. No one in the revolutionary marxist movement has considered that a victory for a party like the Labour Party now is represents the workers in power. This dispute was settled some 70 years ago in the polemics against the Possibilists and Bernstein.

Comrade Williams' formulation and the arguments used to support it contain the seeds of an extremely serious political mistake. It is not even true to contrast the Tory Party as the party of the ruling class and the Labour Party as that of the workers. The Labour Party has been an important weapon of bourgeois reform for the workers but in the present context the Labour Government is just as much an instrument of the ruling class as is the Tory Party. In fact, sections of the ruling class would prefer Labour to be "in power" because certain policies they want are much more likely to be implemented under Wilson than Heath. (See the Economist article produced as appendix to "From a Propaganda Group to a League for Revolutionary Action").

The only reason we have worked for and called for a Labour victory in the past is to assist the workers to lose their illusions in Labour. When Lenin and Trotsky wrote of this tactic there had not been a period of undisputed Labour Government. We are now in the sixth year of Labour Government and the workers have not shifted their allegiance. The document of the PC and the "Contribution to the Discussion on West European Perspectives" try to answer the problem caused by this situation. In the PC document we say that the reason for the failure of the tactic was the absence of a revolutionary leadership. You ignore all this and just reiterate in an inaccurate manner what you think was Lenin's position.

Lastly, on this topic, it needs to be said that it is extremely light-minded to talk of a "sensitive orientation to the Labour Party" and only discuss what we are to say in an election. Comrades, the election will last only a few weeks.

What do we do the rest of the time? How do we express our "sensitive orientation towards the Labour Party" here and now? After the election? Be honest with us (and yourselves as well); your arguments can only mean entry and that we should be training our new members for entry -- at least into the Young Socialists.

Eliminating "all those forces who (sic) fraudulently claim to be Trotskyist."

In Comrade Williams' document she says:

"This task" (that of eliminating the SLL) "is not a diversion from the job of building the IMG, but rather a prerequisite for its growth. Rather than ignore it" (who has suggested this? -- but certainly we don't want to be obsessed with it) "...we must ensure that the SLL is never allowed to get away with its false presentation of Trotskyism and is forced to answer every charge and slander it makes" (I am not quite certain what forcing the SLL to answer its own charges against the Fourth International means -- still it would be nice if it did) "against the Fourth International..." (my emphasis throughout)

In your summary you do not explain what this means. Comrade Williams takes the IMG to task for not answering the SLL on Vietnam, Ireland, the Labour Party, etc., (this is not true as a perusal of International will show -- does she mean that we should do it in every issue?). What are the facts? The SLL has a newspaper that comes out 20 times a month. It has the tendency to devote thousands of words to slandering us and the Fourth International. The only way we could "answer every charge and slander" would be by devoting a huge proportion of our press to this task. This would be quite logical from Comrade Williams' point of view because eliminating the SLL is "a prerequisite to (our)...growth." If that is what you mean why don't you say it?

I know personally that certain members of your tendency have criticised our press for devoting too much space to attacking the SLL -- I am inclined to agree with this criticism. Is this why there is a different formulation between Comrade Williams' document and that of your platform?

The position of the PC resolution is that the most effective way of dealing with the SLL is not to turn the Red Mole and International into anti-SLL bulletins (thus becoming the mirror image of the SLL's press) but to publish from time to time serious pamphlets which get to the roots of the wrong methodology of the SLL. We are certain that Ernest Germain's "Marxism versus Ultra-leftism" has done more to expose the SLL than a dozen articles taking up the SLL on a day-to-day basis. Do we have to answer every charge? If the Workers Press accuses the Outer Mongolian section of the Fourth International of selling out the political revolution in that country are we obliged to answer (that hypothetical suggestion is no more ludicrous than some of the things we have been accused of).

Building a Trotskyist youth organisation

Comrades, I must be blunt with you: to pose Comrade Phillips' document as a serious alternative to the PC resolution is an insult to the intelligence of the members of the IMG. Comrade Phillips' document consists merely of reproductions of a Fourth International discussion statement, extracts from a speech by Ernest Mandel and some trite and obvious sections about the desirability of forming a "revolutionary marxist youth organisation" (despite the strictures

upon us he doesn't call it Trotskyist). It makes no important political points of differentiation from the majority position or what we have been doing since we established the youth caucuses. Differences were apparently discovered afterwards.

One thing does come through, however, though: that you think in terms of a "student oriented" youth organisation. Because of confused formulations it is extremely difficult to grasp what you mean but it appears to mean a very misguided approach. We are not workerists, of course; but it can be established beyond all doubt that if an organisation is purely student oriented it will not get the ear of the students.

This is a very complex problem and the youth comrades themselves will have to work it out in detail once they have established the youth organisation. However, we can say that it will not be solved by putting the youth in a straightjacket by deciding that they must be student oriented. Actually they should be oriented to where action is taking place and where our intervention can be most decisive. They should intervene when possible in strikes the same way as the JGS did in the Limburg miners' strike. Once again it is necessary to ask you to state exactly where you stand.

Returning to our orientation of actively defending...the Vietnamese revolution.

This part of your platform completely distorts your differences with the NC majority. Apart from the supporters of the Keats/Macpherson document we all agree that Vietnam work is a priority. The PC resolution outlines a line of action which would considerably improve our work in this field.

On the other hand, Comrade Williams' document on Vietnam work attacks the whole basis of our previous Vietnam work, including the October 27th demonstration. It is strange that you don't find a place for this in your "statement."

In Comrade Williams' document on Vietnam we read:

"We have tended more and more to equate the solidarity position with slogans like 'Victory to the NLF,' 'Defeat US Aggression in Vietnam,' and 'Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution.' None of these slogans project demands around which larger and larger numbers of people can be mobilised. All these slogans do is to project a desire. They are simple declarations of where a tiny vanguard layer of British society stands vis à vis the Vietnam struggle. They don't explain the nature of the war or project how it is to end..." "The defensively formulated concept can be understood and defended by larger numbers." Comrade Williams evidently forgets that these are precisely the slogans of the October 27th demonstration (together with "End British Complicity").

But certain questions pose themselves immediately: where do you stand on the slogans Comrade Williams criticises? If you are opposed to them why don't you call for their rejection in your platform? If you are not opposed to them why do you call for people to support the Williams document on Vietnam? You must give clear answers to these questions.

The IMG's position has, from the moment it started to take up Vietnam work in a serious manner, always been that of calling for the victory of the national liberation forces and for

the defeat of US aggression. The VSC was founded, under our leadership, with this political line written into its statement of aims. Comrade Williams, herself and other members of your tendency have worked on several demonstrations with these slogans as their focus. Never before have you raised an objection. What has happened? Why do you change your political line and then accuse us of changing ours? Before you can be treated seriously as a tendency you have to come clean on this question.

A vote for your tendency will be a vote against the slogan of "Victory for the NLF" -- the most popular slogan of our Vietnam work. Yet you leave this fact out of your platform. Are you hoping that people won't notice this criticism of the slogan "Victory to the NLF"? Or is it because you have differences amongst yourselves on the topic? The only way you can clear yourself on this question is to include it in your platform.

Some convenient lapses of memory

You ask comrades to support Comrade Williams' documents and yet these documents contain -- shall we say -- lapses of memory which amount to misrepresentation. I shall give you two examples:

(1) when referring to the SLL Vietnam demonstration Comrade Williams omits to mention that we distributed 600-700 each of two different leaflets attacking the SLL on Vietnam work and Bolivia. Once this fact is presented it makes absolute nonsense of her charge that we capitulated to SLL pressure; and

(2) when discussing the January 25th demonstration Comrade Williams omits to mention that (a) it was organised in only a few weeks because of lack of information and the intervention of the European conference and the Christmas holidays; and (b) that it was not a national demonstration but a specifically London one. Therefore all comparisons of numbers fall to the ground.

This method of Comrade Williams is extremely bad and you should disassociate yourselves from it.

(4) The Politics of a Patchwork Quilt

A slightest acquaintanceship with the methodology of marxism teaches one that a programme has to be an integrated whole if it is to be serious. It has to be drafted in a given conceptual framework, otherwise it has no inner logic nor coherence. Our resolution "From a Propaganda Group to a League for Revolutionary Action" endeavours to meet this requirement. We have tried to apply the methods so graphically illustrated in Trotsky's "Criticism of the Draft Programme of the Comintern" (contained in The Third International After Lenin).

Your platform and resolutions have no such conceptual framework. They are a hodgepodge of contradictory criticisms of the majority positions. To give an example: your platform simultaneously proposes:

- a sensitive orientation to the Labour Party;
- an orientation to the youth (or is it just the students?) and
- an orientation of actively defending the Vietnamese revolution (by dropping the slogan calling for its victory?)

But none of this has any meaning because according to Comrade Williams we must first smash the SLL before we can grow!!!

Comrades looking for a guide to our next step in these resolutions and platform get several different answers. We orient hither and thither, like a compass in a scraggyard. Your programme is like a patchwork quilt. It also contains the seeds of some of the most serious errors a marxist can make (confusion about the class nature of the Labour Government, organisation fetishism instead of political analysis and an almost SLL-like misuse of marxist terminology). Only three confused and negative themes emerge (a) hostility to the line of the majority of making the leap from a propoganda group to an action group; (b) the mechanical application of the experience of other sections in totally different political circumstance (this is the only explanation of your weird line on Vietnam and the Labour Party -- in certain cases what you say about the Labour Party would have some validity in countries which have not yet experienced a social democratic government); and (c) a timeless spaceless kind of dogmatism which seeks to lay down absolute laws about papers and organisation which apply in all situations. It has all the hallmarks of an ill-thought out rushed manifesto to cover an organisational grouping rather than a political one. It runs the risk, furthermore, of being designated dishonest because it runs away from the logic of its own arguments and hides in its platform some of its most important positions in supporting documents.

Comrades, if you persist in this course political disaster faces you. You have, of course, the right to raise whatever criticisms you want at the conference. But to do so in this kind of platform runs the risk of discrediting any valid points you may have because of the absurdity of your general position.

When starting out this open letter I made it clear that I address you in a completely fraternal spirit. I think you highly misguided but genuine in your intentions. But I would be less than honest if I did not also express my profound disquiet about your mode of operation. Everyone in the IMG agrees that we are in a very favourable position. The launching of this tendency, especially because of the bitterness injected into discussion by Comrades Williams and Phillips, threatens to stop us from reaping these benefits. You say that you are not a faction but merely a tendency which wants to persuade us of the error of our ways. Yet you level at us one of the worst charges that can be made against the leadership of a Trotskyist organisation: liquidationism. You furthermore accuse us of ultra-leftism, sectarianism, refusing to campaign against a disastrous defeat of the working class, letting down the Vietnamese revolution, capitulation to SLL pressure, adaptation to the youth radicalisation, centrism, etc. Comrades, that is not a declaration of a tendency, it is a declaration of war!

Either you do not mean these things or you must face the logic of your charges.

I will tell you frankly where I stand: I am absolutely opposed to your platform and method. I will do all I can to defeat your programme politically. I consider your politics as the

politics of political suicide. I consider that it would be an absolute disaster for us to adopt any one of your major policies.

I advise you with all the strength of argument that I can muster to disband your tendency before you get into a position from which you cannot withdraw. Long experience has shown that such policies as yours have a logic of their own which prevails over the intentions of the participants. I ask no one to drop their political ideas -- instead I ask for you to take part in a genuine exchange of opinion which is not artificially distorted by the hasty formation of a tendency which has no coherence nor inner logic. I appeal to you not to be carried away by factional fervour -- this is a disease which is very difficult to cure. Join with us in taking advantage of the great opportunities that face us. You have a great deal to contribute. Together we can make the leap from a propoganda group to a to a league for revolutionary action.

APPENDIX: Editorial in first issue of Labor Challenge, February 9th, 1970

"WHO WE ARE -- WHAT WE WANT"

"This is the first issue of Labor Challenge, an independent labor-socialist newspaper published biweekly. With editorial offices in Toronto, we intend to carry news and analysis of interest to Canadian socialists and labor activists from across the country and around the world.

"Many readers of this issue of Labor Challenge will be former readers of the Workers Vanguard which has ceased publication. The publishers of Labor Challenge have purchased the subscribers lists of the Vanguard, and those persons will receive as many issues of Labor Challenge as they were entitled to through their Vanguard subscription. Labor Challenge is applying for the reduced-rate second class mailing rights which the daily newspapers and many other commercial publications continue to enjoy.

"Labor Challenge will carry forward a long tradition of Socialist journalism in this country. The editor and publishers of Labor Challenge believe there are unprecedented opportunities now opening up for the ideas of revolutionary socialism -- in particular, the development of a mass left wing in the New Democratic Party, the growing movement for women's liberation, the inspiring national upsurge in Quebec, the student struggles, and the developing antiwar, anti-imperialist movement.

"Labor Challenge hopes to play a key role in the development of those struggles towards victory in the years to come."

Notes

- (a) my underlining throughout.
- (b) Caps are original emphasis.
- (c) I must point out that on the same page as this editorial there was a story of the opening of a new ISA/YS headquarters in Toronto. This kind of article would be entirely in keeping with the Red Mole. In fact, Black Dwarf even had articles about IMG activities.

by Connie Harris

Robin Blackburn's opening discussion article on the Labour Party and coming general elections raises a question that has dogged Marxists in Britain since the beginning of the century: Can revolutionary socialists, should revolutionary socialists support the Labour Party, a party whose leadership is part and parcel of the bourgeois democratic state?

The answer that he gives is just as old as the question. In essence, it has been given by the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) for over half a century, and by others calling themselves Marxists, after them. For the young generation of socialist rebels coming to Marxism on the wave of the student struggles, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the revulsion against Stalinism after the Czech invasion, it would be, first of all, well worth while to become aware of this fact and to acquaint itself with the history of this decades old discussion and the reasons for it.

Robin Blackburn proposes to deal with this crucial question scientifically. A very laudable intention. But a quotation from Lenin torn out of context (and disjointed from the conditions at the time) and a prescription for young revolutionary socialists to "make their presence felt" (how?) by using the election to discredit the labour leadership hardly adds up to a scientific approach. Certainly not, if by that is meant the approach of scientific socialism. That is, the approach of the materialist dialectic which sees the contradictory aspect of social phenomena, and their possibilities of resolution. However, learning from Lenin can be a good start. Let us learn.

Robin Blackburn's method of quoting Lenin is, to say the least, disingenuous. The quotation is taken from a speech the whole brunt of which was to persuade the revolutionary socialists in Britain at the time not merely to support but to join the Labour Party. The quotation is preceded in the actual speech by the words: "Comrade McLaine (not MacLean) was guilty of a slight inaccuracy with which it is impossible to agree." It is not sufficient to say that the Labour Party is "the political expression of the trade union movement" or its "political organisation" -- it must be added that because of its leadership and policies the party is not "a political proletarian party" and from that point of view, a "thoroughly bourgeois party!!" Right enough. But later on in the same speech, answering Sylvia Pankhurst and Willie Gallacher who opposed affiliation to the Labour Party, Lenin explained why he thought they were wrong.

"It must be borne in mind that the British Labour Party finds itself in a particularly peculiar condition: it is a very peculiar party, or more correctly, it is not a party in the ordinary sense of the word. It is made up of all the trade unions, which now have a membership of about four million and allows sufficient liberty to all political parties affiliated to it...."

Lenin then went on to describe the extremely broad "liberty" prevailing in the Labour Party at the time and concluded: "Under such circumstances it would be a mistake not to affiliate to this party...under such circumstances it would be a great mistake if the best revolutionary elements did not do all that was possible to remain in such a party." It is clear what line Lenin actually was pursuing in that speech. It was the reverse of the one Robin Blackburn poses. But this only sets the record straight. It does not

necessarily mean that what Lenin then proposed would necessarily be right today. Granted.

What is appropos is the method of Lenin's reasoning. Clearly Lenin saw the Labour Party as a scientific socialist. It was a contradictory phenomenon -- a "peculiar" party, not even a party in the "ordinary sense of the word" -- made up of "all" (not really all, even today, but near enough) the trade unions and yet "led by reactionaries, and the worst reactionaries at that, who lead it in the spirit of the bourgeoisie." It must be borne in mind what the period of time was in which that speech was made. All of Europe was still gripped in the wave of post-World War One radicalisation of the working class. Advanced workers in Britain as elsewhere, were in their thousands and even hundreds of thousands enthusiastic supporters of the Russian Revolution, and (as Lenin mentioned in that same speech) labour leaders under pressure organised a discussion in the constituencies on affiliation to the Third International! Yet, with revolutionary opportunities of such great scope, Lenin urged affiliation to the Labour Party. At the third congress of the Communist International a year later -- when the revolutionary wave had subsided greatly -- Lenin put this same argument even more forcibly in his pamphlet Left Wing Communism -- An Infantile Disorder. A rounded out elaboration of this argument was given by Lenin which every comrade could read and study with great profit today.

His reasoning only slowly made headway among British communists and was not adopted as official policy until freedom of opinion and affiliation had been greatly curtailed by the Labour Party bureaucracy. The Stalinised CP never showed any great interest in pursuing this Leninist line, often -- especially during the "third period" -- rejecting affiliation and support in an ultraleft spirit, and indeed on this score there has been no change in the education of its cadres since. "Popular front" drivel was easily reconciled with this sectarian attitude.

Has anything essential changed in the nature of the Labour Party since Lenin's day? If anything its contradictory character can be seen even more clearly. G.D.H. Cole -- hardly a Marxist -- but an honest academic scholar and student of socialism, characterised the Labour Party as both the political movement of the working class and at the same time part of the electoral machine of the capitalist state. Certainly this dichotomy still exists. The main base still remains the trade unions. To see this merely as the "cash nexus" between the union bureaucrats and the Labour leadership is to give way to the concept fostered very carefully by the Fleet Street sociologists who are, by the way, also very anxious to foster the concept of the "moving together" of the Labour and Tory parties. They are among the foremost propagandists of the view that there is little difference between the two parties, not much to distinguish between them.

For the scientific socialist, the historical origin and the actual trade union base of the Labour Party is of decisive weight. This is what makes it preferable from a working class point of view to the Tory Party. Not only to the Marxists but also to the ordinary class conscious workers. It is the worker who votes Tory or is apathetic who is most inclined to the view that there is no difference between the parties -- especially since the Tories now formally accept so much of the established reforms of the welfare state. It

is the backward worker who sees only this, and the breaking of election promises by the Labour leaders, and applies no class criterion.

To advance revolutionary policy Marxists must base themselves on the level of consciousness that actually exists in the advanced layers of the working class. Certainly, this must not imply concessions to bourgeois democratic prejudices implanted among them. Certainly this does not mean yielding to the vague notion of socialism achieved on the present bourgeois electoral bases -- the illusion of the "parliamentary road to socialism." But -- nor does it mean expecting revolution to come by some form of gradual re-education of the workers in the principles of socialism -- either à la the SPGB or à la the Socialist Labour League -- a sensational denunciation of misleaders and self-proclamation as the "alternative leadership." (To be sure, more recently the SLL has tried to give the impression of a Leninist sounding Labour Party policy.)

Revolutionary socialist policy towards the Labour Party, scientific socialist, Leninist policy, means first of all proceeding from realities. Although the Labour Party under its leadership to the present serves the capitalist state, it is no more a capitalist party like the Tory Party than the Trades Union Congress under its present leadership is a capitalist organisation like the Confederation of British Industry. (This sort of little mistake in sociological terminology can be very costly. Drawn to its logical conclusion it equates Fascist with Social Democrat. What that sort of sociology fathered by Stalin in the Germany of the 1930's resulted in is familiar, but often forgotten history.)

It is impossible to convince workers that the Labour Party with its present policies, leadership, etc., serves capitalism against them, if you proceed by what they recognise as the blatant nonsense of designating this party as capitalist per se. In order to convince advanced workers of the reality they do not recognise -- the bourgeois nature of their leadership and its conduct of their party -- revolutionaries have to proceed from the level of consciousness of advanced workers and go through experiences of struggle with them on that basis. This is the point Lenin was making in the early 1920's and this is the lesson that still holds valid for revolutionaries today.

What does this imply? It means that revolutionary socialists must devise a transitional programme of struggle adapted to the needs of the British workers today, both in the general struggle against the capitalist class and within the labour movement against their agents, the misleaders of labour. Revolutionary socialists must regard themselves -- or the necessary revolutionary vanguard -- not as a "party" but as a political combat organisation: they must recognise the Labour Party for what it is: an organisation created, financed and sustained by the working class which under capitalism has the two-sided attribute of being both an organ of bourgeois democracy as well as a bastion of proletarian democracy within that framework. As a combat organisation they must see their role as working within that arena in order to forge the organ of proletarian democracy -- ripping it loose from its bourgeois democratic trappings -- and turn it into an organ for the assumption of class power and the smashing of capitalist power. This is the way revolutionary socialists must regard the question of support of the Labour Party. To this end they must develop a sort of internal transitional programme -- linked to the broader programme of transitional demands and indis-

pensable to it. What should the elements of such an "internal" transitional programme be?

1) It must begin with the acknowledgement that for the workers' objective a government formed by the Labour Party arising historically from their ranks and tied to their organisations is preferable to a government formed by the classical party of capitalism. LABOUR TO POWER is the general formula for this. But -- it is a formula which revolutionaries must then proceed to fill with a content ever more approaching their aim.

2) A second point in this line of reasoning should be: IMPLEMENTATION OF LABOUR PARTY POLICY BY THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT. It is true that this is a modest enough demand. Labour Party conferences hardly adopt revolutionary policy -- at least they haven't up to the present. But they have adopted for example, on Vietnam, on trade union legislation, etc., etc., policies which are far more preferable from a working class point of view and which can be used as a wedge in the fight against the labour bureaucracy. The duty of revolutionaries is to organise the struggle against the labour government's subversion of Labour Party policy. This is an issue of democracy that the thinking worker can understand and that has been rankling him for years. The Attlee "doctrine" formulated under the pressure of Churchill's attack on Laski in 1945 that the government is "sovereign" obligated "only to the electorate" (and upon which this subversion in the interests of capitalism is based) is a patent fraud upon democracy that has never been seriously challenged by the so-called democrats, the "lefts" in the Labour Party. That task is therefore another important point in the internal transitional programme.

3) SUBMISSION OF LABOUR MP'S TO THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE AND ITS POLICIES. One of the chief, if not the main, means of subversion of policy by the leadership has been the paramountcy of the "Parliamentary Party" -- it elects the "leader," the "leader" forms the government, so that, in the last analysis instead of being servants of the movement, the MP's are the "bosses" of the movement. This was true when they were in complete harmony with the trade union "bosses" with their block vote, when the unions were predominantly under right wing leadership. It is still true today, when there has been a considerable leftward drift in the unions. On the continent, in the best days of social democracy and certainly in the communist parliamentary groups, candidates were required to furnish the party executive with an unsigned statement of resignation to assure they would carry out party policy. Some such device -- perhaps subject to application by party conferences rather than the executive must be a concrete objective of this kind of an internal struggle.

4) In order to make an effective internal struggle possible, FREEDOM FOR ORGANISED POLICY GROUPINGS -- particularly of course, Marxist groupings from our point of view must be the rule. At present there are any number of "banned" organisations -- a hangover from the past, when the ban on Stalinists was justified on the basis that they were "agents of a foreign power" and thus taken advantage of by the bureaucracy to prevent any organised opposition to them. This whole issue must be made a point of concentration in the internal struggle. The breakup of the Stalinist monolith and the growing push towards rank and file control are bound to add persuasion to the argument.

5) THE FORMATION OF A BROAD MARXIST TENDENCY within the Labour Party that will grow

around such a minimum programme and carry on educational activities and centralise the struggle internally, as well as provide extra-parliamentary mass leadership in support of this programme, is obviously necessary. Propaganda for extra-parliamentary action by the Labour Party in support of issues that may or may not entail legislation or in support of the government when under attack by the capitalist class would, of course, be the connecting link for the organised revolutionary tendency between its internal and external transitional programmes. In the past, extra-parliamentary mass action has been the rare exception in the Labour Party and the Labour movement generally, but revolutionaries have a tradition which they should exploit to the full. There was the Council of Action. More recently there was the "stop Suez" mass action. The point is, to utilise the tradition and generalise it. There is no doubt that extra-parliamentary action not only can be, but is decisive (Suez is but one fairly recent example). Obviously, initiation of action will be more important in leading to the objective than abstract propaganda. And this means that proposals for mass action must not be devalued by implausible frequency but rather built up with the development of revolutionary moods in the masses.

6) Finally, the deep democratic conviction of the British working class must be constantly kept in mind. The struggle for proletarian power, for the smashing of the capitalist state, for the establishment of the socialist workers

state must take place under the banner of RE-SHAPING AND REPLACING PARLIAMENT BY A GENUINE DEMOCRACY OF WORKERS' COUNCILS.

These are but some elements of a transitional programme of struggle on revolutionary lines within the Labour Party. They must be expounded, developed and constantly adjusted to the changing reality but they are indispensable to the line of support to the Labour Party and this support remains key today for the successful building of the revolutionary combat organisation in Britain, and for the socialist revolution.

* * *

This article was written in reply to Robin Blackburn's article in the Red Mole on the Labour Party and as a contribution to the public discussion which Blackburn's article opened.

This article was submitted to the PC on May 17th in line with the decision of the NC that members of the group wishing to take part in the written discussion in the Red Mole should first submit the article to the PC.

The PC refused this article as a contribution to the public discussion in Red Mole. It is therefore submitted as a contribution to the internal discussion bulletin.

June 8th, 1970

STATEMENT ON THE RE-FORMING OF THE TENDENCY
with comments by G. Camillo and P. Peterson

The tendency was formed for the purpose of conducting the pre-conference discussion. The tendency claimed that the group would not be able to make the great gains which the objective situation made possible if the liquidationist line of the major documents of the Political Committee was not understood and rectified.

The political positions of the tendency were summarised and outlined in the Statement of the Political Position of the Tendency formed around the general line of the pre-conference discussion documents numbers 5,7 and 10 for the national conference of the IMG, 1970 (any comrade who has not seen this statement or the documents referred to should obtain them through their branch or from the national secretary).

After the discussions had been held and the decisions taken, the tendency, in a statement to the conference, declared the tendency dissolved. At the same time the tendency considered that the movement had taken a wrong direction on key issues and that it could not help but pay for this in the long run. The tendency reserved the right to come together again, in the light of further experience of the movement, if necessary. At the same time, comrades in the tendency hoped that that would not be necessary. They hoped that the mistaken political positions would be rectified in the course of engaging in the day-to-day struggles and work of the movement.

In the nine weeks since conference, a number of important developments have taken place which have caused many comrades great concern, and point in a direction of the fears which were expressed by the tendency at the conference, being realised sooner than even anticipated.

As the tendency pointed out in the pre-conference tendency statement, the PC in looking for shortcuts to build the party had put forward political lines and perspectives which reflected an opportunistic adaptation to the radicalising youth. Rather than educating and winning the youth on the fundamental question of the Leninist party by openly striving to lead them with open Trotskyist organisations and an openly Trotskyist press, to working class politics and a working class organisation, the line of the PC resolution blurred this essential aspect of Trotskyism behind a screen of red circles and the Red Mole. But, as we pointed out, "shortcut politics have a logic of their own. Adaptation to the youth means adaptation to the weaknesses and not its strength. It requires an ultraleft and sectarian political line." The tendency thinks that in the nine weeks since conference, the IMG has consistently moved further in an ultraleft and sectarian direction and away from the traditional concepts of Trotskyist ideas and organisational norms. This is what the tendency means when it states that the politics of the majority contain the seeds of liquidationism.

This is most clearly shown around the question of the Labour Party and the attitude of the IMG towards the general election, the development of the Red Mole. The line of the IMG in the election is clearly one of abstentionism. The first public manifestation was an interview by Tariq in the Sunday Times just three weeks after conference. At the same time the main article in the April 15th issue of Red Mole (number 3) was an article by Robin Blackburn on the Labour Party in which he equated the Labour

Party with the Democratic Party of the United States and outlined a policy of abstention in the elections and the breaking up of election meetings during the campaign. This lead article was written up as "opening a long needed discussion on the Labour Party -- a problem which has bedevilled the revolutionary movement since its existence. Our pages will be open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

Comrades in the IMG were disturbed and looked for a quick denial from the leadership of the IMG of the statement by Tariq in the Sunday Times and a clear denunciation of the article by Blackburn.

The leadership decided to overlook the Sunday Times interview and that the national secretary would write a letter to the Red Mole promising an article at a later date (see issue number 5).

In the seven weeks since Blackburn's opening contribution to the "Long need discussion on the Labour Party" the only contribution to date has been the short letter from the national secretary. Meanwhile, comrades have been faced by members of other tendencies with the accusation that the IMG stands for abstention in the general election. The Morning Star, in a report by Fergus Nicholson, the CP student organiser, draws attention to the position of the IMG on this question and quotes Peter Gowan, the IMG student organiser of the British section of the Fourth International, as claiming before a student conference in Oxford "that the outcome of the general election was irrelevant for revolutionaries."

The Workers Press has also attacked the IMG both as a result of the Sunday Times interview and Blackburn's article in Red Mole. In the June 1st issue of Workers Press almost the whole of the back page is devoted to an expose of Blackburn's position which is taken to be that of the IMG also. A number of issues arise as a result of opening this type of discussion in Red Mole with an article by Blackburn.

(1) The line of Blackburn's article is clearly seen to be that of the IMG. While the PC document which was passed at the conference did not openly call for an abstentionist policy, through not coming out clearly with the position of class support for the Labour Party, it left the door wide open for those in the organisation who supported the abstentionist line, to put this forward as the position of the IMG.

(2) Why was it decided by the Red Mole editorial board to open a public discussion in the Red Mole on the Labour Party, when the national conference had voted to have an internal written discussion on this subject? Why wasn't the PC or NC consulted on this? The first issue of Red Mole after the conference (number 3) announced the opening of this "long needed discussion" publicly by giving the centre page to Blackburn. At the following NC meeting it was decided to continue the public discussion but members of the IMG who wished to participate in the discussion were required to submit their articles to the PC. An article submitted by a member of the tendency was refused by the PC for publication in Red Mole and it is now to be submitted instead to the Internal discussion bulletin. If the claim that the purpose of the discussion was to engage in polemics with other tendencies for this public "discussion" in the pages of Red Mole, why weren't we prepared for it? Why did we not open

it with a clearcut unambiguous article designed to educate Blackburn and others who might share his views? Why was it also not made clear to readers of the paper that anyone wishing to put a clear class position of support for Labour at the coming election would not be free to use the pages of Red Mole? In fact, the "long needed discussion" turns out at best to be ill-prepared and not serious, and at worst turns out to be a cover for putting forward an abstentionist line.

The positions taken at conference were of course ambiguous and no one can be blamed for coming to the conclusion that the PC document contains within it the line of Blackburn's article. At the same time, many comrades who supported the majority at conference were against an abstentionist line and didn't understand that that really was the line of the PC.

It was clear at conference that there was a wide range of views amongst those comrades who were in support of the PC document -- from those that think the Labour Party is bourgeois, pure and simple -- to those who view support for the essentially abstentionist position of the PC document as a temporary tactic which could later be changed. In other words the majority was actually an amalgam based on opposing views of the class character of the Labour Party. The tendency decided to move a motion which was voted upon and carried by the conference, to instruct the National Committee to organise a written internal discussion on the Labour Party.

What was the actual line of the PC document? Let's look again at the relevant parts of the PC document: (From the PC document)

"SOME IMMEDIATE POLITICAL PROBLEMS

(a) Policy in the coming general election

As mentioned before the traditional revolutionary attitude on this question "Labour to Power," which dates back as far as Lenin's advice to the newly formed British CP in 1920, is no longer completely valid.

The following considerations would seem to apply:

(1) Defeat for Labour in the coming general election would represent a marginal defeat for the working class in a historical and international sense, especially as it might facilitate the emergence of a "left" social democrat opposition, which could hinder a complete break with social democracy.

(2) However, this is a minor factor as compared with the major task facing the British working class and its vanguard: the rapid building of a revolutionary leadership -- in fact there are circumstances when defeat for Labour might assist that process. (I do not think that this applies now because of the weakness and fragmentation of the revolutionary forces.)

(3) The activities of the vanguard in general and ourselves in particular will have very little (and certainly not a decisive) effect on the result of the election.

(4) Therefore our policy should be determined by one main factor: using the heightened political interest in the period of the election to spread revolutionary ideas and win people for our organisation. This will be exceptionally important because millions of young people will be voting for the first time, because of the dropping of the voting age.

(5) In this context the putting up of candidates would be, in nearly every case we can envisage, an extreme waste of time. To spend the election period working night and day to get a few hundred votes would be unproductive and demoralising.

(6) Our best method of intervention is to openly say that we are in favour of Labour winning, not because we expect anything positive from that victory, but because we think that this is marginally more favourable to the destruction of social democracy than a Tory victory. Certainly we are not going to work for a Labour victory.

(7) Our best method of intervention will be to use the heightened political interest to insert into the election campaign fundamental issues. The call by VSC to organise counter-rallies at election meetings is an obvious example of this.

(8) We must also make it very clear that we shall do all we can to assist the working class to fight whatever government is elected as undoubtedly it will be an anti-working class one."

"Lenin's advice is no longer completely valid -- a defeat for Labour would represent a marginal defeat for the working class in a historical and international sense -- however this is a minor factor as compared with the major task facing the British working class and its vanguard." Doesn't this add up to an abstentionist position? Surely such concepts lead to the conclusion that it "is irrelevant for revolutionaries who gets in," so why bother to vote at all? Such ideas flow directly from an incorrect understanding of the nature of the Labour Party and the consciousness of the class. Failure to put forward a class position of "Labour to Power" and to fill it with some content, when the choice is between a Labour Party and a bourgeois party, and dismissing the class allegiance to the Labour Party are fundamental errors and lead to the positions of Blackburn and that of the PC document passed at conference.

Scientific socialists start from the reality and not wishful thinking. It would be nice to think that the class had developed beyond the stage of having illusions in reformism and social democracy. However, this is not the reality. A share of responsibility for this situation lies with the revolutionary left who from the early formation of the CP right up to the present day have looked for ways of getting around the Labour Party, which they rightly see to be a major obstacle in the development of a mass revolutionary consciousness. Revolutionaries should understand that in order to break from social democracy, the class has to go through many experiences which will involve them in a struggle against the reformist bureaucracy which has established itself in the leadership of the workers' movements. The class will not be helped to come to grips with this parasitic growth as long as revolutionary socialists fail to understand this question, and wishfully look for shortcuts by trying to convince themselves that the Labour Party can be by-passed in the building of the revolutionary party. Anyone who is confused about the class character of the Labour Party and thinks that "in the decisive sense the Labour Party is bourgeois," who does not understand the roots of the class loyalty to the Labour Party in spite of its rotten anti-working class leadership, is not going to be able to lead the class in struggle against the bureaucracy and through these struggles forge the proletarian party.

The only "reply" so far to Blackburn is the letter to the editor of Red Mole from the national secretary in which nothing is said about the conclusions which Blackburn advocates -- the policy of breaking up election meetings. Again it is true that there are differences with the majority on what is meant by "organising counter-rallies at election meetings," a policy initiated by us within the VSC. Robin Blackburn in a radio interview with BBC's WORLD THIS WEEKEND, made it clear that he advocated breaking up meetings to prevent government ministers from being heard on the grounds that they were mere shadows of American foreign policy, and that they do not have anything to say. Such concepts are alien to our tradition and anyone not clear on the principles involved should read Mandel's article on "Workers Democracy" (available from Red Books). The tendency stands firmly for the principles outlined in this article.

The PC however clearly supports the policy advocated by Blackburn. The action of our comrades in Oxford who initiated and carried out the ultra-left and sectarian policy of preventing Michael Stewart from speaking at the Oxford Union debate does nothing to help to loosen the grip of the labour bureaucrats on the movement. In fact the repercussions from such actions is to strengthen them as they are given an opportunity to hypocritically speak out about democracy and freedom of speech.

In a period when the ruling class and their agents are consistently nibbling away the democratic and civil rights which have been won by years of struggle by the class, actions such as the one at Oxford put us in a position of being seen as being against free speech, instead of aggressive proponents of such rights. Reversely, Stewart is given an opportunity to appear to be a victim of undemocratic practices and an advocate of free speech and assembly. He is given much publicity by the bourgeois mass media who also want to foster the illusion that they are also for democratic rights and free speech.

Such actions as breaking up the Oxford debate reflect a concept that alien ideas can be defeated by refusing to allow them to be heard. These methods and worse have been used against the Trotskyist movement for many years by the Stalinists and right wingers to no avail. When small groups resort to ultraleft actions to prevent ideas that they are not in agreement with from being expressed, they reveal a lack of understanding of class politics (see Mandel's article) and the basic ideas of the Trotskyist movement as outlined in the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. The logic of this policy against the Labour leaders and which is endorsed by the PC, is not to stop with the Labour Party leaders. What about right wing trade union leaders, many of whom are experts in selling out strikes and restoring class peace in industry? Should they not be stopped from speaking? And CP spokesmen, some of whom support the Moscow trials of the '30s and the purges of tens of thousands of communists throughout the world. Should these supporters of counterrevolution and mass murder be allowed a platform? And so on.

We resort to such actions because we are looking for shortcuts and have not yet learnt how to fight the Labour bureaucrats POLITICALLY. Confrontation politics, as opposed to intervening in broad class struggles through transitional and defensively formulated demands leads to isolation and takes us in the opposite direction from the one presented to us at conference -- the opportunities to make a big leap forward from a propaganda group to a league for revolutionary

action. The only point of difference between Blackburn and Pat Jordan is around the sociological nature of the Labour Party and even here the differences are insignificant. According to Comrade Jordan the links between the Labour Party and the trade unions still exist but "have been eroded and are not now living relationships." Only one conclusion can be drawn from the fact that seven weeks have elapsed since Blackburn's article appeared and as yet no fundamentally different point of view has been printed in this "long needed discussion" -- that is that Blackburn's article reflects the thinking of the majority of the leadership of the IMG on this question. It is not Blackburn's historical analysis that is crucial but the CONCLUSIONS that he draws from such an analysis that have to be taken up in a serious way. It is not sufficient to declare that an article is to be printed in issue number 6 of Red Mole. For seven weeks the position of abstentionism by IMG in the coming general election has gone unchallenged and it is generally recognised by everyone that that is the position of the IMG.

WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE?

(1) When workers are faced with a choice of voting for a bourgeois party or Labour Party with no revolutionary alternative, it is a principle for revolutionary socialists to be clearly for the victory of the Labour Party and the defeat of the party of the ruling class.

(2) Use the election campaign to make contacts, to educate our own forces and those around us and anyone else we can reach through our paper and other activities during the campaign -- public meetings, etc. We should attend major election meetings and intervene in such a way to force candidates to answer questions on Vietnam, South East Asia, union legislation, racialism, etc. We should devise tactics which would lead to us getting the floor to present our point of view of what Labour policy should be. Far from preventing Labour "leaders" from speaking, we should take the attitude of going to their meetings and making them debate us.

The tendency thinks that what is needed is a programme of struggle oriented towards the Labour Party and labour government which will be a means of educating the radicalising youth and give them a perspective of how to fight the bureaucracy both in the Labour Party and the trade unions. This requires working out a series of transitional demands and slogans within the labour movement and linked to a more general programme of transitional demands for the socialist revolution in this country.

If anyone at conference had doubts about the sectarian and ultraleft direction the movement was heading for, the development of the Red Mole must surely convince them.

The April 1st issue printed an article by Trotsky called "The Essence of Bolshevism." It was encircled by an outline of a Molotov cocktail. The same issue carried an article by an editorial board member Neil Middleton, the line of which was that Lenin's ideas on left-wing communism were not valid for Britain today. The April 15th issue carried the lead article on the Labour Party contrary to the accepted position of the Fourth International. A full-page article in the May 1st issue was friendly to the idea that bourgeois diplomats should be kidnapped by European militants. We were even informed (for the success of the operation) "...that communication with the authorities should take place through an agent in some safe place like Algeria...."

All this nonsense boils down to a substitution for serious political analysis and the presentation of transitional demands geared to meet concrete situations. It reveals in a clear way that adaptations to the weakness of the radicalising youth requires an ultraleft and sectarian political line, which in turn if not corrected will lead to a further liquidation of our Trotskyist programme. The movement has to decide what Red Mole is to be -- is it to be a broad "left" paper or a tendency paper? Is it to be the IMG paper? At the moment it is not one thing nor the other. We are not talking here about legalities. We are talking about the Leninist concept of a paper -- a paper to build the group. To date there is not much to indicate that the paper is the paper of the IMG (e.g., the allocating of the centre page for the initial contribution on the Labour Party discussion to Blackburn followed two issues later by a few hundred words letter from the IMG). It carries no statements made by the Fourth International. It gives little leadership to our comrades engaged in struggle and is mainly a commentator on political events primarily of an international character. On May 1st it published major excerpts from our conference documents without indicating that this was the line of the IMG. We gain nothing by hiding the IMG behind the Red Mole whose function has yet to be clearly defined. Our monthly magazine International was liquidated to accommodate Red Mole. It was to be replaced by a theoretical journal to come out six times a year. It is three months since we had an International printed and it will be at least another month before we get our first theoretical journal. The IMG is without a paper because the Red Mole is trying to be a paper for red circles -- transitional and somewhat fictitious organisations of an artificial character.

It is clear what is needed -- a move away from the "politics" of Molotov cocktails and the infantile "Adventures of the Red Mole" -- to be replaced with articles that express in a firm but sensitive way the ideas of the movement and of the Fourth International. The paper must present our programme and organisation to radicalising youth and workers. It must give clear and decisive leadership to those sections of the class engaged in struggle. We must answer the "lefts" in the socialist movement as well as those to the "right" of us. Only in this way can our comrades effectively intervene in the various struggles that are taking place in order to bring new forces to Trotskyism and develop them into cadres.

It is the opinion of comrades in the tendency that there has never been a greater opportunity to build the Trotskyist movement in this country, that is to build the IMG and eliminate all those forces who fraudulently claim to be Trotskyists. This means that we need an IMG political paper, a revolutionary socialist paper in the Leninist tradition that will help educate and win the revolutionary forces to the Fourth International through its Transitional Programme. Because our thrust in the next period will be to the radicalising youth, it is even more important that our political line -- our political orientation -- on the broad class struggle is precise and rests on an accurate assessment of the level of political consciousness of the British working class. This means recognising that the Labour Party, the mass party of the workers, reflects the general level of political consciousness of the working class.

It means openly calling for a defeat of the ruling class party, the Tories and the victory of the Labour Party in the next elections. It means sensitively and skillfully tying this position with the necessity to struggle against the re-

formist Labour Party leadership and with our full programme expressed through our transitional programme as a means of winning youth to the commitment of building a new revolutionary socialist working class leadership through the IMG. Tendency comrades will be very happy to be invited to branch meetings and discuss the position they hold with the membership. We are confident that an open and frank discussion can only be of benefit to the building of the British section of the Fourth International.

Susan Williams (for Tendency)
May 31, 1970

(1) The Sunday Times quoted Tariq as saying: "We say, don't vote Labour, but abstain and make your revolutionary presence known." As the Sunday Times pointed out, "Freely interpreted, that means muck up Labour and Tory meetings."

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COMMENT BY PETER PETERSON

When the comrades of tendency announced their intention to reform it I asked them to think again before taking this step. My advice was ignored.

I gave this advice for two reasons:

1. that their action in organisationally structuring political differences would harden and polarise these differences. Concretely, it would accelerate their own marked rightward evolution; and

2. that whilst they had the complete right to form a tendency, to go ahead and do so would be injurious to the functioning of the group.

My fears in both cases have been more than amply justified.

The following tendency statement has to be read in conjunction with Comrade Connie Harris' article on the Labour Party. Taken together, these two documents amount to a call for re-entry into the Labour Party. What is worse they do so on the premise of trying to capture the Labour Party ("working within that arena in order to forge the organ of proletarian democracy -- ripping it loose from its bourgeois democratic trappings -- and turn it into an organ for the assumption of class power and the smashing of capitalist power"). This completely revisionist concept will be taken up in the Labour Party discussion. However, it is worth noting that when challenged on their attitude towards entry at conference, members of the tendency denied they were calling for entry.

The leadership have decided to open a discussion on demonstrations and the attitude towards right wing groups. The tendency appears to hold a completely liberal attitude on this question. Our Oxford comrades are heavily criticised for heckling Michael Stewart to the extent that his meeting had to be abandoned (as are the Political Committee for not condemning this action). In support of this argument the tendency statement refers to the concept of workers' democracy. Here even more clearly than on the question of entry the tendency reveals its non-Marxist, non-class approach to a Labour Government. Are we to take it that Michael Stewart is to be regarded as a genuine tendency in the workers' movement? At the time of the meeting Michael Stewart was a bourgeois minister operating a vicious counterrevolutionary foreign policy stained with the blood of workers and

peasants. The action took place just a few days after he had completely supported the American invasion of Cambodia. Our Oxford comrades' action was a thoroughly commendable political demonstration against that unspeakable position. Let the tendency try to explain to the Vietnamese and Cambodians that we could not disrupt Michael Stewart's meetings in the interest of free speech.

The tendency equates a bourgeois minister with genuinely confused workers. We would never do anything but patiently argue with ordinary workers who held Michael Stewart's political position and we would oppose completely anyone who would refuse to allow these people to express themselves in meetings.

The tendency rhetorically asks whether or not we would advocate the refusal of a platform to trade union leaders and Stalinists. Of course not -- but neither would we condemn the Pilkington strikers who pulled their right-wing shop stewards off a platform. These matters are far more complicated than the liberal, free-speech-pure-and-simple arguments of the tendency.

In the discussion on demonstrations and attitude towards right wing organisations the tendency will have to answer the question: where does it stand on anti-Powell, anti-fascist demonstrations? Does it stand for free speech for fascists and right-wing radicals? Does it consider that bourgeois ministers are a genuine tendency in the working class movement who have exactly the same rights as ordinary rank and file workers confused by capitalist propaganda?

By reforming the tendency just a few weeks after the conference the tendency comrades behave as though the conference did not take place. It is a basic premise of democratic centralism that one organises discussions with a conclusion and that after a democratic free-ranging discussion is held and votes are taken the minority accepts the majority decision. Then follows a period in which the new policy is tried out; on the basis of the experience of applying this line over this time a new discussion is organised. The alternative is a permanent discussion club which Lenin so roundly denounced in What Is to Be Done? The tendency claim that it is moved to reform by events which have happened since the conference. The tendency statement is extremely confused on this question; apart from the highly regrettable use of a quotation from the capitalist press which the comrade concerned denies, their complaints fall into two categories: organisational shortcomings and the fact that we have presented the position in public of being "abstentionists." It is hard to see why the latter should be grounds for reforming the tendency because their statement claims that the conference position was actually abstentionist. Surely it betrays confused thinking on the tendency's part when they castigate the majority for not criticising the abstentionist position, when they have already claimed that the majority's position is abstentionist.

All of this is to be of benefit to the organisation. On the contrary.

The formation of a hard tendency (especially one with such a right-wing line as our present one) hinders full discussion within the organisation. We are not trying to build a monolithic organisation where everyone agrees on every question (as the tendency seems to think we are, witness their complaint that not everyone in the majority has an identical position on the Labour Party). We want people to be able quite easily to hold differing positions in the discussion over a range of questions without either being in

a majority or minority with complete programmes. We want comrades to feel free to make political and organisational criticisms and suggestions without feeling that they are thus lining up with a majority or a minority. The creation of a tendency with an across the board range of differences inhibits comrades, especially new ones, from raising questions which would appear to line them up with the tendency. The creation of a tendency with its own inner logic, life and loyalties tends to bring about a position where members of both the majority and the minority feel obliged to approach all questions from a given standpoint instead of freely working their attitudes. For all these reasons the creation of a tendency tends to increase polarisation in a revolutionary organisation and increase differences.

This is why the creation of a tendency should be a last resort.

The comrades of the tendency have never explained (least of all in the pre-conference discussion) why it was absolutely imperative to take this major step. Many of us suspected that their differences with the majority were greater than they actually felt expedient to say -- the shift on the question of entry is demonstration that these suspicions were correct.

Just as the creation of the tendency damages the discussion in the organisation it also is extremely time consuming and affects the running of the organisation. In the past period we have had an extremely difficult period of reorganisation. Among other things we have:

1. Moved into a new office;
2. had to start Red Books virtually from scratch;
3. started a completely new print shop;
4. Taken over responsibility for printing our own large scale newspaper;
5. started the process of building a youth organisation;
6. had the general election "sprung" on us;
7. started the extremely complicated job of reorganising the London branch into two or three new branches.

All this has been undertaken with comrades who are, by and large, very inexperienced politically, organisationally and technically. No wonder it is possible for the tendency to make all kinds of organisational complaints against us. But to use these criticisms to "prove" the correctness of the tendency's political position is contrived and destructive.

No one wants to dampen down discussion or hinder people making organisational criticisms -- on the contrary, these criticisms can be extremely valuable, if positive and friendly, particularly to the inexperienced comrades. But when these criticisms are used to justify the creation of a rightward moving tendency the result is quite negative.

Once again, I would appeal to the comrades of the tendency to think where they are going and what the logic of their position will be. We want a discussion on the Labour Party and an objective consideration of what internal life there will be in the organisation since Labour has lost the election. But to polarise this discussion on the lines put forward in Connie Harris' article, is extremely damaging to the whole idea. Members of the tendency should reject the method of making organisational criticisms to underpin a political

position and lastly they should think out the whole implication of their forming a tendency. I would recommend them to read again my "open letter to members of the Williams tendency" (available from the centre on request).

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COMMENT BY G. CAMILLO

As comrades will know I have been out of the country for two months and returned only recently. Hence I was NOT here when the Sunday Times published an interview which was distorted beyond recognition. Needless to say if I had been here I would have denied the quotation attributed to me very strongly. However, in my absence I am amazed to see that the comrades of the minority have used the distortion in the bourgeois press as one of the reasons for reforming their tendency. Comrades will know that since 1968 the bourgeois press has printed hundreds of distortions regarding me and the IMG. No one in the group took these seriously and it was only IS and the SLL who used them for factional reasons: a smear technique which the SLL

still employs. It is therefore regrettable that the comrades of the minority included a bourgeois press report in their documents and despite the fact that I have told them on my return that the article was in large part a fabrication they have so far refused to withdraw their insinuations.

I am constrained to add that this is a complete negation of the tradition of a movement and in fact is something against which the Fourth International has fought virtually since its existence.

At the discussion of the subject at a Political Committee meeting, Comrade Connie said that all that she had written about was the refusal of the PC to deny the statement: a look at the relevant passage in the "new" tendency document, however, reveals very clearly that the tendency accepted without any reference to me a version of the bourgeois press. And their refusal to retract these remarks despite my denial shows that they still prefer to believe the distortion rather than the word of a member of the IMG.