WORKERS' FIGHT

Internal Bulletin

No. 3

The General Strike & the Tories

Apologies to comrades for this issue being later than scheduled - this is mainly due to pressure of work on the paper.

AGENDA FOR NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING 24 JUNE

1. The Political Situation, the General Strike, the Tories, and the Labour Party.

Resolution (KS): That in the event of it becoming necessary to drop the slogan 'General Strike' the group adopts the slogan 'Bring Down the Tory Government'. That we do not simply call for the election of a Labour government as an alternative but approach the question in the following way: we advance a programme of demands as outlined in MT/AH's document and call upon all workers' organisations (ie LP/ LP branches/ TU branches/ Trades Councils/ Councils of Action/ Liaison Cttee etc) to adopt this programme. In the event of an election we support all candidates standing on the basis of this programme. In situations where the LP refuses, we campaign for an alternative workers' candidate, on the programme.
Resolution (AH, MT): That the NC adopts the general line of the document 'Defeat All the Tories Stand For'.

2. Tenants work (intro. RR)

3. The Paper.
Resolution (Midlands): (a) for a 'theoretical' page in WF linking theory to topical events, eg the law - NIRC - State & Revolution, + something on basic economics. (b) the "Jim Higgins letter" to be published either in WF or as some form of open letter to IS.
Resolution (J. Wright) "While recognising the necessity and the aggregate decision to increase the sales of the paper by 50%, the NC also recognises that this cannot be done by bureaucratic dictum. Therefore it is resolved that no extra papers are sent out to branches unless they are ordered - although it is, of course, the responsibility of the WF business manager to 'push' the branches into taking more papers as best he can".

4. 'One-man management' (intro. AH)

5. Ireland (intro. SM).

STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES 26 June 79 Absent: PL.

DISCUSSION ON THE GOVERNMENT AND THE GENERAL STRIKE.

The High Court ruling on the £55,000 was generally agreed to be not a deliberate ploy by the Tories rather a result of the fact that they don't control the judiciary mechanically and totally, and of ineptness in the drafting of the Bill. But the appeal on behalf of Steer, Turner, and Williams can be nothing but a retreat. The government was near a General Strike - they were defeated even by the not-very-militant railwayment.

The retreat could be one of three sorts.

1) A retreat for a momentary breathing space, like the retreat over the miners' strike. This seems unlikely - the Government has systematically underestimated the strength of the working class (the miners, the railwaymen, the dockers) and the application of the IRAct has not been at all as intended. The Act was intended to push the bureaucrats into policing the unions - instead it has pushed them into defying the Government.

2) A retreat of the type of Red Friday, July 1925, to be followed by a period of preparation for class confrontation, similar to that leading up to the G.S. The Steer/ Turner/ Williams decision is in fact much more like Red Friday, a much more blatant climbdown.

Agreed that an article on the OMS should appear in the next issue of the paper.

There was disagreement over whether OMS-type organisation was likely to be initiated by the Government as in 1925/26, or by the semi-fascist and fascist Right acting independently. AH held that the Government was too discredited (over EEC, hanging, Whitelaw's 'softness') with the extreme right to rally them effectively.

3) A retreat signalling a change of strategy to a 'conciliationist' line. It is doubtful whether the ruling class is sufficiently scared for their power (and not just their finance) to resort to fascist or pre-fascist means yet. The CBI seems to have been standing out for this alternative strategy, and are advocating industrial conciliation machinery without Gov't representatives. On the wages front, the biggest victory for the employers has been over the engineers pay claim, where they have operate a 'soft' line (only one maverick employer used the law), without Government interference. Where the Gov't has interfered - mines, railways - the results haven't been good for the ruling class. On the redundancy front - the only major (partial, very partial) victory has been precisely where the Gov't has interfered - UCS.

The 'conciliationist' line could be very right-wing in many ways - it could involve social service cuts, police repression, increased redundancies &c - the crucial difference would be that it would rely on coopting the bureaucrats , not confronting them.

The recent policies of the Gov't tend to decrease unemployment - that is, recessionary unemployment - but that is not to say that technological unemployment and reorganisational unemployment may not increase.

The crucial question about the 'conciliationist' line is, can it work ? is there enough economic leeway ? Can it solve the 'problem of inflation' for the ruling class ?

The picture painted in the financial pages of the bourgeois press is generally rosier than it was. The average rate of wage increases is in fact not high (arpund 8 to 9 %). The Gov't has felt sufficiently confident to try reflation. But with the slight revival of the internal economy has come a balance of payments problem.

It was agreed that the SC couldn't decide the extent of economic leeway at all precisely until PL finishes a serious study of the question. Anyway, even

if we did know that, we couldn't be certain about the Gov't's policy, since that policy is not determined by economics directly.

The tactic of a General Election could assist the Gov't with either the 1925/26 type policy or the 'conciliationist' policy. The present is a bad time for an election if the Tories want to win - it is possible that they might deliberately stage a new confrontation in order to whip up a "unions vs the people" atmosphere. The main objections to a G.E. as a 'safety-valve' for the bourgeoisie at present are: (1) the need for internal self-preservation of the Tory party; (2) the EEC. But Wilson has been making it clear that if elected he would not withdraw from the EEC.

A Labour gov't would actually be better placed than the Tories to appear as a 'national', not a class, government. But it would be under tremendous pressure, there would be tremendous opportunities for exposure.

It was agreed to discuss the alternative perspectives opening up in the paper.

Whatever type of retreat is involved, our immediate emphasis must be on the need for an offensive, to turn the retreat into a rout. SM proposed a series for the paper on situations where the Labour movement has forced retreats - Germany, Italy, France, USA.

The Question of 'Kicking out the Tories'. KS said that he disagreed with DB's recommended slogan 'G.S. to kick out the Tories'. But we do have to link up with working class anti-Tory feeling. There is nothing wrong with raising 'kick out the Tories as such'. It doesn't imply posing Labour as the alternative. We should make propaganda critical of the LP in our paper. We must centre our work round a programme - no incomes policy, work or full pay, sliding scale of wages, nationalisation under workers' control etc - which meets the needs of the working class, and struggle to commit every working class organisation, including the LP, to this programme. We must confront individual Labour MPs with this programme as a condition for support.

SM opposed making support of Labour MPs conditional - RM agreed that we can't make support of Labour MPs conditional, but we can use KS's approach to shift emphasis. People have far more illusions in Parliament than they do in the Labour Party as such; using KS's approach we can shift emphasis to indiv l MPs.

If the 'conciliationist' approach is used, then clearly the G.S. slogan will eventually have to be dropped. What is our emphasis then ?

The discussion centred round three main problems. (1) The problem of using the class feeling inherent in anti-Toryism while not either letting Labour o the hook or going in for lesser-evilism; (2) the problem of giving a precise institutional/organisational focus to the struggle while not leaving the fidd oper to the bourgeois politicians of the LP; (3) deepening the struggle, not simply 'Heath Out' which is behind many workers' consciousness, but not ignoring the facts of parliamentarian illusions.

Two positions were put forward:

(1) (SM) - If we drop the slogan 'G.S.', we should raise the demand for a General Election and kicking the Tories out. We must relate to the political sphere, the sphere of the general administration of society, understanding that the demand could not be used instead of, counterposed to, the direct action of the working class. We must relate to the political sphere via the LP. We must try to break through the fatalism which infects many workers' attitudes to politics.

Against this i was said that if we say 'kick out the Tories' we are merely acting as a (very puny) echo-chamber for the class, which is already saying that In terms of a concrete programme of action, it amounts to nc more than 'step up the aggro'.

(2) (AH, MT) - we should link campaigns on the main issues of independence

of the TU, unemployment, and (MT, but not AH) racialism and chauvinism with the slogan 'defeat the Tories and all they stand for'. This slogan can summarise a concrete programme of action on the main issues, and can relate to 'kicking the Tories out' without capitulation to Labourism or lesser-evilism - we can explain that we support Labour not because the LP will defeat all the Tories stand for, but because having Labour in power will make it easier for the working class to defeat all the Tories stand for.

Against this it was said that the slogan was equivalent to "smash capitalism", that it was entirely abstract, a 'package' slogan containing others,necessarily propagandist and essentially irrelevant as an answer to the problem of immediate concrete slogans. It was said that the slogan was incompatible with support for the LP in an election. It was said that the slogan was sectarian - it did not see the need to take the lead in the struggle to 'kick the Tories out'.

It was agreed that the question should be remitted to the NC, and documents prepared for the IB.

It was agreed that the next issue of the paper should stress the theme 'turn the retreat into a rout'; should use 'defeat the Tories and all they stand for' as a masthead; should relate to 'kick the Tories' out' in the style of "you say 'kick the Tories out'? Good ! We will fight alongside with you for a G.S., not allowing ourselves to be derailed by the Labour leaders'". It was agreed that the concretisation of the G.S. slogan in WF no 6 should be reviewed and updated, and that the theme 'hands off the unions' should be broken down like the theme 'work or full pay' in WF no 1.

Weekend schools - Teesside to fix date, North West July 16th.

F.I. special conference - SM to see to booking Rugeley - not done.

SM to arrange Rugeley booking for FI special conf.

Cadre school - to cover the following: writing for WF, speaking, organising a meeting, writing a leaflet, industrial work, educational work, women's work; Labour Party, State Capitalism, IMG, Ireland & permanent revolution, FI, Stalinism, Trotskyism in Britain, Marxist economics. PS, JW, PL, AH, MT, RM, SM to compile notes; AH to arrange details.

Agreed that cadre school should be postponed to 22-28 July, AH to write to those invited IMMEDIATELY, and to make other arrangements.

3. PAMPHLETS.

SM proposed a policy of producing pamphlets, some to be based on articles in the paper, some to be translations. This was agreed in principle, but the journal is the priority.

KS to be responsible for producing Tenants' Supplement.

4. HOOK & DOCKS

Agreed to produce as substantial an issue of the Hook as we can without jeopardising the paper.

SM to write a major article for paper & Hook.

5. INSTRUCTIONS TO BRANCHES.

Agreed to include itemsin branch circular on 'one-man-management', LCDTU.

THE CURRENT SITUATION.

The growing crisis in capitalism on an international scale signifies a new stage of development in the relation of class forces. Capitalism in its nerve centres in the USA and W. Europe is faced with the increasingly difficult problem of inflation: the situation where an expansion in the volume of purchasing power occurs without a corresponding increase in the volume of goods available for sale, resulting in a general rise in price levels.

This chronic problem can only be solved by massive attacks on the workers' movement. This is particularly true of Britain where the economic problems of the bourgeoisie are especially acute and pressing, and which demand a more drastic mode of reaction than elsewhere. In short, this means to effect a sharp change in the relation of class forces; or as Heath put it so succinctly,"to change the course of history of this nation". For the ruling class this is no small task. The functioning of monopoly capitalism requries more and more that the worker is 'atomised' and reduced to a single and individual appendage of the machinery he operates. The process is a disciplining one - and is in opposition to the internal tendency of capitalism to concentrate ever larger numbers of workers into single plants, the very tendency which creates the basic conditions for the development of trades unionism.

Therefore, monopoly capitalism is faced with a monumental contradiction - a conflict of opposites within a process - and can dispense with neither side of the contradiction. It can, however, seek to eliminate that which is created out of the conditions under which the working class labours - namely its organisation. Every aspect of the way in which the class struggles to gains for itself a favourable outcome of the division between wages and surplus value is at this stage subject to amendment. Without changing the outcome of this division, the bourgeoisie cannot maximise the return on its investments. Not can it ensure the full utilisation of its machinery, plant, etc, which is installed at an ever increasing cost. This means that the ruling class must launch a concentrated assault not against wage demands but actually against the machinery used by the worker to gain those demands and to defend himself against the employers - ie the trades unions.

This is where Heath comes in. As the balance of payments difficulties and inflation worsened in the late 1960s, the Labour Government revealed itself incapable of obtaining a favourable outcome from its efforts to straitjacket the unions. The working class was far too strong and routed the reformists over "In Place of Strife". Thus, by 1970, the ruling class felt a deep need for a Tory government - which would carry out everything the Wilson government had fluffed. They wanted a government which would get the gloves off - and which would show some backbone where Labour had shown only jelly.

Ideas of a national revitalisation were offered up by the Right Tory press immediately after the June 1970 election. The capitalists sensed that Heath's Government had what the Labourites so clearly lacked: determination to take on the working class and defeat it. Consequently, the election of the Tories was an expression of a deep crisis within the ruling class. Labour had failed - their failure had exacerbated the problems of inflation. The winter of 1969/70 had shown tremendous gains made by the working class on the wages front.

We are now almost two years on from the election of the Tories. The problems of British capitalism are more acute than ever. The 'lame ducks' policy has not been successful - workers' resistance has been too strong for that. The Tories have not been able to inflict a major defeat on the working class. They have the weapon of the Industrial Relations Act but have not been able to wield it effectively. It is precisely those struggles which are coming up, and which will decide the future policy of the Tories. That there is an Industrial Relations Act to contend with at all is the responsibility of the existing reformist

leadership. The failure of Feather and Co to organise any action beyond token protest gestures has opened up enormous dangers for the working class. Their refusal to mobilise the class in a general strike to remove the government has encouraged the Tories in their drive to destroy the independence of the trades unions, and has counteracted the victory of the miners. Thus, the rail and docks disputes are quite crucial in terms of the Tory offensive. It is doubtful whether the Tories could sustain a double defeat here. If they do, it is highly likely that the tendencies towards a strong state will be consciously strengthened - the Tories will resort to a form of Bonapartism, balancing between the extreme Right sections of big capital, on the one hand the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois State on the other. And, even if they win, the tendencies will proceed, but at a slower rate than if the Government is defeated.

Anyone who refuses to face up to this is in danger of making the same mistakes as Feather: that is, of ignoring reality, of complacently looking at surface appearances. Already, the Tories have made detailed preparation for the use of the army to break a rail and dock strike. Sections of the army officer clique are straining at the leash for involvement in strike-breaking. Contingency plans have been worked out in fine detail for action to prevent a fuel crisis, in the event of dock and/or rail strikes. The bourgeoisie's ideological grip is about to be supplemented by the use of the 'bodies of armed men' who constitute the State.

This will pose completely new tasks for us in Workers' Fight. The invocation of Emergency Powers by the Tories will be the proof of their intentions. It would be extremely dangerous to rule out even widespread State action against the revolutionary movement in the event of dock and rail strikes. The atmosphere has already been generated to the level where police can raid the homes of socialists. A witch-hunt has stirred up wide sections of the middle class against the railment and the organs of bourgeois propaganda have well and truly beaten the drum of law and order. I do not think it is exaggeration to suggest that the Tory leadership is motivated by such hatred of the working class that they actually believe that Feather is the "wild man of the TU movement". This is an expression of their arrogance and determination to win the class war and of their complete and utter contempt for the 'leadership' of the TUC.

All this, of course, makes the TUC's cowardice all the more craven and makes the need for a political struggle within the unions even more essential. Heath wants nothing less than total surrender, from a working class that is full of fight and its leadership which is full of fear. This is the opposite side to the confidence of the class and its high expectations which are derived from the massive gains made in the boom period. The repressive potential which is concentrated in the Tory government and the state machine cannot be underestimated.

As I stated earlier this poses new tasks for us. To this end I propose the following:

1. That we produce at the Centre a national printed leaflet advocating the idea of a General Strike to get rid of the Tories.

2. That the paper continues its emphasis on the need for a General Strike, but begins to explain, additionally the the necessity of getting the Tories out and Labour in, but with warning that a Labour Government will be a government of crisis, an unwilling government, and we need to prepare to fight it, too.

3. That we propagandise as widely as possible on the need for Councils of Action so that the class can be prepared for an all out clash. That we attempt to campaign systematically in the union branches and around the factories on these demands.

4. That we make demands on the Labour leadership to fight. That we demand to know what Wilson intends to do in the face of the 'Tory provocation' which he is so adept at prattling about.

5. That we demand that the TUC fights or gets out of the way.
6. That in every area we call a public meeting on "Dockers and Railwaymen vs the State".
7. That as part of the campaign we engage in work round the railways, and attempt to lay the basis for a railways fraction and railways paper (all branches have large railway stations in their areas).
8. That the Hook should carry articles on the rail dispute, pointing out the political importance of the fight, stressing the opportunity to extend the strikes into a general strike, and advocating joint committees of dockers and railwaymen to coordinate the struggle and develop rank and file initiative.

D. Black. 4 June 1972.

I still holdto the position that we ought to be stressing in the paper the necessity of bringing down this government. Only this way can we try to face the class up to its political tasks. You see, it seems to me that the necessity of such a slogan is confirmed every day. In this respect, I think the SLL have the correct propaganda emphasis but tend to then approach the question of action in a millennial way - that is, as if nothing can be done between now and the removal of the Tories. Yet the basic fact still remains. The working class can get nothing out of the Tories, who clearly have the full collaboration of the TU bureaucracy. To leave the Tories in strengthens them in their drive to take back the boom-time concessions. Also, it is quite clear that a real fight to get the Tories out would seriously damage both the capitalists and, more important, the bureaucracies. Labour does not want to be in government - it's the last thing Wilson and Co want. The TU bureaucrats also do not want to be faced with a Gov't in crisis. Such a situation would call their whole position into question. They could be exposed in action. The problem now is that we have a situation which gives rise to a lot of 'left' talk by the bureaucrats. Tons of talk - but no action. Thus, the demand that the TUC mobilises the Labour movement to get rid of the Tories has two roles: (1) It points clearly to the objective task facing the working class movement. (2) It creates a situation where we can intervene on a clear political basis with demands that our 'leaders' face up to their responsibilities. This allows us to discuss actual political perspectives with workes, placing the effective R & F work on the docks etc in a framework of clear demands. Not placing demands for a concerted struggle to remove the Tories on the union & Labour leaders really lets them off the hook. I think we must recognise that the situation is a very advanced one. Worsthorne, in last weeks' Sunday Telegraph, was quite accurate when he said that the class war is proceeding at a greater intensity than in the 1920s. Surely, then, our demands must be brought into line with that. I agree that a G.S. can be called for limited aims. However, I reckon that the most limited we can afford to be is to demand that this Gov't is removed. One thing is crystal clear - this Act will not be smashed unless the Gov't is smashed. The only realistic replacement for the Tories would, of course, be the Labourites, who would incorporate large amounts of the Tory strategy into their programme. Socialist policies would not be forthcoming. That is not to say we don't demand them or demand that the bosses are mdde to pay for their crisis, or that we do not stress that the problems facing the class can only be resolved by making inroads into capital there and then. If the class had been mobilised in struggle to get rid of the Tories then the Labour leadership would be faced with the truly gigantic task of deflatingthe strength already mobilised. A class which had brought down the Tories would refuse to simply take 'No' for an answer from Wilson & Co. Therefore, the demand to 'Bring down the Tories' actually goes a long way towards developing the self-confidence of the class and acts an an element - consciously - in its

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1. The downturn in world trade has sharpened competition between the main producing countries. It has had an effect on investment, making it necessary on the one hand to streamline in order to compete while making it less profitable given the trade contradictions as a whole. The optimism of the past has given place to a new caution. Despite a whole battery of financial and diplomatic arrangements the unevenness of the stagnation has meant an exacerbation of national/bloc interests (US, EEC, Japan).

2. In Britain the inflationary tendencies which actually are causing serious problems in all the major countries are particularly developed. For Britain there is the particular problem of the age of its plant. Given the situation of the world market streamlining cannot be attended by an increase in production, only productivity. The increased rate of exploitation is only to be achieved by reduction and disciplining in the work force as well as a reduction in the real value of wages.

3. The ruling class is faced then centrally with the problems of stagnation and inflation. However this is not a question of some cataclysmic reversal or slump. Instead the situation develops slowly and unevenly. There is room for minor temporary upturns in the situation and one may even be due now. Nevertheless these concerns are those central to the ruling class and as such determine absolutely the options open to them. The 1964 Labour Government initiated the offensive with partial success (mergers through IRC, Redundancy Payments Act and beginning of wholesale labour cut-backs), but failure on crucial fronts ('In Place of Strife'). The major 1970-2 politics of the Tory Government have all been continuous of 1964-70 Labour policies, but applied in a much more crude and straightforward way. This line has recieved a number of set-backs each related to a fundamental underestimation by the bourgeoisie of the strength of the working class: miners, railwaymen, dockers.

4. A possible option for the Tories which would mean a reversal of policy is a direct attempt to increase unemployment so effecting a sufficient demoralisation in the working class that either the 'soft cop' or the 'hard cop' approaches would be successful. Redundancy is the issue above all that has met with little successful resistance, though the limited successes at UCS, Plesseys & Fisher Bendix might be a factor in deciding the Tories against this. It would, we repeat, be a change of present policy. It is particularly likely in the 'conciliationist' outcome.

5. We see the government's alternatives as falling into 3 main approaches, summarised in the SC minutes 16.6.72. The question arises of relating to these possibilities in a political situation where there is mass working class hatred of the Tories and a big though by no means overwhelming rejection of the Labour Party; where despite the main and most successful focus of struggle being extra-parliamentary - industrial - ideologically the working class has not, despite disillusion with present political parties, transcended parliamentarism.

6. The '1925' variant would present tremendous practical challenges. However, working out our basic line is perhaps simpler than in the 'conciliationist' alternative. The chief slogan would have to be 'Prepare the General Strike', concretised in terms of: councils of Action (Liaison Cttees, Trades Councils); - national coordination of these committees and councils (programme for LCDTU); - organisation of workers' mobile pickets (motivated from Saltley and Longannet, and usable as a basis for arguing for workers' militias); - explanation of the general strike weapon; - extra sharpness against 'left' demagogy, avoidance of any 'All Power to the General Council' approach

7. As the SC minutes indicate, we believe that the 'conciliationist' approach is not at all excluded. This seems to be supported by the experience of Italy, where the ruling class is still reluctant to rest on the fascists.

The General Strike slogan will have to be dropped unless, as is then improbable, it can be at some point motivated by a specific sharp confrontation of the working class and the state. Certainly the GS slogan cannot possibly be given any kind of continuity. Thus we are faced with four interlocking problems:

(1) using class hatred embodied in anti-Toryism while neither letting Labour off the hook nor going in for lesser-evilism; (2) giving a specific organisational/ institutional focus while, particularly with the possibility of an election, not leaving the field open to the LP politicians; (3) deepening on a class basis while not ignoring the parliamentary illusions that determine both the rhetoric and the framework for the mass of the workers now demanding a political solution;(4) establishing a continuity of our political line, expressing the fundamental tasks of the present period and giving a context to short-term reactions.

8. Examined in this light the 'Kick the Tories Out' slogan has certain positive sides. It is clearly related to the basic class hate now voiced by the working class. It uses parliamentary rhetoric but does not divorce ~~you~~ from the industrial struggle. Also it is very useful as a connecting link in a campaign, meetings, etc - a veritable visiting card to the increasingly class-conscious. It has however serious drawbacks.

The call KTO is a call which represents more than a simple parliamentary cretinism - 'Labour to Power'. But while it represents more, those who call it - often having few illusions in Labour and a vivid memory of the last Labour Gov't - do still think parliamentary terms. This means that the slogan KTO while expressing basic class hatred also contains it within the rhetoric of parliamentarism. It is a case of adaptation without intervention. Those using it hope that the adaptation will give them the visiting card and then they can 'give the line' .... criticising Labour too. This attitude inevitably tends to come out as 'lesser-evilism' (a search for lesser evils within capitalism). This is because the issues which motivate KTO do not appear, and they apply also to Labour. KTO tends to go with the idea, so well retailed by the SLL, that "you can't get any concessions out of the Tories" so vote Labour. This is a reformist nonsense born of demagogy.

And KTO can let the TU bureaucrats off the hook by switching the focus from demands for immediate action from them to parliamentary forms.

9. All this does not exclude the use of KTO. Indeed, if a mass revival of the LP occurs, KTO will definitely be essential.

What is ruled out is 'General Strike to Kick the Tories Out'. This slogan - or any other slogan - must be considered from the point of view of what those who hear it take it to mean, not those who say it. Thus it actually means 'GS to put Labour into Government' - unless we say loudly and specifically that it means something else, in which case it can only be 'GS to smash capitalism'.

'GS to put Labour into Government' is not just a GS for a limited aim - it is GS an aim which limits the GS in advance, and thus completely reformist. GS, by its nature, raises the question of political alternatives in an open-ended way; 'Labour into Government' raises the question of political alternatives in a specifically closed way. To focus a GS, action which raises the question of working class (ie Soviet) politics, on bourgeois party politics, is quite wrong. When we support Labour, we do so for lack of a substantial working class alternative. That condition would not hold in a GS situation.

It is very probable that a GS could result in simply replacing Tories by Labour, and that it could do the replacement in such a way as to make it a gain for the working class. But we cannot limit the GS to that in advance.

10. We feel that the problems outlined in (7) can be resolved by putting forward a programme centring on the main current issues of the class struggle. This programme should be summarised by the slogan DEFEAT ALL THE TORIES STAND FOR or DEFEAT THE TORIES AND ALL THEY STAND FOR. Unlike the KTO slogan this, while utilising anti-Toryism, raises the question of 'policies'. And it is to these that the struggle must related if it is to be taken up as a (politicised) industrial struggle or as the basis for opposition to the LP - thus providing a continuity to class politics. Here we must bear two things in mind: although we must view the fatalism of "oh well, all politicians are the same, Labour and Tory alike" as inadequate, we must

round it out by attacking the resignation inherent in it, ie by putting forward a programme of concrete demands related to felt needs. To spend time attacking the estimation of Labour involved (as the SLL does) is to argue against the best, the most advanced aspect of the attitude. 'Labour to Power with Socialist Policies' (the SLL slogan) does exactly that - it thus attacks the gains in terms of the raising of consciousness derived from having gone through the experience of the last Labour Government; secondly, however, we must understand that such a fatalistic dismissal of the parliamentary parties is not a transcendence of parliamentarism.

11. These observations become sharper when we see the slogan in relation to Labour. We need a policy which while not excluding support for Labour at the next election is aggressive with respect to Labour. Such a policy would need to focus on what is at present the main focus of struggle and the point also at which the class line of the LP in government is most clearly discernible: the industrial struggle. Because, however, DATSF relates to politics and not just to competing political formations it can be a weapon against lesser evilism - particularly if the conciliationist trend develops and the election question is raised. Lesser-evilism would in this event simply put you in the same bag as the bourgeoisie: they will want Labour with the old (capitalist) policies while we call for Labour with the new (socialist) policies which we freely admit it won't adopt. Being in line with the bourgeoisie does not always disqualify a policy. For example, 'Vote Labour' in 1964 was clearly in line with the plans of substantial advanced sections of the bourgeoisie But if we are left in a conciliationist situation, when 'kicking the Tories out' is by no means the most vital front of struggle, KTO, if not subsumed by some slogan of the type of DATSF, must become counterposed to the direct action of the class- whatever the intentions of those posing it.

One of the objections to our proposal (DATSF) was that it was sectarian, It did not recognise the need to try to take the lead in the movement to 'Kick the Tories Out' and not just to say "well, yes, you might as well kick the Tories out while you're at it". This objection rests on seeing 'KTO' as directly expressing the militancy of the working class. Actually KTO is - to some extent - a straitjacket on that militancy. We must not identify the movement with its rhetoric. Our task, while not counterposing ourselves to KTO, is to free that straitjacket. We must not think of the working class as mind blank and ears flapping, waiting for our slogan. The working class already is saying KTO: we will have to take up the slogan and concretise it. "You want to KTO ? Good ! We propose a campaign against unemployment, for TU freedom, against chauvinism ..."

12. It has also been said that DATSF is passive and sectarian , as it means, in effect, 'smash capitalism'. Further it is said that it does not constitute a call to action or link with a programme of action that can take the struggle forward now. As to the first objection: we see the slogan summarising a programme which can be actively agitated around. It does not mean 'smash capitalism', as what 'the Tories stand for' to workers is not some piece of bare, reductionist, formal logic - ie the Tories stand for the maintenance of the bourgeois order at the cost of the workers and so does Labour, so in fact does any non revolutionary formation. 'What the Tories stand for' is specific. Though Tories stood in 1926 for a reduction in miners' money wages, they do not stand for that today, as the situation is seen in reality. They do stand for racialism and chauvinism, for the IR Act, shackling the trade unions, holding down wages in a period of rapidly rising prices, upping the rents dramatically, throwing men out of work &c. Indeed it is contradictory to argue that such a slogan is both demagogic and passive. That the two elements do appear if you split up (&thus distort) the phrase (DEFEAT THE TORIES/ DEFEAT WHAT TORYISM BASICALLY ALWAYS HAS STOOD FOR) indicates that the phrase DATSF actually combines a sharp relationship to class feeling as well as a more substantial political point.

13. Another objection runs as follows. Vulgar Trotskyism objects to all consideration of 'stages' on the grounds of opposition to Stalinist 'stages theories'. However, what is wrong with the Stalinist theories is not that they consider stages, but that they use the stages as roadblocks, not bridges - they subordinate the final aim to the intermediate stage. Actually for any concrete strategy it is necessary to map out 'next stages'. But 'DATSF' doesn't do that. It doesn't give a precise organisational forms to the struggle. Instead of indicating a definite aim, it cries 'for socialism, against capitalism'.

If we were to use 'DATSF' completely alone, this objection would be valid. But we have said definitely that DATSF has meaning only as a summary slogan - and what it summarises does map out definite aims. More so than KTO, which concretely means only 'step up the aggro'.

DATSF would form the line of political continuity for the coming period in a a way which the call to action cannot. It is also a tool for deepening the political understanding of those whose ear we have as well as a possible bridge between the advanced and less advanced sections. It thus puts a weapon in the hands of the advanced to gain their workmates' support in a struggle at the immediate level at which they can pursue it, the industrial level. KTO, for instance, could not do that.

As well as being used as an overall, background 'summary slogan', which can be combined with specific conjunctural slogans such as 'GS' (or even 'KTO'), DATSF can be used as a conjunctural slogan. That is what we advocate for a 'conciliationist' period.

14. Finally, we are told that DATSF is effectively syndicalist, in that it doesn't relate concretely to the political sphere. The masses are asking questions on the level of the general administration of society, with KTO, and we are returning answers on the level of industrial struggle.

It is true that DATSF doesn't (of itself) give a specific political alternative in agitational terms. Rather, the question of political alternatives would have to be discussed in terms of detailed propagandist explanation. We admit this is a disadvantage. But we are in no worse a position for that than we would be if Labour were in government, or if we were in a country like the USA without a labour party (unless, grossly at variance with Trotsky's conceptions, we were to use the slogan for the labour party as an all-time panacea). If we took the logic of this argument, we would raise KTO always, unless either the LP was in government or we were calling for a GS. Certainly if the LP becomes the focus of working class consciousness then we will have to raise KTO as a main conjunctural slogan. But that isn't the situation yet.

15. The programme that the slogan would summarise needs to relate the main issues facing the working class. How do we define, though, which are the main issues ?

We define 'main issues' as those over which victory of defeat could have the most serious effects on the consciousness, solidarity, and organisation of the working class. The indications of our Perspectives document are that these are unemployment, independence of the TU, and racialism & chauvinism.

The third issue needs slightly different consideration from the first two, since it is seen as a main issue by only a few advanced militants, and it is not a front in the mass organic struggles of the class. But it is not included just because we want to live up to a textbook definition of internationalism. Though it would obviously come more to the fore in a '1925' type outcome, even in a 'conciliationist' type outcome chauvinism would be the major ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie. To leave the issue of chauvinism in the realm of propaganda and confine agitation to the industrial calls to action would be 'economist' bowing down before the present political level of the labour movement. (This was the point of the Stoke amendment to the Perspectives document). CONTD P7

elf-mobilisation, especially when we see that every struggle against the Tories brings political questions of government right to the fore, and makes workers see the need (as they see it) for a Labour Government. What we want as Marxists is a Labour Gov't brought in under conditions favourable to us, where the class can get to grips with the bureaucracies in conflict against them. For the same reason the bureaucrats fear the mobilisation of the class. A defeated class would be a better prospect for them. It would certainly make life easier for the next inevitable Labour Government. These are just a few reasons why I think we ought to be posing this demand. Shortly, I will attempt a much more systematic analysis

D. Black.

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However, we must recognise that we are in politics not just to spread the good word, but to give our politics life in the activity of the class. We don't bow down to the present level of the labour movement - but we don't ignore it either. We have to try, to the extent that it is possible, to argue against chauvinism starting from the immediate concerns of the movement.

The working-out of a detailed programme of action is not appropriate to the issue. The question of chauvinism will have to be argued tactfully and in a different way from those of unemployment and TU independence. You can assume that people are against unemployment, and discuss how to fight it; whereas with chauvinism, being against it is the crux of the matter. The problem with chauvinism is finding arguments with genuine access to popular consciousness; over Ireland, we believe, the starting point will have to be that the British army fights for the Tories' interests, not ours.

We envisage agitation and propaganda being put in terms of:

"The Tories stand for a million unemployed. Fight for work or full pay !"

"The Tories stand for shackling the unions to the State. Hands off the unions"

"The Tories stand for splitting the working class with the poison of racialism. The British army serves the Tories' interests in fighting against a free and united Ireland. Full support for the IRA and for black people fighting racialism"

'Work or full pay' and 'Hands off the unions' will have to be broken down into detailed practical slogans: this has already been done for 'Work of full pay' in WF no 1, and the SC has already decided to do the same for 'Hands off the unions'.

A. Hornung, M Thomas.