

Internal Bulletin

No. 34

More background material for 1975 conference.

"PROFITS, CAPITAL & OUTPUT" - GRAPHS TO ACCOMPANY ARTICLE ON THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN I.B. 25.

On the -

Fourth International

More reprints from the 1972/3 discussion in WF:

"WORKERS FIGHT AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL" - January 1973 Background Document.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3rd 1972 NATIONAL COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

DATES, NAMES, SPLITS AND FUSIONS: A SKELETON DIAGRAM OF THE HISTORY

WORKERS FIGHT & THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL - JUNE 1973 PAMPHLET

Portugal

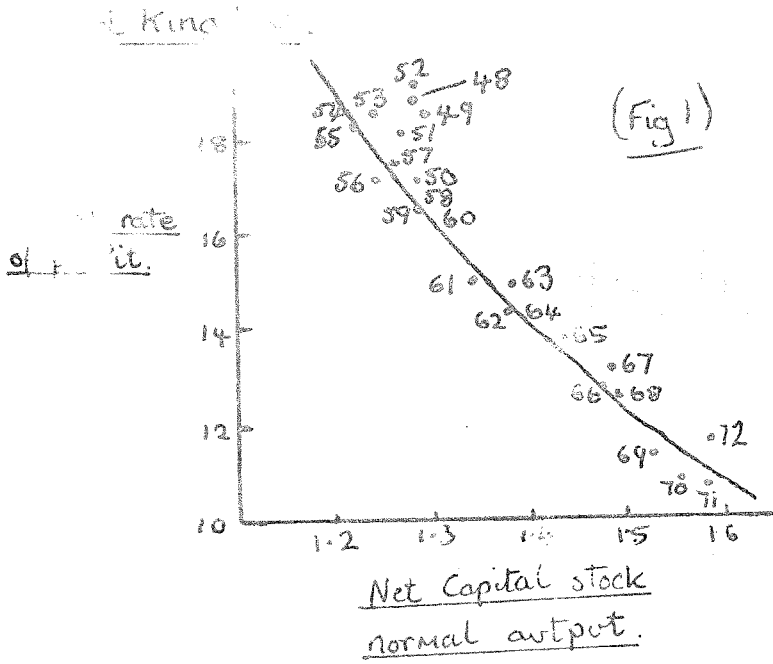
MINUTES OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN WORKERS FIGHT STEERING COMMITTEE AND PORTUGUESE WORKERS' COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Also:

WF NATIONAL COMMITTEE MINUTES 19-7-75

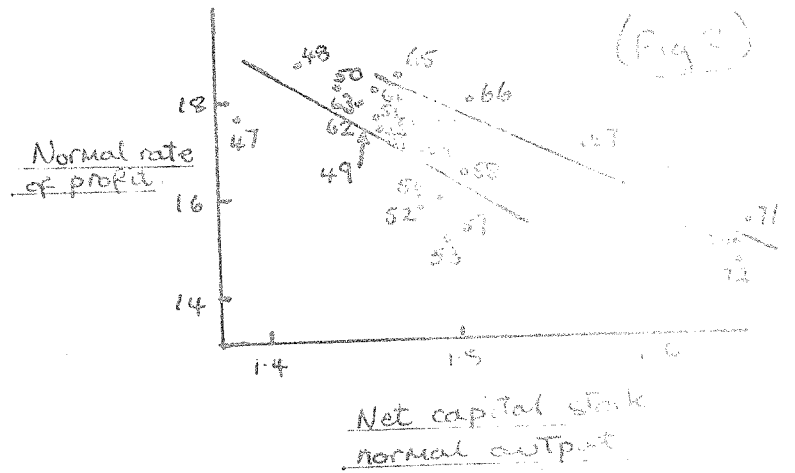
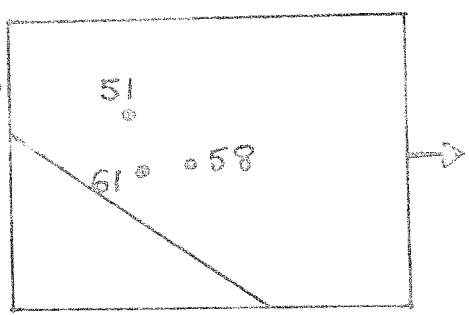
10 p.

Profits, Capital and Output.

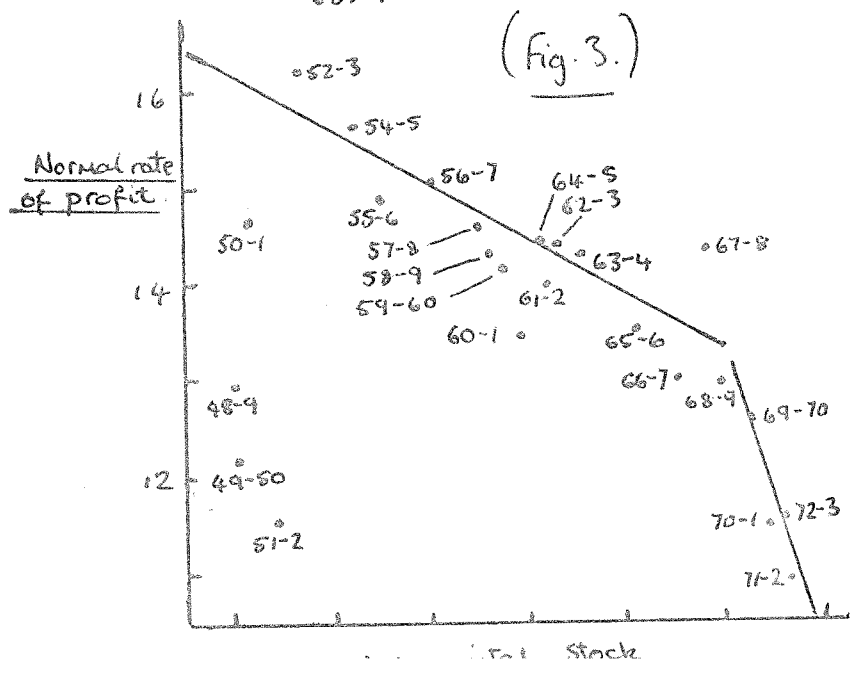


United States of America.

NOTE:
THE 3 DOTS
INDICATING
YEARS 1951
58 AND
61 ARE AS
INDICATED
IN FIG. 1.



Australia



(January 1973)

WORKERS' FIGHT & THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

We are communist internationalists: we know of no communist programme that can be realised or confined to any one country, or regional group of nation states. Capitalism is not national, but an organic world system. Our battle for socialism is necessarily part of a world struggle. The proletariat is either a world revolutionary class or it is not revolutionary.

For this reason we take the international dimension of the working class struggle in Britain as self-evident. In Britain we oppose and set ourselves intransigently against all manifestations of reactionary British nationalism, British insularity, British chauvinistic narrow mindedness.

The struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in Britain is merely a part of a world wide struggle of the working class for socialism. As WF's "Where We Stand" says: "British workers have - fundamentally - more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, nationality, or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class." We are firmly convinced that Trotskyism, revolutionary communism, in the epoch of imperialism and of global politics, is the doctrine of proletarian internationalism par excellence, and that there is no Trotskyism without internationalism.

WF is the only ostensibly communist group to have refused the disingenuous 'soft option' of publicly 'opposing' Common Market entry, in a situation where the Labour leaders and a section of the ruling class were noisily campaigning against the Common Market and for 'Little England', and taking refuge in the privately understood communist reason that we oppose capitalism in all its specific manifestations. We took seriously Trotsky's warning: "... never play with slogans that are not revolutionary by their own content but that can play a quite different role according to the political conjuncture, the relationship of forces, etc..." (p. 90, writings 1934/35, my emphasis).

We have publicly called for the defeat of the British army in Ireland, an army seen as 'its' army by the masses of that section of the international working class of which WF is a part. We have publicly supported the right of the IRA to strike at military targets within Britain itself. We take the whole international history of our class as our guide and attempt to transmit its lesson to the section of our class which we reach directly - as on the question of the general strike, on which WF was the single group to escape from both the crippling limitations of the memory of the one catastrophic British general strike, and simultaneously from reformism.

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Logically internationalism requires an organised International, a recognition of the need for a revolutionary Bolshevik party constructed to the scope and dimensions of its task - the world revolution; with the local national parties as sections of the International. Any 'Trotskyist' grouping that does not adopt this (Trotsky's) concept of an International party built on the communist internationalist programme of permanent revolution, and take up as its starting point the fight for such a party, is a regression to the level of the Second International.

On the other hand, any small grouping, based, in fact, in one country, which does not coldly assess its prospects and possibilities, and its primary responsibility to build a base for communist internationalist ideas in that

2/2.

section of the working class which it can reach, is substituting an abstract and largely worthless 'internationalism' for real communist practice in the class struggle.

Writing in 1954, James P Cannon, the founder, after Trotsky, of 'Trotskyism', explaining the degeneration of the CPUSA, put it like this: "The degeneration of the CP began when it abandoned the perspective of revolution in this country, and converted itself into a pressure group and cheering squad for the stalinist bureaucracy in Russia - which it mistakenly took to be the custodian of a revolution 'in another country'... what happened to the CP would happen without fail to any other party, including our own, if it should abandon its struggle for a socialist revolution in this country, as the realistic perspective of our epoch, and degrade itself to the role of sympathiser of revolutions in other countries. I firmly believe American revolutionaries should indeed sympathise with revolutions in other lands, and try to help them in every way. But the best way to do that is to build a party with a confident perspective of a revolution in this country. Without that perspective, a communist or socialist party belies its name. It ceases to be a help and becomes a hindrance to the revolutionary workers' cause in its own country. And its sympathy for other revolutionaries isn't worth much either." (p. 37 - 38, 'First Ten Years of American Communism'). Romantic self-abnegation before a fetish is a bad service to the International that must be built.

WF, with its tiny forces, cannot build the full FI (organisationally and politically). It could conceivably build or make a serious contribution to the building of a revolutionary party in Britain. The ultimate responsibility for our role in this, and to the international working class for the development of communism in Britain, is ours. We cannot abdicate it, and we must approach the problem of international organisation in the light of it.

Our primary immediate task is the one we can actually apply ourselves to now, that is to build a revolutionary communist organisation within the British working class. A major element of our assessment of the USFI must be what its discipline and WF's amalgamation with the IMG would mean for that work. It is sham internationalism that does not fight for the international communist programme, and use the international communist experience on its own home ground. It is toy internationalism which subordinates doing that to cheering on revolutions and revolutionary movements in other parts of the globe (which we should do also), or which fetishises the bare bones of an international organisation in the way the CP used to fetishise the "great Socialist Fatherland".

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But is not this, in essence, nationalism decked out in empty pseudo-internationalist phrases, or at best the platonic 'internationalism' of the centrists: "having proclaimed the necessity of the Fourth International, (the centrist) will work for the building of a Two and a half international" (Trotsky: Centrism and the Fourth International) ? If the centrist "...does not understand that in the present epoch a national revolutionary party can be built only as part of an international party" (ibid) is not our attitude a centrist attitude ?

For two reasons, the answer is NO. Trotsky addressed himself on such occasions to the programmatic basis of the FI, and to organisational affiliation only as a product of this. He addressed himself to groups which

stopped short of the programme, or had another programme, or did not understand the need for the FI, that is, for reconstructing the Communist International on the blueprint of 1919. We base ourselves on the internationalist programme; we proclaim the need for the FI. Beyond that it becomes a matter of answering responsibly a series of concrete questions: the state of the FI groupings to which we must relate; the state of the major (USFI) segment; the state of its British section - and the relationship of that British section to the work we have done and do in our struggle for the communist internationalist programme in the working class movement, a struggle without which international organisations become ritual incantations and internationalism a private attitude - and a political irrelevance. "A revolutionary organisation does not mean a paper and its readers. One can write and read revolutionary articles day in and day out and still remain in reality outside of the revolutionary movement. One can give the labour organisations good advice - from the sidelines. That is something. But that still does not make a revolutionary organisation It is the task of the revolutionary party to weld together the correct ideas with the mass labour movement. Only in this manner can an idea become a driving force." (our emphasis: p. 33, Trotsky writings 1934/35).

Responsible determination to do what it is within our power to do for the programme of communism in the British labour movement demands that we reject the discipline of the USFI whose political and organisational reality we have examined. The local struggle is not higher than the international - it is merely that which is possible to us given the state of the FI. Internationalism does not 'absolve' internationalists of responsibility for assessment of different spheres, different countries. The pursuit of internationalism and an international organisation can become pernicious, can act against the revolutionary essence of communist internationalism if it is destructively counterposed to the struggle in one's own arena, or becomes a 'compensation' for defeats and inadequacies within that arena. If subordination to the IMG and all it stands for in the British labour movement is the practical implication of WF's becoming part of an International now - then international organisation is destructively counterposed to the struggle where we do have forces. We must recognise that fact.

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Capitalism has drawn the world together politically, in the wake of its economic intermeshing. But still the class struggle is within national arenas, or groups of nation states - to begin with. Polemicising against the theory of Socialism in one Country, Trotsky outlined the relationship of the socialist revolution on the international and the national arenas thus: "... The Marxist doctrine ... posits that the socialist revolution can begin only on a national basis, while the building of socialism in one country is impossible" (p. 21, Third International after Lenin). (our emphasis)

It is this which gives ground for belief that revolutionary practice by a nationally limited group is possible in a national arena, on the basis of the international communist programme. While it could be greatly aided and even transformed by integration into a genuine communist International, that link is not a logical necessity. Nor in any case should communists ever pretend that the situation regarding communist internationalism organisationally, or for that matter programmatically, is other than it is. The party which led the Russian Revolution was part of no International in 1917 - nor did it allow its internationalist programme and its struggle for a communist

international to lead it into fantasies concerning the organisational situation of an international, or a reactionary surrender of its responsibilities in its own arena of struggle. For laying solid organisational foundations for the 3rd International the crucial initial battle was one fought out in the arena of a single state - Czarist Russia. (Though the programme of the Bolsheviks was not drawn only from Czarist Russia). For Lenin, rebuilding the proletarian International, like building the Bolshevik party, and making the Russian Revolution, was a matter of finding at each moment, at each stage, the concrete link in the chain - not abstract proclamations of intention or pious recognition of 'necessities', historical or other. Our task too is to find the concrete links of revolutionary practice and judge every existing organisation from this point of view.

The extremely sharp language of the 1938 Congress of the Fourth International regarding the 'reactionary' character of the Workers International League did not prevent the WIL of 1938 from becoming the major force, the most healthy force of British Trotskyism then and for the following decade. Organizational formalities in themselves were not the decisive criteria even in 1938. Peddlers of "the International" as a panacea to which, once it exists even in a shadowy and programmatically undernourished form, all judgment, initiative and responsibility must be surrendered, should recall the Chinese experience of 1927. It was international instructions carried through too loyally, against their own judgment, that derailed the Chinese revolution and led to its defeat.

Today the USFI as an organisation is a tertiary consideration, absolutely secondary to the question of the programme and how the communist internationalist programme is to be fought for. These truths must be proclaimed bluntly and even brutally in Britain today. They are the necessary antidotes to the pernicious organisational fetishism of groups like the IMG and the SLL (whose 'fetish' is largely a projection of its leaders' imaginations), and the romantic 'internationalism' that goes with it. The USFI today cannot claim to be the 'general staff' of the revolution - or in any case cannot vindicate such a claim. We look at the freaks and mutilations hobbling along the road behind us (the RSL, the SLL, and even the RCL) and recognise that these are the children and stepchildren of the Fourth International. We remember it when we are told that unless we accept the International's democratic centralist discipline and the discipline of the IMG, we will degenerate. The USFI leadership has only the authority of its persuasiveness, its record, and its known abilities. The truth is that its advice on any subject can for us only have the weight of advice from overseas comrades, and, on their record, not an especially heavy weight. Why, therefore, given also the 'actuality' of the IMG, should we place ourselves in a relationship to them where their discipline would have the character of instructions (such as their attempted dictat of 14 months ago) ? Because of the mystification regarding the FI in Britain and the consequent loss of sight of the concrete questions of political authority and responsibility, this too must be said brutally.

How do we dare, as internationalists, to assert that we must start from Britain ? Because we start programmatically and conceive of communist internationalism as programmatic internationalism, to be grounded in practical activity. For Marxists the tasks are concrete; that which the whole conditions is the parts, the local; thus we judge its effects on the struggle to build a revolutionary group on Leninist principles. The existing situation in the ostensible Trotskyist left in Britain demands that we forego dreams and

fantasies and wish fulfillment. No adequate revolutionary party exists in Britain. Of the existing groups the USFI's British section is by no means the best in the struggle for the communist programme within the working class; and separate, apart from that struggle, any organisation, no matter how international it may be, has no meaning for us, or for the working class.

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WF's turn toward the USFI, despite all the USFI's opportunist faults, has meant for WF fundamentally an ideological break with the "anti-Pabloites" and all they stand for. As such it was progressive, and as such it has been defended at a number of Aggregates. It would be disastrous to change the substance of it now.

Our rejection of USFI organisational discipline is both an expression of profound unease about its political history and much of its current politics, and also of the peculiar situation we face in Britain, given the nature, history, role and likely future of the IMG, which is closer to Bordigism than Trotskyism. We neither lie about the USFI nor say it doesn't exist, merely because we differ with it. (Though we insist that what exists is not what it pretends to be, nor can it have the rights and powers it lays claim to). We do not look towards it as a source of salvation for British based revolutionaries; nor, above all, do we treat the tasks of revolutionaries in Britain with contempt, by throwing off responsibilities which are ours and for which we will be answerable to the revolutionary working class militants of the future, onto a small body of people whose history (and current theory and practice) gives no grounds for such implicit organisational/political confidence - because collectively they wear the badge of the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky.

For us the Fourth International is the banner and the programme under which we fight. Its surviving organisational reality, with all its glaring inadequacies, is not a fetish on whose altar we will gratefully lay down our responsibilities.

WF, emerged from the SLL and RSL, groups irrationally hostile to the USFI and incapable of educating their members in the real history of the FI. We arrived at the position of recognising the USFI as the most healthy segment and indeed the mainstream of the Fourth International, slowly, empirically; and reluctantly, given its record in Britain and the existence of the IMG. The understanding that the real dividing lineⁱⁿ the history of the post-war Fourth International was in the discussion pre-1951, and not 1953, which we gained in the confrontation with the state capitalists, decided us to declare critical support for the USFI, despite our differences and criticisms. It was a decision based on our fundamental agreement with the basic codifications of 1951, as opposed to the new class theories, but which left open the question of organisational affiliation. It was a decision which treated WF's own record of orientation to the working class, and within that orientation to rank and file activity (and, therefore, of conflict with the British section of the USFI) as only of secondary importance for the issues then posed. For WF as an independent organisation this can no longer be left open. To answer the question of orientation and practical activity otherwise than with a refusal to subordinate to the USFI, would be political irresponsibility.

In addition the bare understanding of the significance of 1951, and of the USFI strand emerging from 1951 as being its politically most serious outcome, was far from an adequate appreciation of what a communist programme is.

Trotsky wrote: "The importance of a programme does not lie so much in the manner in which it formulates general theoretical conceptions (in the last analysis, this boils down to a question of 'codification', ie, a concise exposition of the truths and generalisations which have been firmly and decisively acquired); it is to a much greater degree a question of drawing up the balance of the world economic and political experience of the last period, particularly of the revolutionary struggles of the last five years - so rich in events and mistakes" (3rd International After Lenin, p. 3). Given the nature of the post-war political crisis, the codification of 1951, whatever criticism one makes of it, is fundamental. But it is not enough. To understand that it is not enough is to understand the inadequacy of WF's conclusions on the Fourth International in 1969. The other questions posed have not been answered adequately by the USFI. The incontestable inadequacies of the present, and the past, British sections, as well as the divisions which now rend the USFI, as on Vietnam - cannot be understood apart from this question.

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WF will build a Fourth Internationalist group within the working class. We will defend the fundamental programmatic positions of the Fourth International against the Bordigist IMG as against its other enemies. We will recruit and educate in the real traditions of Lenin and Trotsky and we will build a democratic centralist organisation of active proletarian militants, not an intellectualist discussion club, which is what the IMG is.

That which we proposed to IS regarding the USFI, we will ourselves take up: the establishment of contact, collaboration and dialogue where possible. This will, of course, depend on an end by the USFI and its local section of any pretence that it has organisational jurisdiction over WF, or ever can have unless we decide so. Simultaneously we must not limit our international contacts to the USFI, and should aim for closer relations with Lutte Ouvriere, 'Spark', and other organisations, excepting only the hardened organisations of the ICs, which represent the pathological strand in post-1951 'Trotskyism'. From the FI discussion, having decided on organisational conclusions, WF must map out a whole programme of theoretical research and self-education, covering a whole period. The USFI's political contribution, which, despite all its inadequacies, incompleteness, and mistakes, has been the most serious, cannot but be one of our major starting points.

WORKERS' FIGHT NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING. 3 December 72.

Present: SM, RR, MT, RM, PS, SC, KS, PL, DS, plus ND, TD, J?, HC, TB, ST, JS, MK, OD (non-member). Absent: JW (wife in hospital), TC (not present instead), AH (morning only - at Indochina Solidarity Conference).

Minutes of last meeting - detailed notes had been lost by cde responsible. Meeting approved rough minutes made from memory.

Discussion on Fourth International.

SM introduced. Why are we interested in the International? Because it is impossible to be a 'national' revolutionary in the modern period.

The high point reached by Marxism was the CI from 1919-23. The FI did not develop its own independent theory, it basically rested on the programme of the CI supplemented by a number of analyses, eg of Stalinism.

The start of the Trotskyist movement dates from 1923/4 - opposition to bureaucratism in the Russian CP, to theory of socialism in one country, to the bureaucracy's economic policy. Later, issues of Britain (Anglo-Russian Committee) and China. In the '20s, the Trotskyists were essentially a Russian national grouping.

In 1929 there was a three-way split among the Russian Trotskyists. People like Pyatakov and Preobrazhensky went over to Stalin after his turn in economic policy, other people went state capitalist, while Trotsky maintained definition of USSR as workers' state while insisting in relation to Stalin's economic policies that it wasn't just a question of what was done, but of who did it.

1929-33 - initial formation of Trotskyism as an international tendency.

1930 - first international conference of Left Opposition. Basic question was whether Trotskyists should be a faction of the CI or not. Trotsky argued for position as a faction, on grounds that (1) the CI was a mass revolutionary workers' vanguard, grouped round the banner of the October revolution, and it was impossible to go to the masses over the head of this vanguard; (2) to write the CI off as dead was to write off the prospects of revolution in the near future, since an alternative leadership would take time to build.

After Hitler came to power, the Trotskyists called for a new German CP and then for a new International. At this stage, they only called for the new International, they didn't declare it. The perspective was one of declaring a new International when Trotskyism had gained some sort of substantial mass base. The US and Belgian sections were gaining some sort of minimal base in the class, but all the other sections were petty bourgeois in composition and totally isolated.

But by 1936 Trotsky called on the FIst movement to declare the FI, and in 1938 FI actually was declared. A serious change in perspective was involved - we can't suppose that Trotsky was unaware of the effect of the serious class defeats - his aim can no longer have been an immediate mass International.

In 1938 there were 10 groupings in the FI. The most important was the SWP (800 to 1000 members). The Belgian grouping had some base, but all the other groups were insignificant. Soon the SWP split almost 50/50 (Burnham/Schachtman), almost all the Belgian leadership renegaded during World War 2 and the section had to be rebuilt round Leon and Mandel, the French movement almost collapsed.... The structure of the FI broke down completely during the war.

In 1943-48 new problems arose, and all the real issues which vex us today were posed. In this period, the fact that the FI's Marxism was basically inherited, a defence of the CI's Marxism, became a weakness.

Trotskyists expected a mass working class upsurge. It came - in Italy, France, etc - but was kept under CP control. The USSR bureaucracy was thought likely to fall - but it proved much more solid. Stalinist expansion, the economic assimilation of E. Europe, the Yugoslav revolution and the Chinese revolution, also posed problems. These events, together with big upsurges in the colonies, passed by, and the Trotskyists were still small and isolated.

The problem of the nature of Stalinism was raised. The 1948 Second World Congress showed a very different approach from later. It talked about defining

ing "what was left" in Russia, described the situation in E. Europe as state capitalist* and reactionary, advised Trotskyists in E. Europe to join the Social Democratic parties to fight against the Stalinists. There was a clear state capitalist logic to the ideas. (The Healyites sometimes echo the ideas of 1948). The 1948 Congress said that the theory of Permanent Revolution had been substantiated negatively in Vietnam, and even described the struggle as led by the bourgeoisie. None of the later mealy-mouthedness about the murder of the Vietnamese Trotskyists.

But soon after the Congress the Yugoslav CP broke with Moscow, and in 1948-50 moved importantly to the left. This forced a reassessment by the FI, and a decision that Yugoslavia was a workers' state. In 1948 to late 1949 there was an intense (but non-factional) discussion in the FI, in which three essential views were represented:

- 1) Haston and Grant argued early on that E. European countries were workers' states. They tended to identify nationalisation with a workers' state.
- 2) Mandel held that the E. European countries were state capitalist.*
- 3) Pablo held that the E. European countries were workers' states, but stressed the (limited) mobilisation of the masses and the smashing of the bourgeoisie as important criteria.

By 1951 Pablo's views were almost universally accepted. But meanwhile the SWP (which had gone up to 3000 or 4000 members immediately postwar) was losing membership rapidly (it went down to 100 - 150 in the late '50s), and the European sections were more and more isolated with the left turn of the CPs.

The 1951 Third World Congress was really the founding conference of the FI as we know it today. There was unanimity on the main questions except for the French majority (today's OCI), and even they agreed on the analysis and only differed on the tactical conclusions.

But now we begin to hear of 'Pabloism' (the term being originally coined by the state-capitalist Johnson tendency in the SWP). In early 1952 the International Executive Committee proposed the tactic of entrism sui generis. The immediate post-war perspective of mass Trotskyist parties was abandoned and there was a turn to deep entry work. This may have been a wrong tactic, it may have reflected tendencies to vulgar evolutionism in the FI's thinking, but it was not an abandonment of the building of independent revolutionary parties. The IEC instructions even called for the retaining of independent groups alongside entrism sections, though this didn't always happen. Everyone at the time expected world war III, and it was quite reasonable to expect that there would be mass pressure on the CPs. The FI did not say that the CPs would be forced into revolution.

In fact, entrism sui generis had already been practised since 1948 by Healy. But in 1952 the IEC proposal led to the split of the majority of the French section, who opposed entry to the French CP while the International Secretariat insisted, and eventually expelled them. The French majority's opposition was largely based on an orientation to the ' easier' Socialist Party and Force Ouvriere (even though the SP had largely lost its proletarian base in the 1940s).

In 1952 the first draft of Pablo's "Rise and Decline of Stalinism" was circulated. It specifically did not call for the overthrow of Tito or Mao. Its ideas alarmed the SWP. Meanwhile the Cochran-Clarke tendency had developed in the SWP, a coalition of conservatismised trade unionists who wanted out and people arguing for an orientation to the American Stalinist party (at the time totally isolated and discredited). This tendency fought for the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism" document, and was to split in 1953. Its impact forced the SWP majority into a dogmatic fundamentalist position on Stalinism. Meanwhile the British section (Healy group) had also split, with Lawrence's group entering the CP as the official British section.

So in 1953 the SWP issued its Open Letter to the world Trotskyist movement, declaring a split from Pablo, and stating that the FI had not called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from E. Europe in 1953.

* The theories of 'state capitalism' involved were quite different from Cliff

This led to the "International Committee" regroupment, a curious alliance of the Healy group (the pioneers of entrism sui generis, a group which for a considerable period did not have their own paper and instead pushed Tribune), the Lambert group (which had broken with the FI on the issue of entrism sui generis) and the SWP (which had, right up to the split, described the Lambert group as the right wing of the French section).

Pablo's documents on the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism" and later on the "Decline and Fall of Stalinism" rested on three postulates. (1) Stalinism = the regime of Stalin; (2) Stalinism was a peculiar Russian phenomenon; (3) Stalinism was caused by the isolation of the USSR. Thus the sort of tidal wave of socialism which Pablo saw as coming in the post-war period had swept away the objective bases of Stalinism. So Stalinist expansion was in fact not Stalinist expansion at all, but Stalinist disintegration! This view was totally metaphysical, abstracted Stalinism entirely from its social base. Thus the FI said Mao was not a Stalinist, and up to 1967 did not call for political revolution in China. In 1965 Pablo started to argue that Mao was Stalinist, but Mandel argues to this day that he is not.

The ICFI never really existed as an international tendency. In fact, the Healy group in this period was a totally social-democratic tendency.

In 1954 the Fourth World Congress was held. The British (Lawrence), French (Mestre), and US (Clark-Cochran) minorities, which had been supported by Pablo, turned up and proposed the dissolution of the FI, then walked out. This did at least mean that the genuine 'capitulators to Stalinism' had been purged from the FI.

Also in 1954 the Algerian war broke out. It was started by a 'right-wing' split of the Algerian nationalist movement (of the Provos in Ireland). The FI supported those fighting, and thus lived up to the basic principles of communism. The ICFI groups, led by the French group, (and also I.S.) supported the 'left-wing' MNA, even after it was quite obvious that the MNA was reactionary. The FI stands entirely vindicated on its stand on the Algerian war.

From 1955 the LSSP of Ceylon was definitely involved in parliamentary deals with the bourgeois SLFP. One of the most disturbing things about the FI is that the LSSP, effectively a mass social-democratic party, was the pride of the FI for many years. Meanwhile Healy belabours the FI over the "Great Betrayal" of 1964 - but the LSSP had been one of the sections opposed to Pablo's theses on Stalinism, and Healy had courted it for many years even while it was totally social-democratic.

The Hungarian revolution created mass ferment in many CPs, and vindicated Pablo's prediction that layers of the bureaucracy would come out in support of the workers.

Over the Cuban revolution of 1959/60, the ICFI split, with the SWP majority (as well as the FI) stating that Cuba was a workers' state, while the OCI (Lambert tendency) and the Healy group (SLL) said it was still bourgeois. The OCI/SLL arguments, coupled with their acceptance of the deformed workers' state characterisation of China, actually rest on a glorification and fetishisation of Stalinism, supposedly capable of creating deformed workers' states while ^{other} non-proletarian leaderships cannot.

In 1960, Pablo and the Dutch Trotskyist leader Santen were arrested for aiding the Algerian revolution. The 1961 World Congress took place without Pablo, and was a piddling Congress. Previously Pablo had used an alliance, with Posadas to dominate the FI, but with Pablo in jail there was a split, Posadas advocated total concentration by the FI on orientation to the colonial revolution, and caricatured Pablo's vulgar evolutionist tendencies to the point of lunacy. There was a great tidal wave of socialism and every colonial struggle would lead to socialism. Posadas ended up advocating world war III. He split in 1962, and initially had a solid base in Argentina, which is now dissipated.

In 1963 there was a reunification Congress of the FI and the SWP. The document of this Congress, 'Dynamics of World Revolution Today' was very

inadequate, or rather was an adequate expression of the muddle of the FI's ideas. Just one example - the document states that China, Cuba, Vietnam etc "confirm Permanent Revolution to the hilt" "To the hilt" ? This is crazy, a totally stunted conception of socialism, a nadir for the FI.

From 1963, the reorganised IC (OCI and SLL) launched a virulent attack on the FI, with a totally incoherent reiteration of dogmas, coupled with mystical bombast about "developing theory". They use lies, a myth of Pablo as the evil ghost in the machine of the FI, and a total Eurocentrism, a concept of class struggle as only really existing in a classical, straight-up form of workers vs. bosses, which is quite inconsistent with their position on China being a deformed workers' state.

But it is necessary to recognise that in the USFI the unresolved ideas of the Third World Congress have led to an internal instability and uncertainty, an internal collapse of the ideas of Trotskyism. Examples are the IMG/ Ligue Communiste position on the recent Vietnam peace proposals, reflecting a totally speculative confidence in the PRG, their equally speculative, passive confidence in Ben Bella in Algeria. Deep entry led to serious deviations, for example the virtually left-reformist position advocated under the name of 'structural reforms' by Mandel in his "Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory" pamphlet. There was serious adaptation, though it is important to note that the FI has been able to swing left since.

The 8th World Congress of 1965 was not notable, but the 1969 Congress marked a turn away from deep entry to "primitive cadre accumulation". "Primitive cadre accumulation" is not in principle ridiculous, but in practice it has meant a turn away from the working class and ultra-leftism. Eg IMG. There has, however, been large scale growth of the FI.

However, today's FI is quite clearly federalist. The SWP is clearly opposed/the majority, but has protege groups in South America, India, and Ireland. The situation in Ceylon is still disturbing. The Spartacists, who are usually truthful, have published what purport to be minutes of the 9th World Congress of the FI reporting on an inquiry on the LSSP(R). Both minority and majority reports say that the LSSP(R) is falling short of revolutionary politics and tends to be an appendage of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, of which its general secretary, Bala Tampoe, is also gen. sec., and many of its 50 members are officials. The minority report proposes that the LSSP(R) should be disaffiliated from the FI, the majority that Bala Tampoe's dual role should be ended. But Bala Tampoe still fills his dual role.

WF needs to be much more critical of the FI than we have been, but we must make no concessions to the ICite "anti-Pabloites".

FI and Britain: the FI's role has been throughout utterly pernicious and disruptive. In 1938, the RSL, a hastily patched together ^{coalition} of some five groups was recognised as the British section while the WIL was condemned as a "nationalist deviation, in essence reactionary". During the war the RSL mouldered in sectarian stagnation, while the WIL grew to 300/400 members (from 12 in 1938). The WIL and RSL merged in 1944 to form the RCP, which continued to grow up to the beginning of the cold war. G. Healy soon developed a perspective of Labour Party entry on the grounds that war and revolutionary crisis was soon coming, and there would be no time to build a revolutionary leadership outside the LP. His perspective was rejected by the RCP, but supported by the FI. In 1948 Healy's (small) minority split to join the LP, and for a time there were two FI sections in Britain. In 1949 the RCP collapsed into the LP. Healy was still in small minority, but the FI insisted that he should have a majority in the leadership of the now-reunited group. Internal SLL-type terror and expulsions followed, giving rise to the Cliff and Grant groups. Soon Lawrence's CP entry group was made the official section, and after that disintegrated there was no official section.

After 1956, the biggest break in any European CP was in the British CP. The SLL made big gains, but the FI had no section. So Pablo sought out Grant, who had been expelled from the FI in 1950-51 as a right-wing bum, and offered him the franchise. The RSL was never really a section, and was finally expelled from the FI in 1965.

The present IMG began to organise separately from the RSL around 1961. The FI has acted as a cover from the IMG, the romantic appeal of the FI covering over the IMG's stupidities.

FI and WF: A) There are many unresolved problems, on which we need a serious programme of theoretical work. B) We must not capitulate to romantic internationalism, sacrificing our possibilities of real revolutionary work to some abstractions about the FI. C) However, WF's move to critical support of the FI was the major political breakthrough for the group. It enabled us to free ourselves from the myths of the "anti-Pabloites".

KS read out the section of his ^{factional} document dealing with the FI.* KS's disagreements with SM not on level of disagreement over this or that fact. Overall, SM's account a rationalisation of the history of the Pabloite tendency.

The FI was destroyed by the spread of revisionism from the centre of the International. This revisionism, adaptation to Stalinism, penetrated every section of the Trotskyist movement. The FI does not exist, but the work of the ICPI is a basis for rebuilding the FI.

The crucial struggle is the crisis of leadership, the struggle of the FI against the Stalinists and Social Democrats. The crisis of leadership can be solved only internationally, and on the basis of the leading role of the proletariat.

Since 1933 no Stalinist has been revolutionary. The Stalinists are our mortal enemies.

The 1938 FI was democratic centralist, and continued as such through the war and to 1945, though in 1945 the leadership was Pablo, a functionary, and Germain, a young intellectual.

The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International is the summation of the already accumulated experience of the Leninist movement. It can only be understood in the battle to use it. To fail to use ^{it} indicates the wrong method. The TPI itself cannot be revised without changing the method on which it was founded. It is based on reality, and cannot be negated or refuted by ideas. There is not a single idea of Marxism which is outside the struggle for power.

The post-war boom indicates no revival of capitalism. The statement "mankind's productive forces stagnate" cannot be understood statically. New techniques applied since the war are only form, the content, the way they have been applied, is totally anti-social. Booms & slumps are surface phenomena.

Trotsky never said power could be seized ^{only} under the banner of the FI. But there are revolutions and revolutions. The proletariat can fight for its interests only under the banner of the FI.

We can't sacrifice this or that demand from the TPI without negating the basis of the whole. Unity with reformists or stalinists can only be practised as a tactic. There is no excuse for WF's fusion with IS. The only possible party for entry work in Britain is the Labour Party.

France 1968 was part of a struggle which never stops - the struggle over who controls state power. There are no longer any purely economic struggles. Every struggle leads to the question of power. There is no excuse for debates over whether we are not too small to lead the class. Disaster and defeat is the only alternative if we do not lead.

In 1946 the FI had a perspective of immediate economic crisis and the world centre of revolution being in the advanced capitalist countries. This perspective was correct. But the CBs sold out the struggle. In 1948 there were no significant changes in perspective, but in 1948-51 drastic revisions were put out by Pablo - the Stalinists would be forced to take power, 3rd world war was certain, and there was no time to build the FI. Today the politics of the USFI are a combination of contemplation and adventurism.

The majority of the French PCI opposed the liquidationism of Pablo. Although deep entry into a Social Democratic party can be practised without *The minutes here are fairly sketchy, since KS's document will be out soon

liquidationism, deep entry into a Stalinist party cannot. But for Pablo all the FI could do is act as an observer, recognising it could not act independently.

Pablo's 1951 document "Where are We Going?" is impressionistic and counter to the TPFI. It calls Stalinism "roughly revolutionary". We must remember that the Trotskyist party of Vietnam, smashed by the Stalinists, was a mass party, at the head of the proletariat in that country.

E. Europe, Chinese, and Vietnamese revolutions are in no way comparable with October. But the FI has not learned the lesson of the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism from Vietnam, Hungary etc. The Chinese Communist Party is and was Stalinist.

Capitalism forces the proletariat to struggle. The content of this struggle is the drive to overthrow capitalism, its form is support of the trade union struggle and the traditional parties of the working class.

Discussion:

MP put three questions to KS :

- 1) KS says he supports the OCI's OCREFI, but does he support the OCI's line that the United Front is a strategy. OCI's line leads to blatant rightist practice. Eg in the presidential elections of 1969, the OCI called for a united CP-SP candidate against Krivine. The CP said that a common programme would be necessary for a united candidate. But the OCI said "never mind about the programme" - to quote, "in the precise circumstances, the development of the programme of a government of the united workers' organisations flowed from this candidature. The working class, in struggling for the defeat of the candidates of the bourgeoisie, would have charged the united candidacy of the workers' organisations with a class content..."
- 2) KS supports the OCI's view that big (anti-social) arms expenditure since world war II means that in fact the forces of production have not grown. But this is mystical moralism, which works only by glibly redefining terms. Makes nonsense of any attempt at scientific Marxism.
- 3) KS says the trade unions and the traditional workers' parties express the will of the working class to take power. This organic conception is taken by the OCI to the point of denial of the Leninist theory of the party, stating that (to quote) "Proletarian class consciousness is not carried to the proletariat "from outside", it proceeds from the development of the whole class struggle". etc etc.

and three questions to SM:

- 1) SM's criticism of Pablo's theses on Stalinism perhaps not justified. Pablo pointed quite accurately at numerous tendencies to disintegration in Stalinism. And the Chinese revolution (for example) must have been conscious on some level on Mao's part. It seems to lead to a more useful analysis of the Chinese revolution if we analyse the specific ways in which the CCP had relative independence of the Kremlin bureaucracy, rather than relying in our analysis (as does the SWP) on a mystical 'tidal wave' of 'mass pressure'.
- 2) In the FI's documents, we find the word 'revolution' used in a peculiar fashion. It doesn't refer to an event, but to a historical subject, which "advances", "exerts pressure" on this or that, etc. Thus the subject of history is located in a hypostatized abstraction, which detracts from the recognition of the working class as subjective factor.

Moreover, the concept of 'dual power' which the FI use to describe the situation in E. Europe between 1944 and 1949 is very strange. How is there dual power when the proletariat is generally subdued and brutally suppressed? Seems to be just an attempt to fit events in E. Europe into a traditionalist mould.

- 3) One aspect of the FI's politics that needs investigating is its view of party and class. The FI documents operate in terms of a simple polarity of 'vanguard' and 'masses'. 'Vanguard' is systematically ambiguous, often used to denote what the CP call "the broad left", thus allows the FI to follow opportunist, adaptationist relation to left-reformist and contrist currents.

PS KS is ambiguous for a start in saying that the FI doesn't exist, and also that the ICFI has laid a basis for reconstruction.

He says that the crucial question is method. But the ICFI was a totally unprincipled alliance of three national groups with radical differences. The talk about method is pure bombast.

If booms and slumps are 'surface phenomena', this makes a nonsense of any attempt at a scientific appreciation of reality.

Have the productive forces been declining? If they have really (not just in mysticism) then the chief productive force, the working class, has also been declining, there has been massive unemployment, starvation etc. Has this happened?

Every struggle of the working class raises the question of power? This statement totally ignores the specific dynamics of specific struggles.

The FI never said that the CPs would be forced to take power. KS is making an amalgam between the FI and Cochran. But one can always take strands from a body of thought, blow them up, and use them to discredit the main body of ideas.

It is true that the CPs were sometimes forced to side with the colonial revolution against imperialism.

AH KS's position is sectarian - but not the classic "abstract propagandist and passivity" Bordigist sectarianism. It is sectarian in the sense of imposing dogmatic schemas on the real movement of the class struggle, but it leads not, or not only, to isolated passivity, but to sluggish adaptationism. It is similar to the sectarianism of the SLL (adaptation = the 'general strike for a general election', 'Labour to power with socialist policies' lines) and of the RSL. It is marked by a totally fetishistic attitude to the traditional organisations of the labour movement.

This sectarianism is exemplified by KS's rightist, semi-racialist position on the Middle East (ie, the Israeli working class is the main force for socialism). Because of the closer conformity of the Israeli working class to certain traditional schemas of proletarian organisation (trade unionisation, etc), they are elevated above the Arab masses.

The OCI's approach on the development of consciousness (as quoted by MF) is an example of sluggish adaptationism, a regression to Second Internationalist thought or worse.

KS talks about "the conquest of the masses" - Pablo had a similar perspective. With Pablo, there was conjunctural misestimation; but in any case the "conquest of the masses" formulation could only lead to voluntarism or adaptationism. It is quite clearly contrary to WF's formulations on Fusion of Education and Organisation - and, as can be seen when KS has been persuaded to state his position in the London branch, KS also opposes Fusion of Ed. and Org.

KS It is not true that saying that the Labour Party reflects the will of the working class to take power leads to Pablistism. KS stresses the question of the revolutionary party, while Pablo played it down.

It is true historically that Marxism comes to the working class from outside, in the sense that Marx and Engels were not workers, but since that time it is not true. The OCI is right, the question of "consciousness from outside" is metaphysical. Marxism can only develop in the struggles of the working class. KS now wishes to withdraw some of the statements in his IB article on Rank and File papers, since they reflect the wrong "consciousness from outside" idea.

KS is opposed to the slogan of General Strike, so AH is wrong to try to make an amalgam of KS and the SLL.

PS is right to say that the 1953 IC break was empirical. But the content of the break was to defend the programme and the organisations of Trotskyism.

SM Unfortunately KS's contribution has de-centred the discussion.

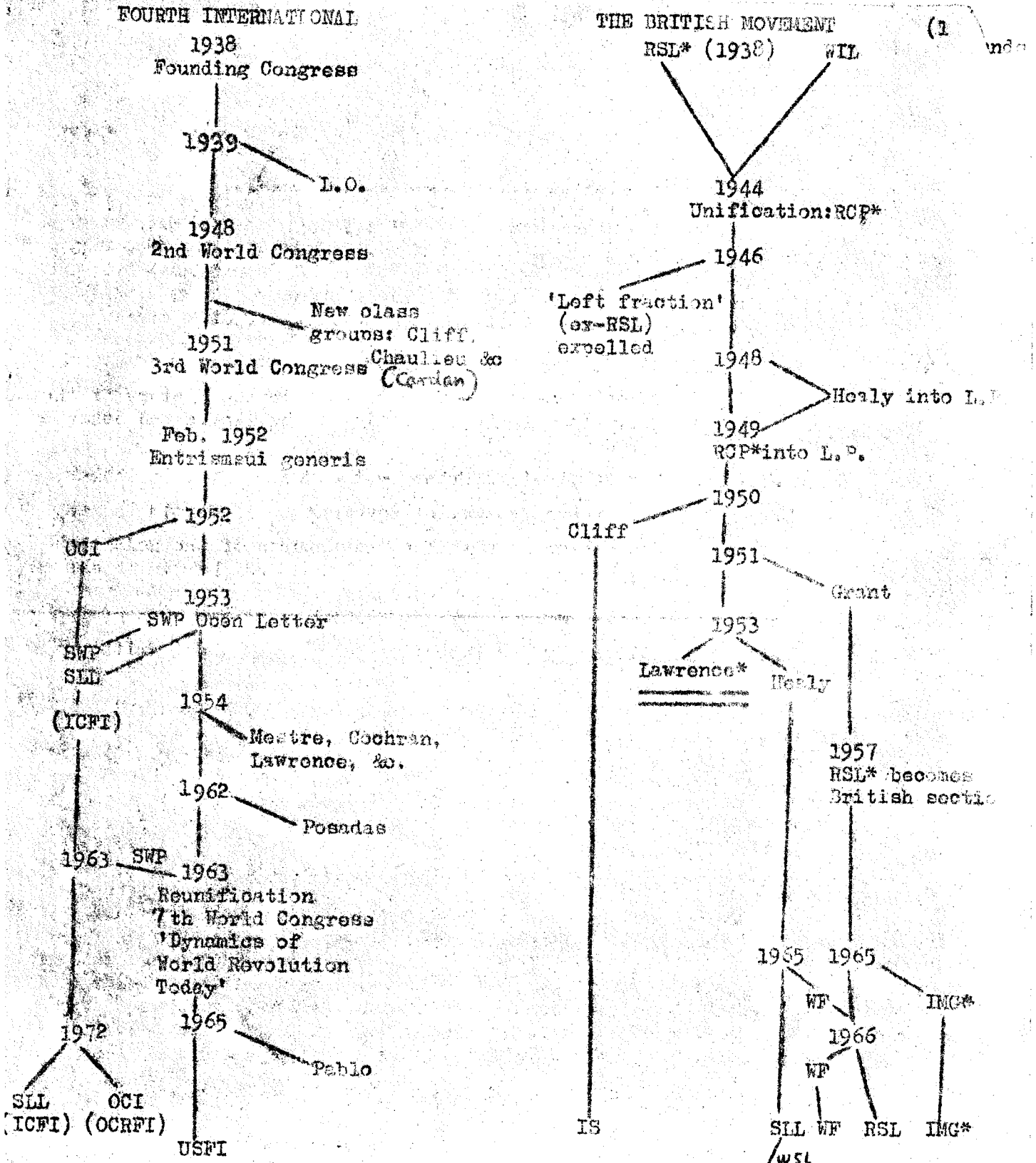
KS fetishises the Transitional Programme, and condemns any talk of "progressive trends in Stalinism". But look at what the T.P. says about the "faction of Butenko" (proto-fascist) and "faction of Reiss" (proto-Bolshevik) in the bureau-

KS says the T.P. is based on codified experience - yes, but experience up to 1938 only!

In KS's world view, China, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, &c can feature only as petty marginal details. Logic of this idea is state capitalism or bureaucratic collectivism.

On MT's contribution - The Chinese and Yugoslav CPs did have a degree of independence of the Kremlin, but the point is that they maintained the ideology and procedures of Stalinism.

MT is right on "the revolution" - the USFI uses the term teleologically, to describe a whole process starting in 1917 and sweeping ever onwards.



WORKERS FIGHT and the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

INTRODUCTION

On Saturday and Sunday, January 23-29, WORKERS FIGHT held a special conference. Its purpose was to consider the group's position on the Fourth International.

It had been prepared for over a long period by schools, meetings, and discussions which involved all the members of the group. The conference UNANIMOUSLY decided to reiterate the POLITICAL ESSENCE of our declaration of 'critical support' for the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, but to eliminate the organisational ambiguities of that formula by redefining our activity and attitude as a "fight to regenerate the Fourth International", recognising the USFI as the Trotskyist mainstream.

The unanimity with which the political substance of the attitude to the USFI (which we adopted in 1969) was reiterated marked a major change, a clarification in the politics of the group: at every other conference since 1969 a major section of the group has opposed the majority position on the Fourth International.

Equally unanimous was the agreement on the need for a sharper definition of the inadequacies of the USFI, mainstream though it is - although no section of Workers Fight has ever denied its deficiencies or advocated other than CRITICAL support, or argued against the organisational independence necessary in Britain to stave off the warping and crippling effects of the degenerate form of Trotskyism which the USFI represents.

It was decided to publish a full account of our reasons for changing the formula, and our recognition of the need to maintain a separate organisational existence.

Why now, when the British working class is preoccupied with major struggles, spend so much of the group's time and resources on such a discussion? Because without reference to the struggle for an international working class party it is impossible to function as true revolutionaries in any one country.

COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALISM

Capitalism is a world-wide, intermeshing system, none of whose parts can be understood apart from the whole. Marxists see socialism as the withering away and elimination of all class contradictions, and also of the state that grows out of those contradictions, after the working class has taken power.

This is UNQUESTIONABLE except on a material level of relative abundance, which stimulates the primitive struggle for existence which has been the urgent concern and permanent regulator of human history so far. Socialism must TAKE OFF FROM the highest point of production reached by capitalism, on the basis of the resources, and division of labour, of the whole world.

Therefore any programme of socialism is either a world programme or it is STROPHILAK NOISESSE. The working class is either a world revolutionary class or it is INOCCENT. Revolutions in single countries, or continents, are only steps towards world revolution. Prolonged revolution amidst backwardness can lead to such mutations as Stalinism, combining elements of pro-capitalist society with some of the worst barbarisms of class society.

For this reason, socialists have tried to organise a world revolutionary party: The First International, 1864-72; the Second, 1889-1914; the Third (Communist) International, 1919-57; the Fourth, founded in 1978.

The basis of the Third and Fourth Internationals was the international Communist programme. This programme saw the struggle for workers' power as on the immediate agenda. It was based on the total internationalising of the world in all its parts: a programme for the building of a revolutionary party sufficient to the dimensions of the world revolution, that is, a WORLD BOLSHEVIK PARTY.

After the Russian Revolution, Lenin, Trotsky, and the Bolsheviks founded the new Communist International in a sharp break with the practices of the Second International.

It attempted to fuse the fronts of the class struggle - the general political struggle with the sectional industrial struggles, and both with the ideological struggle - into a strategy for working class power. For Leninism they substituted audacious revolutionary action to smash the capitalist state.

The sham internationalism of the Second International

meant IMPOSING the norms of the advanced countries on the 'backward'; its opposition to nationalism meant complicity in the national slavery of the colonies.

Communist internationalism passionately championed the national rights and interests of the oppressed peoples of the world, distinguishing the nationalism of the oppressed peoples from the nationalism of the oppressors.

TROTSKYISM

The first four Congresses of the Communist International were a great communist renaissance, which codified experience and analysed reality.

The Fourth International was founded by Trotsky to defend the communist programme and rebuild the revolutionary International after the rise of Stalin's bureaucracy had led to the degeneration of the CI. It suffered cumulative defeats, but succeeded in one vital thing - it preserved the programme, the unaltered tradition and the banner of communism, in the implacable opposition to the counterfeit which Stalin's "Commintern" created through the mud and covered with the blood of honest revolutionaries.

THE CRISIS OF TROTSKYISM

After the second world war, the Trotskyists had to make a new analysis of the world, where vast changes had taken place. Capitalism was entering an expansionary boom. Forces other than those of Trotskyism carried through a major part of the programme of the Fourth International (in Eastern Europe and in China).

Beginning with the Yugoslav revolution in 1945, Trotskyism entered a period of crisis. Up to 1945 and with increasing doubt until the end of the decade, the Fourth International could regard itself as a movement based on a given Marxism which guided practice and interpreted reality in the present and clearly indicated alternatives for the future. The 'philosophers' had interpreted history and proletarian experience.

But from the mid-40s and after 1948 it became a matter of an increasingly desperate effort to catch up with events in reality which had not been expected, and, at first sight, appeared to CONFIRM the expectations and also to invalidate the connection between the programme and the proletariat as Marxists had understood it.

rent as such - this, in itself, could not be a major criterion. In Germany in the 1930s the movement's correctness AND THE PKP/AF had both been total. The crisis was provoked by the growth of forces outside it which, as in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, and later Cuba, carried through a major part of its programme.

The task was now to analyse the new events like the Stalinisation of Eastern Europe and the failure of revolution and to integrate the conclusions into a theory which, understanding the laws of motion of the real world, could function as a guide to action in that world, including the Stalinist states.

The general possibility of exceptional developments like those in Eastern Europe (structural destabilisation) and Yugoslavia (conquest of power by a non-Stalinist leadership) had been anticipated by Trotsky before world war II. But it was necessary to analyse how THESE UNUSUAL developments had taken place, and how Trotskyists were to relate to the forces carrying through these changes.

This was never adequately done. Analysts - we believe correct analysts - were misled leading to the designation of present-day Yugoslavia as a 'developed workers' state'. These analyses were outlined at the Third World Congress of 1951 and after, and form the foundation of all modern Trotskyism. But, as Trotsky explained in the following passage, codification, fundamental as it may be, is not all:

"The importance of a programme does not lie so much in the manner in which it formulates general theoretical conceptions (in the last analysis, this boils down to a question of 'codification', i.e. a concise exposition of the truths and generalisations which have been firmly and decisively acquired); it lies to a much greater degree a question of drawing up the balance of the world economic and political experience of the last period, particularly of the revolutionary struggles of the last five years - so rich in events and mistakes..."

Following the rise of Stalinism, Trotskyism has been dogged by a real contradiction. An essential part of its perspective, of its 'concept of the epoch', has been the exceptional position which the Comintern and its leadership occupy with respect to the WORLD MECHANISMS OF THE PRESENT HISTORICAL PERIOD (Trotsky, our emphasis). Yet the Trotskyists, the defenders of the revolutionary programme, have been isolated from the mass revolutionary forces.

size and the scope of its ambitions and aspirations, between what it wanted and believed needed doing and what it itself was able to do, rent the then Russian-based Trotskyist movement into three segments:

Those who saw only WHAT the industrialisation turn in Russia was doing and ignored how it was done and by whom it was done - Preobrazhensky, Ptatakov, and the administrators;

Those who placed themselves entirely on the semi-syndicalist grounds of the effect on the working class, that is concerning themselves exclusively with HOW and BY WHOM the new industrialisation turn was carried out, and what the effects on the lives and rights of the Russian people were - neglecting and dismissing WHAT was done - the State Capitalists;

And those, like Trotsky, who resisted the decomposition, the mutually repellent one-sidedness, ignoring neither 'WHAT', nor 'HOW', nor 'BY WHOM'. The pattern was a recurring one.

The conflict has generated constant pressures towards one-sided ideological developments. Some write off the 'exceptional position' of the revolutionary leadership in 'the mechanics of the epoch'. The perspectives and the concept of the epoch thus become an 'objective' schema with 'objective', moreover, understood in a vulgar economic-determinist sense. This leads to an 'evolutionism' which is entirely vulgar and non-Marxist. The role of leadership, and even of the working class itself, comes in as an external factor, motivated only by dogma.

Some place totally speculative hopes in the established mass organisations and their leaderships, or construct hopeful scenarios for the rapid ascent of Trotskyism to the leadership of those organisations. Such is the 'Trotskyist' who 'denies the sharp tasks of today in the name of dreams about soft tasks of the future... Theoretically, it means to fail to base oneself on the developments now going on in real life, to detach oneself from them in the name of dreams" (Lenin).

Some junk the 'global' side of the perspectives, the concept of the organic imminence of 'wars and revolutions', and dismiss the actual revolutions as marginal details. They retreat into subjectivism, reducing perspectives to the level of daily tasks. As their historic criterion, their yardstick by which to judge events and developments, they overemphasise the immediate effects on and involvement - or non-involvement - of the working class, brushing aside the titanic 'objective' - economic, social - effects of these events in our epoch.

The developments between 1929 and the still-continuing post-war crisis of Trotskyism have been of that character, and have reproduced those trends

NEW CLASS TENDENCIES

The fundamental dividing line in the Trotskyist movement post-war is that between the 'new class' tendencies and those inherited from the 1931 're-founding'. This dividing line was developed from the attempt to come to an understanding of the new phenomena at a fundamental level.

But the 'new class' tendencies represented a complete break with Marxism. The 'bureaucratic collectivist' theory amounted to a description of the Stalinist societies similar to Trotsky's description of Russia, but with a few labels changed - and with an implicit perspective of ignoring, denying, or evading the whole Marxist conception of the necessary development of capitalism and from capitalism. In its major organisational manifestation - the US Schachtmanites - the tendency became a variant of ex-Marxist utopian socialism.

The 'state capitalists' remained formally within the discipline of Marxist categorisation - but again with a wide range of scope for purely subjective emphases and for constant options. They are characterised by a crude 'bureaucratic' bias: it is not best countered by those polemics (such as the ISPA) who insist on seeing the working class as only part of a world unfolding world 'process' and actually lose sight of working class activity as the SUBJECT of history. Nonetheless it IS crippling for an understanding of the world outside the metropolitan countries. (See note 1)

IMPLICITLY this theory says that we are living in an era of expanding capitalism, of new organic growth, with massive implications for revolutionary practice. It means that Third World struggles can lead only to new repressive regimes (and in the case of IS there is a totally arbitrary approach to such struggles: FOR the Vietnamese; neutral on Korea; implicitly hostile to China.) In fact, the specific theory of IS (most important for us) is a disguised form of bureaucratic collectivism, as Grant demonstrated already in 1949.

The capitalist nature of the USSR is not, in Cliff's theory, ultimately derived from ECONOMIC categories - commodities, exchange values - but from competition of USE-VALUES between the USSR and the West (arms competition). This turns basic Marxist economics on its head, and IN FACT presents a picture of a NEW society, with a NEW and

unperceived dynamic. More rigorous analysis is required to call a picture like that 'bureaucratic collectivism' (i.e. society X). Cliff chooses to try to cram it within familiar terms and to return to the Marxist categories, motivated by a shallow dogmatism.

The unsatisfactory nature of 'state capitalist' theory is especially clear in the analysis of 'Third World' state capitalism. It defines the 'state capitalist' class in the USSR by its role and function, which is said by analogy to be capitalist. Yet, regarding the revolutionary struggles in China, for example, they talk of an 'embryo class' of state capitalists - without any comparable functions. Again they divorce conclusions and designations from any analysis of what they arbitrarily call state capitalism.

In its own way it is a negative demonstration that the solution to the problems of the movement in the late '40s did not lie with the 'new class' groups. Rejecting the 1948/51 conclusions of the Fourth International as a break with the programmatic foundations of the movement, they quite legitimately dismiss the FI as only an ALLEN political tendency. Unfortunately, in addition, the IS group campaigns against the Leninist concept of internationalism, thus breaking not only with a tendency but with a principle.

TWO TRENDS

The 1951 CODIFICATION proved inadequate to answer the subsequent questions of supplementary analysis, orientation and tactics posed to the movement and two distinct trends emerged from the forces represented at the Third World Congress.

One subsided into a primitive dogmatism based on a historically unproved version of 1938 Trotskyism, without relation to any problems or developments in the world since. Implicitly it became a tendency to liquidate Trotskyism back into utopian socialism, based on timeless dogmas - to cut its roots. In Britain this has been the Socialist Labour League; in France the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.

The second genuinely attempted to come to grips with the real problems, to draw conclusions from the codifications of 1951 and after; but normally did this by political and adaptation - to 'left' social democracy, Maoism, etc. It AFFIRMS the basic ideas of Trotskyism but doesn't always seem to have a use for them. This is now the USFI; its current British representative is the International Marxist Group.

Both strands arise from the failure to INTEGRATE the post-war experience into Marxist theory, and the resulting DESTRUCTURING of that theory.

the separation of...
ent shorthand, is partly...
OCI, etc) have NOT been free from adaptationism, or the tendency to liquidate Trotskyism organisationally and politically.

Nor have the 'chameleons' been undogmatic. Whereas the SLL and the OCI HYDE from the real world behind dogmas, the USFI has often only succeeded in viewing the world in a very distorted way through ideas used as rather cumbersome dogmas - though at least the OUTLINE of reality comes into the picture.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The SLL/OCI tendency are not just sectarian bigots who just happen to have developed a totally incoherent world outlook, which, for example, saw Mao's China as a workers' state but refused to admit that Cuba was, too. All their politics, even formally correct 'dogmas', have had their roots in rational analysis of reality cut.

Their version of the history and problems of Trotskyism, the myth of 'Pabloism', is a lying mystification. 'Pabloism' is the name given by the SLL/OCI to a very wide range of post-war shortcomings, allegedly a tendency to 'capitulate' to Stalinism/ social democracy/ national/ petty bourgeois etc etc, and to 'liquidate'. In fact, 'Pabloism' is a myth created by one section of the Trotskyist movement after 1951 to 'explain' all the errors, inadequacies, and faults common to the whole movement by ascribing them to a section of it which is defined FRACTIONALLY, ORGANISATIONALLY, and ARBITRARILY.

The concept of 'Pabloism' tells us as much about the history and problems of Trotskyism as the term 'Khrushchevite revisionism' tells about the history of the Stalinist current. In both cases the encapsulated history involved in the term makes it impossible to know precisely what is meant. And not accidentally. The essence in both cases is that such terms and procedures are NECESSARY to avoid a more precise attempt at accounting which would look too closely at the specific features of those using the swear word in question (the "anti-Pabloites" or the Maoists) and their affinities with those denounced.

Not a single one of the alleged traits of 'Pabloism', nor support for guerrilla struggle, was absent from one or other of the 'anti-Pabloite' tendencies. Far from explaining anything, the myth of 'Pabloism', though given a certain apparent credibility by the opportunist limits of the USFI, like all superstition - fairly takes HINDERS understanding of

the real problems - and substitutes fictional for real solutions.

The systematic lying of the SIL/OCI tendencies is merely conscious continuation of the self-deception and rejection of all rational politics which is at the root of their 'solution' to the problems of post-war Trotskyism. Their internal lack of democracy and gangsterism result from ideological hypocrisy and consequent fear of free discussion and questions. The result is the dictatorship of a priestly caste led by a leech or a leechlet - essentially a negation of everything Trotskyism stands for - the subordination of the world to national working class control.

The tragic joke against these dogmatists is that they deviated independently AFTER 1951 in polemical opposition to the USSR (then the USSR) which, in a period of stagnation of the workers movement in the metropolitan countries, and big struggles in the colonies (Indochina, Algeria) tried with meagre resources to apply a basic principle of Lenin's Comintern: that revolutionary wars in the advanced countries must ACTIVELY aid the revolts in the colonies.

In self-righteous but ineffectual anger against the 'Patriotes', and some of their one-sidedness in the colonial revolution, the SIL/OCI wound up disdaining the struggles in the 'Third World' in an explicit way that even the Second International before 1914 would have found shameful!

There is a peculiar TENDENCY in the International Committee groups (OCI, SIL) towards filling the discredited forms of degenerated 'Trotskyist' ideas with Second Internationalist content.

This is almost total in the French OCI. Whereas the SIL has a revolutionary position on the Middle East, the OCI actually equates Israel (a racist state comparable to South Africa) and the Arab states. The OCI supporters in Zionist-occupied Palestine ('Israel') accommodate to Zionism in the name of promoting Jewish-Arab working class unity. This is equivalent to South African Trotskyists trying to ignore apartheid, the better to promote working-class unity!

Uniformly, the OCI's positions, pseudo-Trotskyist in appearance, are a giant step backwards. They discard Third World struggles. They reject the idea that there is a Marxist method, and talk in terms of an organic ripening of working-class consciousness. They discount the ideological struggle, and the question of Marxist consciousness being brought to the workers from outside. They capitulate

to the rump of the French Social-Democracy. They push the slogan of a Communist Party-Socialist Party united front, leaving the question of PROGRAMME to one side. They bill a CP - SP government in France, or a 'pure' Social-Democratic Government in Germany, as a WORKERS' GOVERNMENT - even while the CAPITALIST STATE remains stable!

Since splitting from the SIL in 1971, this group has created, with a few satellites, an 'Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International'. Given their policies, they will only manage to 'reconstruct' the Fourth International... back into the Second! Or a preposterous miniature caricature of the Second!

THE UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The most rational tendency, which has developed the general outlook we believe to be Trotskyism, in the USSR, committing gross errors, never really adequate in the post-war period, it had nevertheless not 'betrayed' Trotskyism, as the sectarian leaders were said. Its decision, made in 1957, that a political revolution was, after all, necessary in China - though it was an TERRIBLE MISTAKE - showed the major difference between the USSR and the USSR. It was the USSR. We declared critical support for the USSR in 1959.

Support meant recognition that this was the mainstream, and a definitive break with the 'anti-Patriotes'. 'Critical' meant understanding that MEMBERSHIP of the USSR tendency was not compatible with revolutionary practice, then in Britain at least.

The Fourth International has tended to dissolve all concrete questions of communist practice into a grand picture of 'the Revolution' as a shadowy but powerful historical actor, marching relentlessly across the world, a latter-day 'hidden hand'. Analysis of the colonial revolution has tended to collapse into 'emphatic' generalities. Permanent revolution has been seen as a general scenario, a self-propelling 'process', rather than what it really is, a fusion of different movements, relating to different (bourgeois-democratic, socialist) tasks, a fusion realised by revolutionary practice.

The FI has made correct, though incomplete, explanations of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions in terms of the overall REVOLUTIONARY 'Third World' relationship to imperialism: of the class structure of those countries; and of the survival of the post-capitalist state in Russia. It has repeatedly

... formations such as
that of the FI, which has explicitly denied the
need for a fundamental political revolution in these states,
which have never known workers' democracy and suffer all the
contradictions of stalinist misrule. The PROGRAMMATIC
DOCUMENT of the 1963 reunification even talks of the Yugoslav,
Chinese, and Cuban revolutions confirming the theory of
Permanent Revolution "to the hilt"! If so, while no
workers' democracy exists (not even in Cuba) and no direct
workers' rule - then the theory of Permanent Revolution
has been foreshortened by a head. So, indeed, has the
theory of PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.

In practical politics, the FI has shown a totally
exaggerated confidence in various petty-bourgeois leader-
ships, and a dissolving of many of the theoretical 'norms' of
Trotskyism, even while they are maintained formally.

It is true that the Fourth International's record of
solidarity work with the Algerian revolution stands in shining
contrast to the record of the 'anti-Pablite' tendencies. But that
does not and cannot justify the exaggerated confidence granted
to the FI. At the 1963 World Congress, it was stated as a
simple FACT that Algeria was shortly to become a workers' state,
and the "socialist orientation" of Ben Bella and Boumedienne
was hailed without criticism.

Now Algeria probably was one of the few places where a
repeat of the Cuban experience was possible. But a simple
assertion of faith that a repeat would happen was not enough
for revolutionaries.

On Vietnam, likewise, the Fourth International has a good
record of solidarity work. But the attitude of the FI
majority (exemplified by the Ligue Communiste) to the peace
settlement of 1973 has been one of unqualified trust in the
political judgment and ability for political struggle of the
NLF and DRV leadership. What has happened to the Trotskyist
PROGRAMME of workers' councils? Certainly, the NLF, the DRV,
and the Vietnamese CP, despite their heroic military struggle,
do not fight for that programme.

For a whole period, propaganda for the political revolu-
tion virtually disappeared from the press of the FI. The
programme of political revolution was in fact explicitly
renounced for Yugoslavia and (until as late as 1967) China.
The FI gave its confidence to, for example, the boasts of
the Chinese bureaucracy about the Great Leap Forward.

To this day, the attitude of the Fourth International
to China is extremely muddled. Maitain writes that the

... degenerated - whereas the FI
is that it was totally reformed from the start. The
attitude of the FI to the non-USSR deformed workers' states
- those in which an independent revolution occurred - has been
much closer to the Right Communist Oppositionists regarding Russia
in the 30s (Bramler/Lavestone) than to the attitude and programme
of Trotsky and the movement for the Fourth International.

The whole of the FI's "deep entry" work in the
Social-Democratic parties was based on work with, attempts
to create, or even TO SUBSTITUTE FOR left-socialist currents
(replacement leaderships) within the mass workers' parties.
In many countries, public Trotskyist activity simply disappear-
ed (Belgium, Britain). Everything was subordinated to the
expected 'next stage' of political development.

As with the case of Algeria, the expectations were not
unreasonable. But to make hopeful expectations the FOUNDATION
of your policy is not correct: it "denies the sharp
tasks of today in the name of dreams about soft tasks of the
future... Theoretically, it means to fail to base oneself on
the developments now going on in real life, to detach oneself
from them in the name of dreams."

With the upsurge of student militancy in the 1960s, the
FI reacted with its characteristic manner towards new radical
movements - 'fundamentalist', trying to take on the colour of
its surroundings. There was a sharp turn away from the organ-
ic involvement in the workers' movement, towards open,
increasingly propagandistic, 'enlightening' work, usually
directed towards peripheral social groups and layers.

It is true that nothing better has existed, and that
it is easier to see 'clarity' afterwards than in the mael-
strom. But if the reason d'être of the Fourth International
is the preservation and development of the communist theory
and programme - as the only possible basis for party-building
- then to pass over inadequacies and confusions out of respect
for 'the International' is to negate that very raison d'être.

WORKERS FIGHT AND THE I.M.G.

General appreciations of the International - though
necessary - are not sufficient. For Lenin, rebuilding the
proletarian International, like building the Bolshevik party,
and making the Russian revolution, was a matter of finding,
at each moment, at each stage, the concrete LINK IN THE
CHAIN - not abstract proclamations of intention or pious
recognition of 'necessities', historic or otherwise. Our task
too is to find the concrete links of revolutionary practice

and judge every existing organisation from that point of view.

When WORKERS FIGHT first appeared in October 1967, we were primarily involved in rank-and-file struggle in the ports. The proto-IMG was hobnobbing with the workers' control movement with Jack Jones - who was actively sabotaging the dock strikes of that period. Their paper carried no criticisms, and only a veiled hint of disapproval, WITHOUT MENTIONING JONES BY NAME.

The IMG behaved with gross irresponsibility, indeed ideological and political cowardice, in refusing to enter the inchoate centrist regroupment that was the 1968 International Socialists. The creation of the present bureaucratised IS, and the consolidation of the control of the Cliff tendency, was not inevitable, but the result of a defeat for Trotskyism, in 1968 and afterwards.

Our expulsion from IS, in December 1971, posed sharply the issue of our ORGANISATIONAL relations with the USFI. Was it possible to maintain a serious orientation towards the working class, to continue the positive work we had done in IS, as part of the IMG ?

Negotiations with the IMG (which had helped the IS leaders with factionally useful information against us in November 1971) showed it wasn't. We proposed to them a preliminary period of discussion coupled with action in producing a joint workers' weekly paper. They refused. Manoeuvres, attempts to exploit the question of the Fourth International in a petty factional way - that was their main concern.

We resumed contact after a six months' gap in December 1972, while still in the process of working out a full assessment of the USFI. We asked for access to the major draft documents for the forthcoming 10th World Congress! (which were anyway soon to be made public). We needed the documents so as to base our discussion on the FI on the fullest knowledge of the latest balance sheet by the USFI of the serious shifts in its positions over the last years. We naturally offered the necessary guarantees regarding control of circulation, etc,

In response it was demanded that we allow participation in our discussion by a "representative of the USFI"; only then would the necessary documents for a full POLITICAL assessment of the USFI today be made available to us. This presented us with a very serious problem. Having decided to continue to function in the class struggle during the course of the thorough discussion of the history, politics, and current trends within the broad 'Fourth Internationalist' movement, we had to take steps to prevent the discussion from disrupting W.F. organisational unity. Especially so given that two of the main opponents of the

to whose politics and organisation W.F. has taken shape in the last six years. Objectively the possibility existed that the internal differentiation and disputes that might emerge in assessing the diverse currents of international 'Trotskyism' could cripple the group and tear it apart (No. 2) Any involvement in the IMG (or by the USFI on behalf of the IMG) could not do other than lead to a disruption of the discussion on the international and its probable transformation into a factional conflict. Especially given the IMG's record of shortsighted and petty factionalism, nothing was to be expected other than that they would use any opportunities they were given not to engage in a serious political discussion with us, but to continue the policy of trying to conduct organisational raids on W.F. (Their efforts had been inept, to be sure; but their intention at least was clear enough). In addition any special rights for the USFI or the IMG in our internal affairs would place in question the organisational integrity of the group and partially pre-empt the group conference and usurp its powers; after all, the conference was being called on the authority of the previous W.F. conference, to decide on our international affiliations, if any. We refused the USFI/IMG any special rights in the discussion. In response they withdrew the documents. Here, of course, they were within their formal rights ... except that their National Committee had just passed a resolution in favour of THE FUSION of the two groups. Nothing can demonstrate the IMG's 'organizational setting' - in essence political - attitude to the FI more clearly than this combination of talk of organisational fusion together with REFUSAL to allow a discussion of the proposed political basis for that fusion - the politics of the USFI in the period before the 10th World Congress!. They tried to reduce the documents necessary for any assessment of the current state of the USFI into MAINTAINING COVERTS to force their way past our organisational distrust of them, into the internal affairs of a group whose organisational integrity they had promised to respect before discussion opened.

Over the last year we have watched the IMG in amazement - genuine, not rhetorical! Its preoccupations have been determined by the dynamics of the development of its 'own' insignificant and muddled ideas, not by the dynamics of the class struggle erupting round them.

They stood Lenin's ideas on propaganda, agitation, and calls to action on their heads, just when the class struggle rendered them vital. They stood theory on its head again by declaring that Lenin's analysis of imperialism, the theory of capitalism in its period of decay and parasitism - this analysis FLOWED FROM the concept of the epoch!

It was this same 'concept' that explained opposition to

'Popular Fronts' - subordination of communists to alliances with 'left' bourgeois politicians. That was one in the eye for poor old Marx, who insisted as long ago as 1850, way before the epoch of imperialism, on the POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE of the working class as a basic principle.

And so on, and so on. The IMG is an unhealthy tendency, and it is only the latest example of the inability of the International which fosters it to build a serious organisation in the British working class. The dynamic of the leadership is not that of a group which seriously assesses and learns from its own mistakes, JUDGED BY THE NEEDS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE, but that of an intellectual clique dominated by the periodic rush of 'brilliant' new ideas to the head.

To fuse with that tendency would be to adopt the existence of an opposition tendency, one of a number, within an unhealthy organisation, whose size and importance in the working class, even compared to our own small size, does not recommend such a policy. There are many excellent comrades in the IMG. We think they are wasted there - and the British working class cannot afford such waste.

Workers Fight will fight for the communist internationalist programme in the British working class. The IMG, so far, has been nothing but a diversion from this work.

Not a single voice, except that of a non-member of the group, a visitor, was raised at the conference in favour of fusion with the IMG.

REGENERATION

We will contribute to the necessary REGENERATION of the Fourth International by building in Britain and by attempting to contribute to the clarification of the political problems that have beset the movement since the war. We seek dialogue, discussion, and exchange of material with the USFI - and with other tendencies. Internationalism is a basic political principle but it is not an organisational fetish. Where an international ORGANISATION, with the weaknesses and faults of the USFI, is the best that exists, the task of those who disagree is neither to hide in a nationalist shell nor to prostrate themselves before a fetish - but to seek dialogue, political and ideological clarification, and on the basis of that clarification, international co-thinkers.

By referring to 'regeneration' we do not mean that the USFI has degenerated. On the contrary, in 1967 it was REGENERATED by the decision on China. We mean that the USFI has not yet

the last quarter century of the FI's history is that it has been a DEGENERATE form of Trotskyism. The basis of this degeneration has been the destructing (in the case of much of the SLI/OCI material, the complete reduction to non-rational gibberish) discussed above.

We regard ourselves as standing organisationally apart from the USFI. We do not oppose the necessity of an International, nor (like IS) do we break with a basic principle under guise of separating ourselves from a tendency.

But it is toy internationalism which sacrifices fighting for the communist internationalist programme amongst the working class it can reach to a bare organisational fetish - or which ignores the ideological and political ROOTS of the inadequacy of the FI in the post-war period out of deference to the shadowy organisational reality of the USFI. This sham internationalism - the attitude that would dictate that we must join the IMG at the expense of our practical work - is possible only for self-indulgent romantics who feel little responsibility to the working class they live amongst.

Feeling that responsibility, the WF conference has no choice but to vote the way it did.

NOTES

Note 1.

The French group, Lutte Ouvriere, holds that the USSR is a degenerate workers state and that all the other stalinist states are capitalist states because they underwent no classic workers revolution such as that of October 1917 in Russia (Though LO has a creditable record of support for third world struggles which stands in sharp contrast to the dishonourable record of IS in Britain). Concentrating exclusively on the evolution and character of the state machine in these countries LO ignores the fact that their social structure is identical with that of the USSR (and historically inseparable from the existence of the USSR and their interaction with it). The untenable and totally incoherent nature of the theoretical position of LO becomes obvious if we apply the analytical method they use on states like Cuba, China and E. Germany to the USSR itself. For Trotsky at the end of the 1930s the character of the USSR as a degenerated workers' state was not at all determined by the character of the state machine (he believed that a political counter-revolution had in fact occurred) but by the structure and nature of the post-capitalist society surviving from the Revolution, despite the transformation of the actual state machine into an instrument for oppressing the working class in the interests of the stalinist bureaucracy. In fact Trotsky said that in his opinion the stalinist state machine WOULD be surviving social con-

ests of the October Revolution would be nothing less than a
CIST STATE. Only in that it guarded and defended these social
remains of the Revolution (in its own way and for the reason
that the privileges and interests of the bureaucracy were tied
inseparably to the post capitalist society established by the
October Revolution) could the USSR be still considered a Workers
State, even a degenerated one. Thus it is applied to hold the
China, Cuba, etc., to the USSR itself it must cease to hold the
degenerated workers state position: and if it applies the actual
considerations which underpin Trotsky's analysis of the USSR to
the other stalinist states then it must cease to consider them
as capitalist.

Note 2.

As the League For A Workers Republic, an Irish group we were once
associated with was torn into three pieces during a similar disc-
ussion in 1970. Three groups resulted: an IC (SIL) grouping, a
group in critical support of the USFI, and a small rump consist-
ing of the majority of the old "leadership", hanging together on
a clique basis. After the SIL/OCI split in the IC, in 1971, this
rump joined the OCI-dominated Organising Committee for the Recon-
struction of the Fourth International (OCRI), because it appeared
still to be fighting the good fight against "Pabloism". Initially
they did not even know the SPECIFIC politics of the OCI, and in
any case would have been incapable of critically assessing them. Its
paper, WORKERS REPUBLIC now introduces a full blooded version of
Trotskyist "Trotskyism" to the English speaking world. During the
recent 20 County elections it demonstrated its bankruptcy strik-
ingly. Its slogans were as follows: "VOTE LABOUR; NO COALITION;
LABOUR TO POWER WITH SOCIALIST POLICIES, SUPPORTED BY THE TRADE
UNIONS!" Since the possibility of a coalition depended on the
small Labour Party, which had pledged itself to a coalition,
every vote for Labour was a vote for coalition, and it was impos-
sible IN REALITY to vote Labour without voting Bourgeois coalition,
without helping the Labour Leaders make it possible. The main
emphasis, the only directive to action was "VOTE LABOUR". By any
one of the basic Marxist tenets on the class nature of the state
the LMR lent its small weight to the bourgeois coalition. In
so far as the slogans related to the world of hard realities
and real political relationships no other interpretation is
possible. In addition the slogan "LABOUR TO POWER WITH SOCIALIST
POLICIES" can do nothing but spread illusions in this BOURGEOIS
LABOUR PARTY. That this slogan is favoured in Britain by the SIL
and the NSL does not make it any the less alien to Trotskyism
and the Fourth International. It is a product of social-democrat-
ised "Trotskyism" in its most degenerate state of political and
intellectual enfeeblement (See for instance "IN DEFENCE OF MARXISM"
where Trotsky upbraids Max Shachtman for spreading or having
similar illusions in the US Socialist Party in the late 1930s.).
As for the trade unions, it is the ELEMENTARY duty of revol-
utionaries to fight implacably against Trade Union support for any
Government administering capitalism: only if it is really expected
that Labour COULD come to power and promote "socialist policies"

does such a slogan make any sense at all. That the leaders and
members of the LMR are in their intention revolutionaries only
emphasises the scope of the retrogression - almost to the politic
of the Second International - involved in the OCRI. Of course
it shows also the backwardness of the people who run the LMR,
thinking it is possible to operate as revolutionaries without
bothering to master even the ABC of Trotskyism, operating inst-
ead with an eclectic mish-mash composed of half under-
stood "basic truths" and the anti-Pabloite mythology. Even
more, perhaps, than the SIL/OCI these former comrades of ours have
demonstrated that the road to Hell - in their case to inadvert-
ently crossing the class line in the elections: no less a verdict
in itself - is paved with the best "anti-Pabloite" and "anti-
revisionist" intentions. And especially where the anti-Pabloite
factory lines are a substitute for a serious and politically resp-
onsible approach to the history and problems of the Trotskyist
movement.

Sam Magennis

June 1975

MINUTES OF N. C. MEETING (19th July)

PRESENT: PR/FB/MI/SM/JBx/NW/NS/DS LATECOMERS: AH/RI/PS/BH
OBSERVERS: CB/EH/GK/JBr ABSENT: JS/SC
CHAIRMAN: NS MINUTES: DS START: 12 Noon (1 hour late) Finish: 5.45.

MINUTES OF LAST N. C., SECRETARIAT ETC.

- PR- There had been a good discussion on Portugal and Ireland at the May N. C.
Where were the minutes?
- NW- Had taken minutes but couldn't understand them.
- AGREED: NW to send notes to MT for deciphering.
- DS- Had May N. C. corrected April N. C. minutes on 'Priorities'? AH's resolution is not mentioned in the minutes. Worse still - AH's resolution had been passed!
- NS- The May N. C. had decided the minutes were correct.
- DS- Question on the Sect. Minutes. Why can we not afford to send a comrade to the L. O. Conference? Paris is no further from London than Manchester.
- MT- The L. O. Conference is a waste of time as he had reported previously.
- SM- This was not the reason why the Sect. decided not to send anybody. It is a question of priorities.
- NS- We can discuss this under the item 'Fourth International' on the agenda.
AGREED
- NW- Moved Next Business.
- DS- Opposed. Why do Comrades object to matters being raised? Ten minutes is not long enough for the Minutes, if we take the Group seriously.
- MT- Notice of one week should be given for any item on the N. C. agenda and any question on the minutes. Proposed a resolution on those lines.
- DS- Then the N. C. Minutes and Agenda should be produced well in advance, not on the day of the N. C.!
- SM- Proposed that plenty of time be allowed at future N. C. meetings for raising issues on the Minutes.
- AGREED to SM's proposal.
- DS- A number of points had recently been raised on the issue of demonstrations e.g. banners, who marches with who. Also we need to learn from the PTA demo. Proposed SC commission article for I.B. on Demonstrations - How to prepare, how to behave on the dmo, how to follow up etc.
- AGREED to DS's proposal.
- DS- Question on the purpose of the Solidarity Bulletin.
- SM- A) We use it to organise in TCM
B) We co-ordinate all forces agreeing on this one issue.
C) We aim to gain a presence for W.F.

REGROUPMENT AND THE SITUATION ON THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT (See MT's document)

- JBx- Question on the CP.
- MT - The CP will build. They appear to have get up and go. They made many contacts on the Common Market issue. Victory in Vietnam will help them. The CP in industry has influence over the Labour Left, particularly now the Labour gov. are attacking the working class.
- JBx- Surely 'Militant' should be included in Section 6
- MT- Most people joining 'Militant' are not revolutionaries. They don't want to bite the head off the bourgeoisie!
- NS- There had been confusion in comrades' minds. Were we asking people to join Workers' Fighter creating something new.
- PR- Thought Section 5 was contradictory. Surely large splits from the big groups are bound to be compromised by their history.

SM- Point 7 is not critical enough. The NC had been too vague. We should have hammered away at the tendencies. Instead we substituted diplomacy for propaganda.

On point 5 - all the elements are there but the focus is wrong. Our focus must be on 1 to 1 recruitment and vigorous propaganda.

DS- Questions to MT. How does he see us operating in relation to a likely Left current in the LP.? Does Section 5 mean that future growth in WF is to be expected from drop-outs from other groups?

MT ANSWERS

To NS - It is not a contradiction to aim to recruit groupings as well as individuals within a grouping. With IS-LO, regroupment should have been in the background

To FR - We are not going to overtake IS by one to one recruitment. We hope whole sections will join us. These new people will have to face up to their history.

To SM - We never had an ecumenical point of view. We never dropped any political points to gain signatures.

To DS - Tribune's letter columns have been full recently of the need to build Tribune groups. With SDA forming, the Left will organise.

These groups will suck in many non-aligned elements, ex-revol. group members etc. We want to see an open movement in which we can intervene.

AH- MT evades SM's point. Diplomacy was not in the letter itself but in our approach. It caused disorientation in WF branches. We related to leaderships instead of to individuals. We need to emphasise once again that we are a propaganda group.

SM- The document is too innocuous, too complacent. True I'm jaundiced. Just to think of all those endless, pointless discussions makes me sick. But the focus of the document is all wrong. For example, the mention of the Labour Lefts - we are not in favour of regroupment with them!

JBx- SM is taking an unproductive experience and generalising. Regroupment was and is the correct tactic.

MT- What is SM on about? SM is jaundiced - not a good basis for a political judgement.

SM- PROPOSED Sections 5&7 to be remitted to the SC.

AGREED to SM's proposal (6 to 4 for S. 5/5 to 3 for S. 7)

PASSED the rest of the document unanimously.

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES (See A.B. 30)

PR- Disgruntled that we should have to change sections after one month.

Also, Sections 5 and 6 underpin the rest - the whole thing is now off balance. Let's not be light-minded.

AH- We were wrong on the LP and on the Jones plan. But these are not basic theoretical errors - our assessments are too journalistic. Why?

Because we have too few connections. We have to recognise the sharpening struggles on the Left. Right Tribunites do not want to lose new alliance with the T. U. C. (on the Common Market), so Huckfield saying, 'Look the T. U. C. want it'.

SM- Astonishing re-enactment of the history of Social Democracy in encapsulated form. Remarkable putting down of roots in the working class - even some involvement in real struggles. Then real compromise to help capitalism solve its problems. We can surely expect more feverish series of struggles to result from the speeded up nature of the crisis. Those people who are even now going along with the government will be radicalised. There are very good prospects for revolutionaries in the next period.

FR- Agreed with SM. If Tories had done a Healey, there would have been a General Strike or calls for one. This inconceivable now. But surely decisive struggles must be coming up.

MT- PROPOSAL: SC to produce a supplementary document to the Pol. Perspectives.

AH- PROPOSAL: We refer the document back.

AGREED (5 to 5 - NS for) to MT's proposal.

RANK AND FILE COMMS. & MOVEMENTS (See L.B. 30 and attached points)

MT- Introduced his new points. IS-R&F had become almost like the ATUA of the WRP. The R&F papers had declined because of IS pandering.

R&F movements come and go, there is nothing permanently structured.

We need regular industrial bulletins and pamphlets.

AH- MT's document is eclectic. By focussing on generalities it loses focus. PROPOSED that the IB document be rejected.

The section on Our Policy has no direction and no priorities. The new points would improve matters but only marginally.

Apologised for not producing an alternative.

SM- Bewildered. How can we carry on this discussion? MT has patched up his document as a result of yesterday's School. Yet AH's views are unclear. R&F activity is not a matter of ideas - it is permanent either at a low-key or mass and spontaneous. History in U.K. - spontaneous, no polit. tendency with hegemony in Shop Stewards' movement before WW1, Revival under influence of CP after 1921 defeats. In 1950s unofficial movements and action. It exists as a reflection of the divorce between the machinery of the T.U.C. bureaucracy and the Rank and file.

WF is a propaganda group. We are proletarian. We need a programme for our comrades. We need a general policy for industry as a whole and specific policies for specific industries. We have an exaggerated presence in various industries BUT we have no trained cadres integrating militancy with WF politics.

Nothing is focused, nothing is concrete. We need to prepare a discussion.

AGREED: To be discussed at the next NC - AUGUST 9th

NEW CONSTITUTION FOR WF (See document from BH)

BH- Explained various sections that had been altered and added to.

AGREED: To discuss at August NC.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL (See SM's forthcoming document)

SM- Introduced his document which he later read.

At our special Conference in 1973, we decided we could not join or accept the discipline of the USFI.

This document is intended to draw out conclusions implicit in the 1973 decisions.

(Basically, I think SM was saying : 1) No F.I. exists

2) We are in the 1933 Trotsky situation of the need to rebuild

3) Ideologically the situation is worse than 1914 where at least there was the healthy practice of the Bolsheviks.)

PS- We need a full Group discussion on this.

MT- The NC should decide then have educationals on the matter.

AH- Agreed with MT. No point in having re-discussion. Actually this did not take place in 1973. The word got around about the conclusions before the documents came out and we were treated to some pretty asinine anecdotes at IMG's expense. Few people had anything political to say.

We need to have fundamental analyses of F.I. Congress documents with which comrades are familiar and can argue for. This resolution must not substitute for analysis. SM has done the work - great, but we haven't.

RL- This is a very serious issue. If we make a decision, we have the duty to carry it through, to set aside priorities, time etc., to begin a whole programme of work.

AGREED: NC to decide. SM to introduce a session at the Aggregate, on the issue.

DS- What about the L.O. Conference in this context?

AGREED: To refer this to the SG.

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES (See PS's document)

PS- Answered questions on his document.

NW- Why will capitalism recover?

PS- Capitalism will not grind to a halt. Already the Run-down is slowing down. A number of countries have reflatd, others have reduced the rate

of unemployment. There is likely to be an upturn in output in some countries. Nevertheless the situation is very stagnant. Keynesian measures are less and less effective.

NS- Why is inflation still rising in the U.K.?

PS- Capitalists still put up prices because of various pressures and forces. Output falls, overheads increase. State expenditure rises - non-productive. Sterling has devalued 5% in 3 months - thus we pay more for imports. Working class combativity keeps up standard of living, comparatively.

MT- Will U.K. recover from recession less fully than other Western countries, or later, or both?

PS- The structural crisis of British capitalism has been aggravated by the relative impasse of world capitalism. British re-investment pattern is later than elsewhere. The world monetary situation is unstable. There has been a slower and slower growth rate in U.K. The need is to increase the rate of exploitation, yet the British working class is very combative. The £6 a week policy will solve nothing. We can expect a harder core of unemployment. The recovery of World market will have an effect but less in U.K. than elsewhere.

JBr- The WRP say this is the worst of all economic crises. Is this true?

DS- Claimed to have SLL perspectives document from 1962 Conference saying the same things.

PR- PROPOSED: Next NC to discuss how to discuss economic perspectives. Referred to RK and economic bible-punchers.

AGREED to PR's proposal.

JBx- PROPOSED: Remit document to next N.C. AGREED (MT&DS against)

LABOUR PARTY (See attached proposals from MT)

MT- Introduced his proposals.

DS- PROPOSED 2 amendments to MT's proposals.

1) Add to section on tasks for LPYS Conference:

We start now to build new LPYS branches - to get WF delegates to next year's Conference.

2) Add to section on our work in LP Left:

We aim to Gain contacts for WF on the basis of 'Entrism' (i.e. fighting in the LP with us on our policies)

We have heard of impending struggles and good prospects for revolutionaries. Put forward the view that gains for WF would come from new forces, partic. youth, not from other left groups. We need to drive LPYS out in practice i.e. build our own branches. On 'entrism' we need to stop people leaving LP in disgust, at the same time getting people from one issue campaigns (e.g. W.W. Charter, TOM) to join LP to fight with us.

PR) Agreed with DS on building our own LPYS branches. East Midlands had proved this. We had made 12 new members. Now we had a presence, we can fight Militant more effectively.

We must distinguish between Tribune in adult Party and in LPYS. At East Midlands, Tribuneites had circulated anti-Trot leaflet, then Dennis Skinner spoke at the Militant meeting in the evening!

SM- Worried about MT's focussing on the Militant. Like the 4 men in U.S.A. 'most dangerous enemies of the Spattacist League'. Could be last year's war.

AH- We must be far more open with YS paper. Last copy impossible to sell outside LPYS. Attack on sell-out correct, but surely inside pages.

The co-ordination of our LP work has been disgracefully inadequate.

NW- Agreed with criticism of latest YS. We do need to be careful about security. But no martyrdom yet. Militant hacks deny squashing Irish campaign.

PS- There are a large number of LP issues workers relate to. WF paper should reflect these. For example, why not an interview with somebody involved in Newham North East?

Agreed that best way to fight Militant was to build own branches, recruiting youth to take in and fight Militant.

AGREED: DS's Amendments. AGREED: MT's Proposals.

THE LABOUR PARTY (Proposals and amendments accepted by July N.C.)

- 1) The SG to prepare a document on political perspectives in relation to LP
The YS-EB to draft one for submission to SG on practical details of work.
Both these documents to be submitted within 2 weeks.
- 2) We recognise the possible development of a major Tribuneite Left current
in the LP. We fight for revolutionary politics within an open left current.
At the moment we should investigate while keeping our heads down.
We recognise that we ourselves cannot structure the Left in the LP.
We can only intervene.
We aim to gain contacts for WF on the basis of 'Entrism' tactic.
- 3) On the LPYS:
- We prepare now for the next LPYS Conference
 - New LPYS branches - to get WF delegates.
 - Resolutions on - the economic struggle, Ireland, S. Africa, Women's Lib.,
racialism.
 - A YS meeting at the Conference
 - Intervention at pre-Conference Regional meetings and elections.
 - Leaflets on our resolutions
 - A follow-up YS day school.
 - WF comrades on YS-EB to organise this, in consultation with Sect.
 - We aim to become the serious challenger to Militant in the LPYS.
 - We need to focus our LPYS work round centralised campaigns
e.g. on the ban on the Irish Campaign.
 - We approve the proposals to open out YS . We should not, however
co-opt a member of the Chartists on to the YS-EB at the moment.
 - We endorse the Secretariat proposals about structuring LPYS work through
regular YS-EB and Regional YS supporters' meetings.
YS should appear every " months.
- 4) We instruct the WF-EB to increase coverage of LP and LPYS in the paper.

RANK AND FILE MOVEMENTS (Additions to MF's IB article - remitted to next NC)

- To stay as it is.
- The IS-R&F. This movement could have had real possibilities if it had had
clear political backbone and had pursued an energetic United Front policy
with the Liaison Committee, Building Workers' Charter etc. (and had been
accompanied by a political struggle in those groups). We intervened
advocating that policy. In practice IS preferred political tail-ending and an
attempt to keep out of the way of the CP. The IS-R&F is now little more than
an IS version of the STUA.
- The IS-R&F papers have now largely collapsed, with the exception of the
white collar Unions where there is a social base for a militant minority
among an ex-student layer. This collapse is of course partly due to IS's
flabby opportunism. But we recognise the possible value of short-lived
R&F papers as an attempt to capitalise on a R&F feeling which turns out to
be short-lived.
- Our own R&F papers were also short-lived. Our faults were:
 - Failure to combine industrial work with cadre development
 - Unrealistic attempts to extend them to national coverage.
 We should aim for regular industrial bulletins and serious pamphlets.
- We need more ideological centralisation to our industrial work.
To that end we should produce pamphlets and campaign around them.
- We should work within the various loose R&F groupings that exist -
e.g. Redundancies in the Media.
- Ad hoc United Fronts, One-off Conferences etc. can be useful. But to make
of them a strategy in place of ongoing R&F movements is a formula for
opportunism.
- to K. as previous B. to E.

Dear comrades,

I am writing to confirm the points discussed at the LO fete and the international conference of 8/9 June.

(1) You said that you disagreed with our reply to the 'Necessary International Initiative' on the question of the crisis of the Fourth International.

We argue that the crisis of Trotskyism arose essentially from a failure to analyse adequately the Stalinist-led revolutions in Yugoslavia, China, etc. As a result all currents of the Trotskyist movement since the 1940s - International Committee as well as International Secretariat/United Secretariat - have tended to combine formal proclamations of the ideas of the Trotskyism of 1938 with adaptationism in relation to a supposed ongoing objective revolutionary process. The term 'Pabloism' is a mythical concept, blocking understanding of the real problems.

You maintained that the Fourth International was destroyed through the pressure of the class enemy in the early period of the war. This destruction was manifested in the failure to maintain an international centre consistently propagating a revolutionary internationalist line. After the war, the comrades attempting to rebuild the Fourth International failed to do so. They fell into adaptationism. In your view, 'Pabloism' is the name of one period of this adaptation.

We agreed to continue the discussion on this point in writing, around the FMR's document on "The Crisis of the Fourth International".

(2) Discussion to be carried out through an International Discussion Bulletin. The International Discussion Bulletin will be produced in English, by the I-CL as a fraternal service to the Spartacusbund, FMR and IKL. The first issue will be produced around the end of July. Articles for it should be ready in translation by early July.

The articles for the first issue will be:

a) FMR document on the 'Crisis of the FI', to be translated from Italian into English by the I-CL.

b) Document of the IKL, to be sent to the I-CL soon.

c) FMR document on the Origins of Centrism Sui Generis, to be translated from French into English by the I-CL.

d) I-CL reply to the International Initiative and I-CL fusion resolution on the Fourth International. (We shall also try to produce German translations of these documents).

e) The International Initiative, in an improved English translation.

One more article may possibly be included:

f) Spartacusbund document on the post-war crisis of the Fourth International.

The Spartacusbund will inform us if this is to be included.

The International Discussion Bulletin will be circulated to the members and periphery of SB, FMR, IKL and I-CL, and also, we would suggest, as widely as possible to other groups, including dissident factions in USFI sections.

(3) We also discussed exchange of comrades and documents. The I-CL invited comrades from the Spartacusbund, the FMR and the IKL to visit Britain for a period including the I-CL conference. (We have since postponed the conference from 9/11 July to August or September to allow a longer pre-conference discussion period. We may have a pre-conference on 9/11 July nonetheless, and in any case comrades would be welcome to visit us then). We also said that I-CL comrades would be visiting Germany for a period in the summer.

The I-CL also proposed exchange of internal documents. We have already given copies of some of our internal bulletins to the Spartacusbund. A Spartacusbund comrade mentioned the possibility of giving the I-CL copies of a Spartacusbund internal document on Spain.

We hope to hear from you soon on these points. We also propose that we should plan to hold a proper International Conference, including the Spartacusbund, the FMR, the IKL, the I-CL, and any other groups accepting the general spirit of the International Initiative, after one or two issues of the International Discussion Bulletin have been produced. The aim of the discussions (in our view) should be to work towards the elaboration of an international platform, similar in form to the 1930 eleven-point platform of the International Left Opposition.

We suggest also discussion on common intervention in the LO international confer-

REPORT FROM THE L.O. CONFERENCE & L.O. FEETE

1. We do not take our international work seriously enough. We must take it more seriously. We should devote sizable resources - not mere tokens, as at present - to translation of material, and to travel overseas.

2. From the discussions with the Spartacusbund and the FMR (and the IKL) over the weekend, our impression of a degree of political agreement with them was confirmed. They were convinced by discussions that the RCG are a petty-bourgeois academic sect, and nationalist as well. In the forums they dealt with the Spartacists very well, distinguishing themselves clearly from Spartacist-type "anti-Pabloite" arguments.

We also discussed our reply to the 'International Initiative', Portugal, and Spain. We disagreed on the historical question of the crisis of the Fourth International (see letter to the SB/FMR/IKL, draft). I was not sure about the way they linked the slogans of General Strike and Constituent Assembly in Spain, and I felt they tended to a too-schematic view of the situation and an overestimation of the tempo of events. (The SB should be sending us a document on Spain).

3. We should press forward relations with the SB/FMR/IKL as vigorously as we can. Even if the conclusions should be that we have principled disagreements with them preventing collaboration, the experience will be positive in terms of our own clarification and of establishing a presence on the international scale.

3. We should get texts on our position on the FI published in the following languages (in order of priority):

- German (we already have a translation of the 1973 pamphlet)
- French
- Portuguese
- Italian.

Gunther, Foster and Parnell should be asked to concentrate their efforts heavily on translations and international work, if necessary being relieved of other work.

Our present texts are written in a very nuanced and complex literary style, such as to make them extremely difficult to translate. A comrade (Walsh, for example) should be commissioned to do a brief and simply condensation which can be translated (and which will also be useful for our own comrades' and our periphery's education).

5. Price, Gunther and/or Foster should visit Germany for a period during the summer to discuss with the Spartacusbund. If possible we should also arrange for comrades (Murphy or Parnell plus a PC member) to visit Italy.

6. We should see the discussions as aiming towards the production of an international platform of the model of the 1930 platform of the International Left Opposition. We should ourselves, after the I-CL conference, produce a first draft (it will be no more than that) of such a platform.

7. We should also commission Price, Gunther and/or Foster to write a commentary, for our discussions on Manifesto and Action Programme, on the Grundsatzklärung and the Kampfprogramm of the Spartacusbund. We should ask the Spartacusbund for comments on our Manifesto and Action Programme.

8. We should prepare our interventions at LO conferences. For the next one or the one after, we should propose:-

- * campaign on the question of the Vietnamese Trotskyists (having written to them first)
- * document on the question of the workers' government (extracted from Manifesto)
- * document on the crisis of Trotskyism.

We should liaise with the SB/FMR/IKL on this. Obviously there is no question of us forming a common international tendency with the LO/CO/UATCI/Spark, but we have everything to gain from additional contact with them. They are trying to use us, but we can use them.

9. 'I.C.' no. 2 should carry:

- LO's Address, our reply, and a report on the last Conference;
- NII, plus our reply, and a short introduction.

C.Reynolds, June 1976.

Some observations at the Lutte Ouvriere Fete

What struck me most forcibly at the Lutte Ouvriere Fete was that our own lackadaisical attitude towards "international work" put us in immediate danger of becoming a "nationalist" grouping.

When the Trotskyist Tendency was expelled from IS, the IMG immediately read out the writing on the wall that they thought we couldn't understand: "You will not be able to withstand the pressure to become a nationalist sect." They had two things in mind: we wouldn't be able to avoid inventing differences with them in order to maintain our separateness (hence the term "sect"); and we wouldn't be able to come to grips with the burning world-political questions simply on the basis of our activity, however good, in one country.

The solution for these two ailments was in the eyes of the IMG quite plain: we needed only to join the IMG and thereby the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Our ideas didn't matter; it was like those body-building courses that advertise themselves with the words, "No equipment needed." The IMG's record and the USFI's record since then (and of course before then too) has confirmed our choice.

However, there can be little doubt that we did not take the warning seriously enough. Answering that joining the USFI wouldn't solve the problem was true; answering that we saw the need to develop an ideological tendency which really did stand in the tradition of the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky was perfectly right. But what did we do?

Here the record is not entirely negative: we have the work on the FI, we have our own attempts to come to grips with world-political questions. But weighed in the balance with what we should have done and what we could have done, we did scandalously little. Despite a long-time "relation" with Spartacusbund in Germany, we have not once tried to intervene in the life of that organisation, we have not until very recently tried to systematise these relations. In many ways this showed a refusal to learn from some of the mistakes of the relation with the LWR in Ireland. In both cases relations were largely at the personal level, nothing was set down, nothing systematised and the members consequently kept in the dark.

Before I return to the Lutte Ouvriere Fete itself, let me make it quite clear that I consider myself not simple co-responsible for these shortcomings with other leading members of WF/I-CL but more responsible (as certain linguistic abilities do play an important role in this process).

At one of the discussion "forums" held at the LO Fete the RCG intervened to give an outline of what they saw as the process by which an international is built. They said - in the safety of a meeting where most of the participants didn't know to what degree they stand outside the working class - that the first tasks of the development of an international tendency was for each of the national groupings that claim to be internationalists to wage a struggle against chauvinist currents within "their own" working class.

I was immediately struck by four things:

- 1) there is here a confusion between those tasks which serve as a test for an organisation's being free from seeing matters from the point of view of the interest of the national capitalist class (chauvinism) and those which show that an organisation is free from seeing matters solely from within the framework of the "national experience."
- 2) logically, according to the RCG view, an international programme is the synthesis of different national programmes instead of vice versa.
- 3) the RCG, for all their ideological pretensions, simply carry over the ideas of IS on the building of an international. The chief difference being that the RCG are "armchair workerists" while IS does at least put into practice the idea of taking the struggle into the working class.
- 4) while the RCG conception is the diametrical opposite of our conception, our practice actually conforms to their conception (while their practice does not).

Of course if a revolutionary tendency capitulates to its "own" nation's chauvinism, the end of protestations of internationalism will save it from condemnation. In this sense, the struggle against British chauvinism, in particular in relation to the acid tests of the Irish question and the question of blacks and immigration, is decisive.

On the other hand, any tendency which sought to define itself as internationalist on the basis of carrying out this struggle and this alone, simply makes itself ridiculous. When Trotsky denounces the Bordighists for failing to develop an international programme he didn't accuse them of capitulating to the Italian chauvinism!

One of the lessons we learn from the history of the FI (and for that matter of the early Comintern, the Bolshevik party etc.) is the crucial nature of a cadre capable of the assimilation of the necessary lessons of the class struggle and their transformation into revolutionary programmatic positions. No party can fulfill its revolutionary mission without such a cadre.

Now none of this is unusual. It can be read in lots of different texts. In Trotsky, Cannon. But it is something we have to integrate into our practice. We, like the ECG according to its verbal position, have rested satisfied with our struggle against national chauvinism.

The document "A necessary international initiative" has been signed by the German Spartacusbund, the Austrian IEL and the Italian FMR. Possibly it has been signed also by the recent split-away from the Portuguese section of the USFI. There is a lot in the document which might be changed; a lot of truisms; and there is a lot missing from the document. Nevertheless the production of this document is, in some ways, an example for us. Certainly there is a huge gulf between this initiative and our complacency.

Behind the decision to publish the document is a conception to which we pay lip-service, but needs to be far further to the fore in our practical work: that the building of an international tendency demands the training of a cadre "at the international level", that is, in the systematic attempt to understand and intervene in the central internationally important political situations.

It would be instructive - in order to give some idea of what this means concretely - to look at the history of the SWP's understanding (or lack of understanding) of its international tasks. For us certain things are obvious: we have not tackled the question of the development of a group sympathetic to our political line in Ireland with any urgency - indeed, we have hardly done it at all. Secondly, while the developments in Portugal have dominated the concerns of revolutionaries for two years, we have still to produce a polemical account, that is, an account of the development of events which at every major juncture analyses the positions of rival political tendencies and contrasts them with our own. Far from having done this (to be fair - there is an article in the journal which is at present being printed which deals with some of this material, though I don't know how it approaches it) we have rarely had even PC discussions, let alone NC and group-wide discussions, on Portugal and those that we have had have been lacking in serious preparation. (Once again I am at least co-responsible for this state of affairs). Through code Rice it would be possible also to monitor the Portuguese revolutionary press - even to have some dialogue with those organisations.

What lies at the root of these near-criminal complacency? I think it is an implicit distinction between party-building and the building of an international tendency. Fundamentally this distinction is a revision of the very founding ideas of Trotskyism, indeed of post Second International Marxism. The idea is that we go about our daily work and in addition to that, when forces allow, we see what forms and degrees of collaboration can be achieved with other organisations in other countries.

Firstly for a small organisation the pressure to commit all forces to the domestic struggle inevitably turns this "international project" into a bottom-of-the-list "priority" which no one ever gets round to dealing with. Incidentally, the fact that the fusion has meant that the PC and NC need to devote an inordinate amount of time to knitting the organisation together and seeing to its smooth function means that the pressure on committing all attention to the domestic struggle is even greater. (In this context it is a good sign that the I-CL's "international work" has been better than WF's though still grossly deficient.)

Secondly this dichotomy fails to see that "national" party-building is only valid on the basis of an internationally valid programme. As a matter of fact, far from this being a generally true but practically not very meaningful idea, this conception has a very obvious daily relevance to a propaganda group (or sub-propaganda group as I think we are). After all, seen on the simplest level, we are not going to recruit from IS, IMG, WSM etc. to any large extent on the basis of being models of proletarian activity. These groups are bigger than we are, they are - at least the first two, superficially organisationally far more impressive than we are. Gains are going to be made on the basis of sharp political-ideological struggle. Of course, this could occur over a domestic issue, even a tactical issue; but the most serious comrades are going to be won not on the basis of our better position on this or that domestic issue, but on the basis of a qualitatively superior analysis and set of positions such as distinguish a revolutionary organisation from a centrist or reformist organisation.

! * ! * ! *

It would be useful if, next year, we approached this Fete differently. While it is in no sense a major political event, unless there are reasons which make it impossible, a group of about a dozen should be assembled, who would be trained prior to going in discussing the major international issues with the different national and international tendencies. This would be a useful device both for developing a cadre and also for projecting ourselves internationally.

J. Price

