

RESOLUTION ON ELECTORAL TACTICS - Jones, Britain. It has not yet been voted on.
(To the PC: This is by Alan Jones of the IMG in

In the elections held in the current political situation the IMG will adopt the following tactics:

- i. It will call for the return of a Labour Govt against the Tories while exposing the reformist and anti-working class character of such a government. It will expose the fact that the Labour Govt, and all those who support its policies, are responsible for its own downfall.
- ii. In order to reach the maximum number of forces with the most important conclusions on how to fight against the economic, social and political crisis and the policies which will be pursued by a Tory or Labour Govt, the IMG seeks to promote the maximum number of candidates running on a programme of opposition to the anti-working class policies of the Labour Govt although for tactical reasons, to make clear that the responsibility for a Labour defeat lies with the policies of its leadership, these candidates should stand in constituencies where the loss of the seat would not be attributed to this electoral intervention. Such opposition is manifested in a commitment to the most decisive parts of the IMG's action programme and an orientation to reliance of mass struggle and not on Parliament for the defeat of the policies of the government.
- iii. Flowing from the above situation, the attitude of the IMG to forces standing in the election will be
 - (a) Candidates of the IS, SLP(SF), WSL, or supporters of the Militant current are forces which, despite major inadequacies, are clearly carrying on a struggle against the policies of the government. We call for a vote for the IS, SLP(SF), or WSL against the Labour Party, and in any situation where a supporter of the Militant current was the Labour candidate, we are not in favour of running against Labour in that constituency. The WRP's policies do not conform to the above criteria and we favour a vote for the Labour Party against the WRP.
 - (b) We try to promote wherever possible independent class struggle candidates. Our attitude to any candidates standing in opposition to Labour claiming to represent a left alternative will be determined by the considerations outlined above in point ii.
 - (c) Certain individual Labour candidates (Maynard, Knight, Livingstone) and the SLP (Sillars) represent border-line cases who have vacillated between support and activity of mass struggle and reliance on Parliamentary and bureaucratic manoeuvres. At present however, the correct tactic to expose the vacillating character of these elements, and to take the class struggle forward, is by making demands on them. We do not favour therefore at present running candidates against these forces. This situation must however be reviewed in the light of developments towards any election.
 - (d) Both the Tribune group and the Communist Party have clearly subordinated action against the Labour Government's policies to Parliamentary and bureaucratic manoeuvres. Neither general programmatic considerations nor its current role in the class struggle lead to a call for a vote for the Communist Party. There is no reason not to stand candidates in areas where the Labour candidate is a Tribunite.
 - (e) In all areas where there is no candidate representing a class struggle alternative standing, we call for a vote for Labour against the parties of the bourgeoisie.
- iv. The general slogan issued by the IMG for the election will be "For a Labour Government but fight for a socialist alternative".
- v. In order to maximise the impact of the presentation of candidates representing a class struggle alternative to Labour, the IMG will fight for the maximum co-ordination, organisationally and programmatically, amongst such forces. This will include an approach to IS for the greatest possible measure of agreement in the election in regard to avoiding clashes of candidates, calling for a joint vote, etc. In the event a serious agreement of this character were reached, the IMG would discuss how to put up the maximum number of candidates. If only a minimal, or no agreement, is reached, the IMG will attempt, as part of an integrated plan of work involving propaganda, united front initiatives, and the fight for revolutionary regroupment, to present around six candidates in our strongest areas. These will be prepared through a local campaign for class struggle candidates, where possible participation in the local elections, and nationally through a campaign for an electoral intervention for a socialist alternative to Labour in the elections, for the raising of funds, production of material, etc.

not yet voted on

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERVENTION IN THE NEXT ELECTION - JONES
9/12/76 For PC.

The following resolution is based on the document 'Notes on the elections' discussed at the PC on Nov 20th. It has been amended and extended in the light of discussion at the PC, and should be read together with that document. The proposal is that the PC should vote on the resolution at the end of the text and submit this as a PC document for the next National Committee.

General considerations on elections

1. In determining the framework of intervention in elections, revolutionaries have to develop at least two simultaneous tasks. Firstly, they have, in the interests of the long term and present struggle of the working class, to organise the maximum number of forces around the basic historic programme of proletarian revolution. Secondly, in the interests of the proletarian movement immediately and as the sole way in which the forces for the revolutionary tasks of the working class can be won over, they have to organise in the most effective way the fight around the most urgent and burning tasks questions which confront the working class and its allies today. A correct tactic must effectively combine these two tasks in the general dynamic of the class struggle. The suppression of the second purely in favour of the first results in a policy of left sectarianism, and the suppression of the first in favour of the second results in a capitulation before the reformist bureaucracies and a failure to prepare the working class for the struggle against the dynamic unleashed by these bureaucracies.
2. Within their strategic conceptions and class criteria, the position of revolutionaries in elections is a question of tactics. They reject any idea that revolutionaries should always participate in elections, that they should always boycott elections, that they should always vote for the party of the masses, or any similar panacea. The form of intervention in elections is determined by how best to succeed in winning the maximum number of forces to the most correct and important political positions. Whether this is best achieved by standing candidates in the election, by calling for a boycott, by calling for a vote for another party than our own organisation, or by some other tactic can only be decided by a concrete analysis of all the elements in the situation - what are the decisive issues in the class struggle refracted in the election, whether there is any significant force independent of the reformist bureaucracy, what is the likely dynamic of the class struggle following the elections, etc.
3. The political situation in regard to our determining of policy in elections in general is relatively clear. In Europe, in the present period, as noted in the EPD, and our own perspectives, the emergence of a vanguard of some tens of thousands which has broken with illusions in any section of the reformist bureaucracy and which, while small in terms of the masses, is relatively large in relation to the vanguard organisations, poses new tactics compared to the 1950s and early 1960s. To win over this vanguard is the chief task today in organising the forces prepared to fight for the historic programme of the working class. Furthermore-- as by definition as a vanguard, this layer takes up the struggle for the most crucial questions of the day confronting the working class, the organising of these forces is one of the ways of fighting around the chief issues of the class struggle today. The needs of the class struggle and the necessity to organise this vanguard fully dovetail. As intervention in elections is one of the methods of organising this vanguard, the emergence of such a force is characteristic which leads in the direction of revolutionaries in this period in Europe undertaking an independent electoral intervention.

The coming election and our line.

4. In order to determine our position in this specific election in Britain, however, it is necessary to go beyond the general characteristics of the period to the concrete situation in this present phase of the class struggle. The central issue at this election, and in contrast to for example Italy and Spain, will not be dominated by a revolutionary situation or the likely short-term development of one. The central dividing line of action in the class struggle today is not between those who stand for revolution and those who oppose it. To make our intervention in the election on the basis of draw-

ing the line between revolutionaries and non-revolutionaries would be an example of left sectarian propagandism. The central issue of this election is the economic, social and political crisis of capitalism, and the fact that policies to attempt to overcome this crisis in the interests of the bourgeoisie, and at the expense of the working class, are being pursued by a Labour Govt. The central dividing line in the class struggle today is between those who are prepared to oppose this attempt to solve the crisis at the expense of the working class and those who oppose this policy. Specifically revolutionary propaganda on soviet power, the necessity of the violent overthrow of capitalism, etc, is, as always, a task of our propaganda in the election but it cannot be its central axis.

5. The elements which the IMG analyses as the most decisive and defining ones of the present situation, and the answers it gives to these issues, are encapsulated in our action programme. Within this framework, however, attention must be drawn to two points. Firstly, a programme consists not of demands on paper but a project of struggle - and the only struggle which is effective for any demand is that based on the mobilisation of the masses in action. Those who really stand for elements of our action programme are not those who give verbal adherence to it but those who are prepared to engage in a struggle for it. This is a decisive criteria at a time when forces in the LP give verbal adherence to opposition to the gov't's policies but are not prepared to take one step in action to fight it. Secondly, of course while only the implementation of our full action programme can provide a real outcome to the crisis, we of course recognise some elements are the most decisive - thus for example it is possible to take at least certain steps in the interests of the working class without as yet endorsing the demand for sliding scale of wages but it is not possible to take one serious step forward while supporting wage controls, various forces who do not yet endorse the demand for sliding scale of public expenditure can and do nevertheless wage an important and correct struggle, which takes the working class forward against all cuts in public expenditure.

6. It is this central dividing line in the election which defines our relation to all candidates in this election. In relation to the polarisation of the social masses, we stand for a Labour Govt as against a Tory one. However, we also try to organise the maximum forces for the struggle against any such government and for the most effective fight against the Tory government which will almost certainly be returned at the next election. The forces which stand for such a struggle, for the reasons outlined above, are those who stand for at least the decisive elements of our action programme and who, while they do not necessarily reject a parliamentary road to socialism (to demand this would correspond to a view that the decisive issue in this election is socialist revolution), nevertheless do not rely on parliament or intra-bureaucratic manoeuvres but on actions of the working class.

7. It is among other things the relation of the forces inside and outside the Labour Party to this decisive task of the day which determines our attitude to whether to run independent candidates. If there were today a broad opposition within the LP, committing itself to action against the government's policies, then the way forward would be participation in this opposition, and a central axis of waging the struggle within the LP to overturn the present policies of this government. The central orientation would be to fight for socialist alternative policies in Labour with, at the most and as a subsidiary task, running a few candidates against the most extreme and notorious rightists and supporters of the government. The reality however is that today no such serious force exists. Those forces who have pursued a consistent and active role in fighting the government's policies have done so primarily either independently of, or completely outside, the organisational framework of the LP, and any serious opposition current within the LP. Under such circumstances, the chief task is not the fight within the LP, but the task to project and organise as clearly as possible those forces who are prepared to fight consistently - forces which today are organisationally not acting through the LP. This situation determines

a line whereby the way to reach and win the maximum number of forces to the correct and vital positions in the class struggle is best achieved by running candidates independent of Labour and not merely offering critical support to Labour.

8. Such independent candidates must have a limited and serious goal. The realistic task of the period is not that of defeating Labour but of imposing a serious set-back on the CP as the main force competing for united action with leftward moving groups of workers breaking from the line of the Labour bureaucracy. Within this framework, the running of independent candidates will have a positive role both in building a revolutionary organisation and in the central task of the present period - the task of creating a serious class struggle opposition at the base of the mass organisations.

9. The general slogan issued by the IMG for the election must encapsulate this general analysis and its organisational conclusion. The slogan which would correspond to the view that the most urgent task was to fight within the LP for an answer to the crisis would be "Vote Labour but fight for socialist policies" - a position which would also correspond to running no or only a handful of candidates. The slogan which would correspond to the view that the central issue in this election was reform versus revolution, and the task of revolutionaries was therefore to polarise the election around this question, would be "For a Labour Govt but vote for a revolutionary alternative" - a position entailing a vote, apart from Labour, for solely the organisations of the revolutionary left (i.e. not the SLP and involving running against all Labour candidates). Of the slogans advanced to encapsulate the analysis outlined above "For a Labour Govt but fight for a socialist alternative" is the most satisfactory. Such a slogan clearly involves voting for revolutionary candidates running against Labour but, unlike the slogan for a 'revolutionary alternative', also can include voting for candidates or not running against candidates who are not revolutionaries but who have pursued a policy of fighting the policies of the government.

Our position on the forces in the election

10. The attitude of the IMG to all other forces is determined by the considerations outlined above:

- (i) Supporters of the line of the Labour Govt, Support for the Govt will of course be the line of the LP in the election. Despite all the attacks of the Labour Govt, the defeat of the LP in the elections would undoubtedly be a setback, letting in a viciously anti-working class Tory government, demoralising important sections of the working class in the face of this government, and preventing layers of the working class drawing the experience of the role of the Labour bureaucrats in office. For these reasons, we are for the return of a Labour Govt. We will call for a Labour vote against the Tories while, at the same time, in as many places as possible, attempting to get put forward candidates against the line of the Labour Govt whose supporters of the policy of that government are standing.
- (ii) The organised Labour left and the Communist Party, Even apart from their general programmatic backwardness, no organised section of the Labour left has pursued a serious campaign of resistance to the policies of the government. With the exception of individuals, the Tribunites have at most, and not even in all cases, put up purely verbal opposition. Their objective role has been the left cover of the government. There is no reason whatever why we should not stand or support candidates standing against the Tribunites. The role of the CP has been in no way qualitatively different from that of the Tribunites. They have not relied on the mobilisation of the masses but on the contrary completely subordinated that to parliamentarist oppositional illusions and manoeuvres within the bureaucracy. The CP has withdrawn from even the limited opposition shown under the last government in such actions as the strikes against In Place of Strife, the lobbies of the TUC, etc. There is no basis either in general programmatic considerations or immediate needs for giving critical support to candidates of the CP.

(iii) Individual Labour lefts, The most marginal and difficult case is that of a small number of individual left Labour forces who have vacillated between purely bureaucratic manoeuvres and supporting or encouraging action against the government's policies. These range from forces who have simply voted against the government without taking decisive steps outside this but are nevertheless clearly seen by the working class as oppositional elements (e.g. Thorne), through forces who have undoubtedly supported such mass actions as have occurred although not necessarily initiating them (Maynard, Knight, Livingstone), to forces who have openly advocated mass action against the government's policies (Kelly, Roberts, Nicholson, Scargill, etc). In these cases, the problem is whether it is best for taking forward the class struggle and exposing these elements now and in the future, as they turn from vacillating allies to open strike-breakers, to run candidates against them now or not to run candidates but make demands on them while urging a vote for them. Such an issue can only be decided tactically. At present to run candidates against such elements would not be understandable even by advanced forces of the workers movement and far from getting our ideas to most people we would be able to do this most effectively by not running against them. This position must be decided individually in each case however and must be reviewed also in the light of events between now and the election.

(iv) The Sillars SLP, The Sillars SLP essentially falls into the same category as the individual Labour lefts. The Sillars forces have more or less consistently voted against the government on issues such as cuts, unemployment, etc. They have also followed in the wake of mass actions against the government's policies - although they have

initiated none themselves. The tactical problem is how best to take forward the struggle against the government's policies and expose the role of the Sillarsites. As with individual Labour lefts, at present the best way is to call for a vote for the Sillarsites, and not run candidates against them while at the same time placing demands on them. This must however be looked at continuously between now and the election in terms of the evolution of the SLP, its relations with the SNP, etc.

(v) The extreme left, This consists of possible class struggle candidates in a locality, the organised revolutionary left, the SLP(SF), and the Militant group. In a few areas, it may be possible to secure the putting forward of independent class struggle candidates - forces not necessarily revolutionary but supporting the most decisive demands of our action programme and with a record of struggle and base in an area or nationally. We should encourage any such possibility and give full backing to any such candidate. However realistically apart from a few areas (e.g. Newham if Prentice is reselected, areas of high fascist influence), it is unlikely that anything other than one or two such candidates would be put forward. Instead we will primarily be confronted with organised forces of the extreme left. The only other extreme left force than the IMG likely to run more than one candidate in the election is the IS. It is quite clear that the IS meet the criteria outlined above - despite sectarian deviations, the IS does not at all rely on parliament and has clearly been carrying on a struggle against the government's policies on the decisive issues. We call for a vote for the IS candidates against those of the LP. Within this framework, of course, however, we criticise the programmatic inadequacy of the IS on a number of major questions, their sectarian orientation to the mass organisations and the extreme left, call for their campaign to be organised in a democratic fashion and based on the forces engaged in the vanguard of the class struggle, etc. (Footnote 1). The SLP(SF) stands on the decis-

Footnote 1. We should be clear however in the motivation we give for voting for the IS in this election. The question of our motivation for voting for IS is a separate question from our general characterisation of them as an organisation. Even if we concluded that they should be characterised as a revolutionary organisation, this would not be the motivation for calling for a vote. To call for a vote for the IS on the grounds that they are revolutionaries is to make the touchstone of the election for or against revolution - an ultra-left deviation.

ive demands of our action programme and fights for them. We clearly call for a vote for this organisation and urge it to run as many candidates as possible. Despite its centrist character and absorption in Labour infighting, the Militant current clearly fights against the policies of the government. In any constituency where a Militant supporter was candidate (e.g. if Devan were selected in NEwham NE), we are not in favour of running a candidate against them. The only other current which may run a candidate is the WSL. Thoenett, for example, would be an excellent class struggle candidate and we should urge the WSL to run him - pledging full IMG support to such a campaign.

The WRP in the present situation cannot be considered as an organisation fulfilling the criteria for a vote against Labour. It has engaged in no serious initiatives against the Labour Govt. Its chief campaigns are not those corresponding even remotely to the needs of the working class but to its sectarian interests and fantasies. Its campaign for the downfall of the Labour Govt is actually contrary to the interests of the working class. There is no correct basis for calling in this election for a vote for the WRP against the LP.

11. The position of the IMG embodying its analysis is to seek to maximise the number of candidates running on a programme of socialist opposition to the policies of the Labour Govt. For tactical reasons, these alternative candidates should evidently be run in seats whose loss could only be attributed to the demoralising loss of votes created by the Labour Govt and not to an electoral intervention of working class forces opposed to the Labour Govt's policies. Apart from this, we only oppose running candidates against a few individual LP forces of the Maynard, Knight, Livingstone, Kelly/Devan/Nicholson type. We call for a vote for the SLP(Sillars), the SLP(SF), the IS, the IMG, and other forces of the extreme left against the LP. We call for a vote for the candidates of the LP against those of the WRP.