

# The I-CL and the Fourth International



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# INTRODUCTION

THE MAIN documents in this pamphlet are the products of a long period of study and discussion within the Workers Fight group, culminating in the resolution of the August 1975 Workers Fight conference. Thesis XI (page 19) was voted on as a resolution by conference, the rest of the document being motivation and explanation. Naturally Thesis XI is here produced exactly as voted on at conference; the rest of the document ("The World Party of Socialist Revolution....", p.9) has been restructured and edited to make it more accessible to people who have not participated in the Workers Fight discussion.

At the founding of the I-CL, fusing Workers Fight and Workers Power, the political substance of the document was adopted unanimously as the basic position of the I-CL (p.7).

The assessment of the IMG (p.32) fills out the picture of the USFI for the main area of I-CL activity, Britain.

Self-evidently the documents on the Fourth International, summarising its character, are no more than the registration of stages in an ongoing process of evaluation of the history of modern communism — 'Trotskyism' — by the I-CL. A systematic historical and analytic examination of the last 50 years of our tendency is necessary for the movement today. We are working on that, but are not yet ready to produce it.

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A cautious and painstaking approach is essential because of the importance and the scope of the work, and also because the subject is a factional football between all the tendencies claiming any sort of roots in Trotskyism or to be 'the' Trotskyists. The writings produced by the different tendencies are indeed a grim warning.

A whole section of the 'Trotskyist' movement has lapsed into a primitive religious dogmatism, in which a preposterous demonology is employed to 'explain' the problems our movement has faced in the last three decades — the vulgar myth of 'Pabloism'. This mythical explain-all is common to the minority of the USFI (Leninist-Trotskyist Faction), the WRP, the OCI (of France), IS, WSL, RCG, Socialist Charter, etc. As with the life-force theory in the past, and other quackery, anybody who lacks an explanation or is too lazy to seek one, for the real problems of the movement, can latch onto this myth, all the more effective because so ill-defined.

Adopting the true intellectual morality of ancient text-falsifying Christians some of the 'anti-Pabloites' — in Britain, the WRP — fill the air with their indignation against that section of the Trotskyist current that has **attempted** to come to terms with new conditions. Their criticism, often formally correct, is **harmful** because they themselves commit all the errors they attempt to ascribe to factional opponents chosen organisationally and arbitrarily. Often they commit worse errors. Ignorant, scholastic Bible-thumpers, they are the Ian Paisleys of the Trotskyist movement.

Their 'Pabloism' is like the 'Khrushchevite revisionism' of the Maoists — fundamentally it serves as a cover for what is common to critics and criticised, and an evasion of an honest and rational coming to terms with the problems of a movement that has been in crisis for 30 years and more.

IS has produced a series of articles by D. Hallas, which are close to being unique in the productions of that organisation for their shameless mendacity. Hallas has scoured the works of other not-too-scrupulous critics of the FI mainstream, the WRP (I), the Shachtmanites of the USA, and others. He serves up a unique stew in which the textual falsifications of the WRP, and the criticisms of renegades like Shachtman, Felix Morrow, Jock Haston, and Yvan Craipeau are re-hashed in a fine schoolmasterly style.

One example. He 'shows' the alleged unrealism of the FI by quoting J P Cannon in September 1945 as saying the war wasn't over. Learnedly, he cites the SWP's weekly "Militant" as source. The facts? Cannon made an agitational speech, reported in the "Militant", attacking complacency and pointing to the war in Indochina, etc. Within the SWP, critics of Cannon's exaggerated agitational presentation could cite the manifesto produced by the SWP that August on the end of the war! Hallas may not know any of this. The most charitable interpretation is that he is a slothful plagiariser of slanderers and a grave-robber of unscrupulous polemicists now long departed.

But Hallas doesn't care. When an early issue of Workers Fight pointed out that in one of his cribbings from the WRP against "the Pabloites", he had re-produced slanderous textual distortions, Hallas smugly side-stepped the whole question in the reply he did in the IS Internal Bulletin. When short-term factional/organisational concerns are central, what does it matter what mud and sticks are used against the opponent?

To us it matters. Just as a misestimation on the Russian Revolution, the revolution that took place, the real revolution and not an immaculate conception in someone's head, is inevitably disorientating, no less disorientating and crippling is a light-minded attitude to the movement for a new communist International initiated by Leon Trotsky and its subsequent history. That was the only genuinely revolutionary-proletarian current to emerge from the Communist International. Its fate has been the fate of that communism for half a century, and an understanding of that fate is essential to the work of communists now and for the future.

.. .. .

Of the other tendencies, the WSL (a split-off from the WRP), has managed — working within the myth-ridden 'anti-Pabloite' version of the history and problems of the Fourth International — to go backwards a little beyond the WRP's artificial and factional historical dividing-line, 1953 (when the WRP, following the SWP, broke with Pablo). They criticise the WRP, but entirely from within its own frame of references, with the signs scrambled and readjusted a bit. That the WSL is considering the problems is good; that they have yet to break out of the mythical accounts of our movement's history, and even attain a scientific overview, places a question mark over the future of that tendency.

.. .. .

Some of the 'critics', like the WRP, declare themselves and a few supporters to be the Fourth International — a claim which need not be taken seriously even on the organisational level. More serious is the claim of the IMG, the British section of the major FI grouping, the USFI. Common to all is fetishism — positive and negative fetishism. Our documents attempt to break the basis for any fetishism by submitting the outline history and present reality of the FI current to a cold and ruthless political and organisational assessment. Only on such a basis is it possible to rebuild, to regenerate politically, and to cut through the political and organisational chaos.

.. .. .

The I-CL does not criticise from afar, nor do we assume 'superiority'. It is our movement we discuss; they are our problems we grapple with. We deal with them to try to find solutions. We know of no other way to attempt that except rational, critical discussion — including criticism of our own previous

positions where necessary. Thus part of the 1973 material is superseded by the 1975 document.

The sometimes contradictory (taken over a period of time) comments on the FI and the USFI, as well as the negative characterisations, are to be explained by the struggle of the old Workers Fight tendency and of the I-CL to grasp the contradictory, unstable, and, in terms of historical roots, often obscured, problems of our movement. We are not "the children of the prophet" (as one Philistine entitled his history of French Trotskyism), but we are certainly children of the defeat and chaos which engulfed revolutionary communism decades ago. As an organisation, and as individuals, we originated within that chaos and the sects it has fragmented the movement into.

Thus, when we said before that the USFI had not betrayed Trotskyism, and we now accuse it of treason to the programme of Trotskyism, we can reasonably be asked what is new.

A short answer is the current USFI position on Vietnam — no call for political revolution or for an independent proletarian party, and the programme of the power of workers' councils transformed into advice for the ruling bureaucracy. It is true that we find it difficult to consider people like Pierre Rousset, slanderer of the Vietnamese Trotskyist victims of Stalinism (see 'Permanent Revolution' no.2), as comrades.

The more fundamental answer, though, is that we now see the questions like Vietnam in the perspective of a whole cyclically-recurring history of abandonment of elementary principles. What we saw previously as errors of over-reaction, we see now as a constitutionally-inbuilt and chronic condition.

The same where we said no other tendency represents the full revolutionary programme in the present period: we failed to distinguish between the general wishes and desires of the individuals in the FI current, their formal and nominal adherence to a tradition, and their effective programme. We misunderstood the nature of programme: in reality, programme is not a general blueprint, but the sum total of the tendency's operational politics. Therefore our statement that the USFI represented the full revolutionary programme was only true, if at all, in the most platonic sense.

The bitter truth is that wherever the FI mainstream has responded to an autonomous revolution — the deformed workers' states, China, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Cuba — it has adopted, for a longer or shorter time, an accommodationist attitude to the leaderships of those revolutions, excusing and sometimes justifying their anti-working-class policies, the absence of a democratic working-class regime, and so on. This accommodation has varied in degree, but it has been a consistent pattern.

.. ..

What has crippled the FI currents, and generated the unstable zig-zags in their politics, has been the unintegrated coexistence within them of Brandlerism/Deutscherism together with 'orthodoxy'. The Brandlerism/Deutscherism means the acceptance of the bureaucracy as legitimate, the absence of any analysis and critique of the social role of the bureaucracy in certain deformed workers' states, and the failure to elaborate a programme of political revolution in those states. The 'orthodoxy' dictates a belief in political revolution in the USSR and its satellites. The resulting combination has been a broken-backed and necessarily unstable centrist organisation, without either ideological firmness or even an accommodationist equilibrium. There is some organisational continuity with the Fourth International of Trotsky. But political continuity there is none. Calls for political revolution against Russian Stalinism go badly with Philistine accommodation to the bureaucratic formations in the deformed workers' states, when the programme of Trotskyism for soviet workers' power is shelved, ignored, or presented in a supine Fabian spirit as reasonable proposals for the 'next stage' of "the Revolution", and without accepting

the central communist responsibility to build proletarian parties to fight for that programme in every way necessary and against whomsoever opposes it.

.. ..

There is no typical section of the USFI. Still, the IMG's pattern of instability is at least a typical pattern. IMG comrades were incredulous and derisive three to four years ago when we insisted that the magical and intoxicating ultra-left rhetoric about a General Strike to Kick the Tories Out was in political substance right-wing (see Workers Fight open letter to 1973 IMG conference). Today? The IMG is blatantly right-wing — and shifting rightwards still. Its 'scenario politics', delusions of grandeur, and world-historic day-dreaming unchecked by cold assessment, lead it to a 'strategic project' of a broad united front, involving big sections of the social democracy and some of its leadership. This 'project' is way beyond anything the IMG can hope to effect in reality; it is, therefore, now attempting to substitute for it.

In the 1960s the IMG deduced that a left social-democratic current was the creature with which the political times were pregnant. When it failed to materialise, the "Fourth-Internationalists" substituted themselves for the 'replacement leadership', mouthing the necessary left social-democratic politics to qualify. So far today, unlike the '60s, we have only ideological accommodation — as over the Common Market — not yet organisational accommodation. In fact we have the classic centrist-sectarian pattern of organisational rigidity and political flaccidity. An International which tolerates, nay encourages, such things, is nothing but a centrist mish-mash.

.. ..

The 1975 document talks of certain of the post-1948 FI codifications as acceptable to us as working hypotheses only. Inevitably the charge of revisionism and theoretical scepticism will be levelled at us. Another unworthy, but too likely, charge is that of ideological horse-trading between the state-capitalist minority in the I-CL and the workers'-statist majority. It is easily disposed of: there were no state-capitalist members of Workers Fight when that document was discussed and adopted, nor did fusion between Workers Fight and the IS Left Faction (as Workers Power then was) seem very likely. Theoretical scepticism? No. An attempt to pose sharply and honestly the real problems raised by the history of the movement. The record of instability needs explaining: in itself that record shows how little weight the FI has really given its own theories and proclaimed principles.

Principles for us are important: we look for theoretical explanation of the history of chameleon-instability. We believe with Trotsky that centrist pretence that what needs to be done has been done, is harmful, and we have become painfully aware of just how much remains to be done. For us, the fight for the continuity of the politics of Lenin and Trotsky demands a challenge to the claim that the post-Trotsky FI currents represent that continuity in any but a minimal sense.

The I-CL continues to believe that the USFI is the mainstream that has emerged from the communist tendency personified by Leon Trotsky. We intend to relate ideologically to it. If a meaningful International does not exist, the responsibility to start from an international programme of world revolution remains imperative. Absurd and politically agnostic though the logic be that says there is an International organisation, and membership is obligatory irrespective of the politics, it is no more absurd and politically unprincipled than accepting a purely national political existence for a tendency like the I-CL. Simultaneously, while building primarily in Britain, we will attempt to build an international tendency — in dialogue, in competition, and in ideological combat with the USFI and other tendencies.

SEAN MATGAMNA: 7-5-76.

The proletarian revolution in Britain is only one subordinate link in the world workers' revolution. The proletariat, the class which will create communism, is a world class; and capitalism is a world system, which especially in its imperialist phase, has drawn the world together, intermeshing it so that no single part is understandable without reference to the whole.

The communist programme is an INTERNATIONAL programme or it is utopian. The national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa.

Our fight to build a revolutionary party in Britain is historically, therefore, only a subordinate part of the fight to build a proletarian-revolutionary International. The primary precondition for such an International is a developed international PROGRAMME. A PROPAGANDA International—that is, one which as yet lacks mass national sections—can be valid and meaningful as the defender and advocate of such a n international programme. We reject the centrist view promoted by IS, according to which an International can only be formed AFTER national mass parties are built.

Trotsky's Fourth International, declared in 1938 as just such a propaganda International, represented the healthy revolutionary-communist tendency which had survived—and fought against—the political liquidation by the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Communist International.

In the post-war period, the Fourth International movement suffered ideological erosion and disintegration. This arose essentially from a failure to come to terms adequately with the post-war revolutionary developments in Eastern Europe, China, etc. For Trotsky's dialectical materialism, there has been substituted a vulgar evolutionism, seeing the 'world revolution' as a mystical and pervasive 'process', acting behind or even in spite of of the material class struggle. The disorientation is expressed in adaptationist politics, most seriously in evasion, or even treachery in relation to the anti-bureaucratic revolution in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, etc.

To this general ideological disorientation, the 'anti-Pabloite' currents have added an extra element of poisonous confusion. They arbitrarily assign all the failures of the post-war Trotskyist movement to their factional opponents, the so-called 'Pabloites'. In actuality, the term 'Pabloism' has and can have no precise historical meaning, because there is hardly a single mistake, however grievous, that the 'anti-Pabloite' forces themselves, collectively or separately, have not committed, usually with that crassness which is peculiar to them.

To their incoherent and often lying denunciations, the 'anti-Pabloites' add loud proclamations of 'the party' and 'the programme' as entirely NON-POLITICAL fetishes. By thus reducing their politics to RELIGION they LIQUIDATE Marxism in the most thorough way possible.

In this sense (and in this sense only) we consider the current represented by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to be the mainstream of post-war Trotskyism. It represents the most serious and sustained attempt to relate to the post-war problems. The 'anti-Pabloites' can offer only ideological left-overs from the USFI current's work, together with an obscurantism which is properly their own.

As for the 'state capitalist' alternative to the mainstream Fourth Internationalist position, the most substantial state-capitalist tendency, the Cliff group in Britain, abandoned basic Leninist conceptions of the Party and the International; moreover its 'state capitalist' theory is neither Marxist nor state capitalist! (The internal logic, as opposed to the labels adhered to for reasons of dogmatism, of Cliff's analysis and description of the USSR, is bureaucratic-collectivist.)

Nevertheless we do not consider the USFI to be a Marxist International — rather a centrist obstacle to the building of such an International; and all the greater an obstacle for its pretence, bluff and self-glorification. We WELCOME the forthcoming split in the USFI, believing that this disintegration of a rotten bloc will increase the possibilities for healthy dialogue and regroupment.

Immediately, we see our tasks as:

- a) building a communist-internationalist organisation in the British working class;
- b) contributing to dialogue, discussion, and debate on an international scale, and, out of that, seeking international links with co-thinkers.



**THE WORLD PARTY OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION (FOURTH INTERNATIONAL) OF L.D. TROTSKY AND ITS PLACE IN HISTORY; THE CURRENT FOURTH-INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCIES AND THE TASKS OF WORKERS FIGHT**  
(CONFERENCE DOCUMENT, July 1975)

I

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL was based on the political codifications of the Communist International, buttressed by the analyses and polemics of the anti-Stalinist rearguard of the CI. The codifications have survived as the possessions of feeble organisations into an age markedly different, since the end of world war 2, without a Communist International or a Trotsky or even an educated cadre of any substance to deal with the problems of the last third of a century.

At first, after declaring the Comintern dead for the revolution, in the wake of its peaceful collapse in Germany and inability to learn even from this catastrophe, Trotsky considered that proclaiming the Fourth International would be an empty and impotent adventure, despite its theoretical richness. Instead he propagandised for it, expecting substantial sections of the revolutionary labour movement to rally to it, creating a force of some material importance.

By 1936 he was ready to propose that the international conference should proclaim the Fourth International. It refused to, not yet ready to make the change in the perspectives for building the new International that Trotsky had made between 1933 and 1936, still holding that the reconquest of a substantial section of the revolutionary vanguard for the programme of communism was a prerequisite for declaring a new International.

In 1938 the Fourth International was proclaimed at a one day conference; but in the next year we find Trotsky himself admitting, and grappling with the problem, that the International Secretariat doesn't function. He has settled into a realisation that the Fourth International is, and must initially be, a propaganda group — and, however powerful it is politically and ideologically, a very feeble group indeed. It was thus that Trotsky argued for the Fourth International in 1938, soberly avoiding any bluff or pretence. The work had been done — ideologically. Declaring the Fourth International, on the basis of the propaganda forces already assembled, would give the ideologically demarcated current an organisationally finished character and a clear organisational identity, in contradistinction to a wide gamut of centrist tendencies who were also "for the Fourth International", in the imminent period of world war. The 'conquest' of the masses would come.

The problem for revolutionaries today is that the ideological incompleteness, shoddiness, falseness, and shallowness of the independent achievements of the post-Trotsky Fourth International, faced with reanalysing a markedly changed world, and with developing the ideological heritage of the Comintern and Trotsky in a struggle to change that world, including the world of oppression of the working class within the stalinist states, poses for us brutally the question, now: is there an ideological basis for a democratic centralist international party? We can only answer: no!

The USFI is immensely strong now compared with Trotsky's Fourth International — but that is beside the point.

A meaningful — propaganda — international was and is possible without masses, if the ideological bedrock is sound. A mass movement with a false ideological foundation is, and can not be other than, a roadblock.

The USFI has neither solid ideological foundation nor mass following; it stands on a platform of cobwebs. It subsists on political and organisational bluff, delusions, and on an assumed but far from authoritative claim to a sort of 'apostolic' succession. (And, after all, how appropriate this is for a tendency whose outlook is implicitly teleological, not scientific). The ideological inadequacies, which the 1973 Workers Fight Conference defined as a degenerate form of Trotskyism (existing since world war 2), but without drawing the necessary logical conclusions, lead inexorably to one conclusion: No Fourth International exists in the tradition of Trotsky.

Talk of one, two, three or ten "Fourth Internationals" is meaningless, as is the toy-carpentry-set political catchcry "Rebuild the Fourth International". Ideological chaos, collapse, disintegration — the politics of chameleonism, scholasticism — the art of the political palimpsestists who solve a problem like that of the Chinese anti-capitalist revolution by renaming a peasant army a workers' party — these must first be cleared away.

For Workers Fight their significance must first be recognised, recorded and proclaimed. A propaganda international minus the elements — serious analysis, codifications, principled positions — necessary for communist propaganda, is an empty husk, not the precious seed-bed which Trotsky's Fourth International was. Every answer Trotsky made against the sceptics of the Deutscher sort in 1938 now — given the picture of the ideological condition of the FI currents as we see it and as we defined it in 1973 — now speaks against the pretence that a Fourth International exists in the tradition of the politics personified by Leon Trotsky. For one third of a century the ideological work has not been done. And the political and practical record of the 'mainstream' proves it.

## II

IT HAS BEEN a record of ideological instability. A teleological — that is a fundamentally religious — concept of the epoch has been substituted for the basic programme of communism. An extrapolated bundle of tactical recipes and super-speculative scenarios have been substituted for strategy. Vulgar evolutionism has for whole periods taken the place of Trotsky's belief that, though there was a materialist necessity and imperiousness in history, it could act only in and through men and women — and, for the proletarian revolution, men and women armed with the unfalsified ideas of communism. Disloyalty, indeed treachery — for the 'best' 'anti-sectarian', 'support the living revolution' motives, to be sure — to the communist programme and to the working class in countries where an anti-capitalist revolution has occurred without direct working class political power being established — this political self-castration has been the response of the self-proclaimed heirs of Leon Trotsky to the events in China yesterday and in Indochina today. There has been no even remotely serious attempt to integrate the lessons of the partially victorious third world revolutions into the strategical thinking of the Fourth International, with the disastrous exception of Algeria (tail-ending the revolutionary nationalists who had

been 'anointed' to emulate Castro) and the unserious flirtation with guerilla warfare (on which, certainly, WF supported the USFI position in the 1969 period; but for the USFI it merged into political terrorism — Argentina)

Before 1933 Trotsky had seen the Communist International as the organisation without which there would be no workers' revolution, and had struggled to reform it. After the collapse of the German CP before Hitler, the idea became increasingly prominent in his thinking that the objective pressures of reality would compel revolutionary change. But for him this meant that the pressures of decaying capitalism and the convulsions of war would force conscious reorientation, realignment, and regroupment in the labour movement, leading to a rebirth of communism. In the thinking of the post-war Fourth International, conscious communist activity has been downgraded to the level of marginalia. The objective 'process' is everything; the 'instrument' of the 'historical process', anything to hand.

The 'objective process' underlying the evolutionism of the Second International was, at least, a real, empirically-ascertainable process: the growth of industry, of the working class, of the trade unions and the socialist vote. The USFI's talk of a 'revolutionary process' rests on real revolutionary events, and real but limited interactions between them. But the 'process' is a metaphysical construct. Events, interactions, and struggles are dissolved into an image of a 'process' going on everywhere and all the time. As to the movement of this 'process', no empirically-based study is possible; only speculations based on events arbitrarily supposed to be 'expressions' of the working-out of the 'process'.

Any resemblance to Trotsky's dialectical materialism is an optical illusion. It is vulgar evolutionism that makes it possible to blindly pretend that the Chinese Communist Party is a workers' party, or to 'forget' the monstrous incompleteness of the transformations in China and the need for a supplementary revolution. Only in a vulgar evolutionist perspective is it possible to respond so uncritically to the revolutionary developments that undeniably have occurred. This vulgar evolutionism has to a large degree cut away Lenin's 'contribution' to what is now best called 'Trotskyism' — belief in the irreplaceable role of conscious communist activity organised in a revolutionary party which leads an active working class.

The 'Fourth International' has not staunchly and consistently maintained (even in a sectarian, Bordigist-type way) the politics that were 'Trotskyism' in 1940 or even 1948; neither has it synthesised this basic politics with the revolutionary experience since to create a higher, more adequate, more concrete politics as did the revolutionary socialist currents, which, after 1917, organically absorbed and integrated the Bolshevik theory and practice into their politics. Instead there has been the willingness to adapt, eclectically, to 'revolutionary' forces — revolutionary, but fighting neither for our programme nor for our class — characteristic of the footloose petty-bourgeois philistine 'sympathiser', unencumbered by ideological baggage. Because they have neither stuck to a frozen "1948 Trotskyism", nor completely embraced the operational ideology of any of the revolutionary forces they have recognised as having overthrown capitalism, nor synthesised a coherent analysis relating the Trotskyism of the period up to the Second World Congress (1948) to the new revolutionary experiences, thus allowing reactions, projects, critical evaluations in the spirit of Trotsky, they have oscillated, trimming, adapting, unable to either shed or find a consistent use for basic Trotskyism. In practice, they have been weathervanes (the 'ICs' as well as the USFI). Of the FI current for the last 25 years it can be said not only that they have oscillated within the tradition, bits and pieces of it from the Communist International and

Trotsky, but that by now it is as meaningless to ask "what are their principles" as it is to ask "what colour is the chameleon". For them the key question is: what way do you think the 'currents', 'tides', 'evolutions', 'conjunctures', 'waves' and 'processes' of the world revolution are flowing today? They have no stable principles except a semi-mystical belief in an unseen force guiding the 'world revolution', whose current 'will' it is the duty of revolutionaries to discern and accommodate to. They have played the sedulous ape to every 'socialist', 'communist', 'revolutionary' current. They have shown an inexhaustible capacity for seeing those currents, not as they are, but as they would like them to be — or rather, more or less as they **should** be within the framework of the USFI's teleological view of the 'epoch' and the 'World Revolution', and its often revised scenarios extrapolated from that view, with the roles periodically reallocated according to current events for the 'already written' drama!

In general there has been failure to answer the basic questions put to the movement, whether of economic analysis after 1945 or of elaborating a programme for the working class in the deformed workers' states. There has been no adequate self-accounting, or serious self-criticism. (Unless one chooses to call the slanderous attacks published by the LCR against the Vietnamese Trotskyist victims of Stalinism, "self-criticism" — attacks in which martyred comrades of our movement, killed for opposing the Stalinist betrayal in 1945 of the national liberation struggle, are said, in explanation of the Stalinist action, to have "underestimated the national question".) The only major exception is a late and limited self-criticism on Algeria.

Organisationally the USFI is a rotten bloc consisting — this "International", this "World Party of the Socialist Revolution" — of tendencies that are so divided strategically, tactically, **programmatically**, that wherever each is strong in a single country they can only maintain the fiction of international unity by national split. This is in continuity with the whole history of the FI, in which strong groups have competed for satellites and influence. It is obvious that formal international unity, despite the various national splits and expulsions, is possible only because the Atlantic Ocean separates the main antagonists, the LCR and SWP.

The unity is still a fiction and a split would be positive because it would expose to full view the reality. The probable subsequent Right "Trotskyist", "orthodox" regroupment in which the OCI would reunite with the SWP also could aid in exposing and clarifying the reality.

### III

THE RECENT British experience illustrates what the USFI is.

In January 1973 Workers Fight, at its Special Conference on the FI, accurately described the spluttering Catherine wheel of the IMG as "quasi-Bordigist". Calls to action, immediate demands, attention to parliamentary politics — all were rejected in favour of proclaiming "struggle against the State" as the answer. Today the IMG, harking back to its pre-'68 period with 'The Week', devotes itself to reproducing Tribune's programme, with attempts to add a leftist tinge.

The anaesthetic for this political transformation was provided by the "General Strike for all purposes but especially for changing ministries" mania. First, the "General strike to bring down the Government" slogan was adopted (just a few weeks after our January 1973 Conference) as part of the "struggle against the State" — "we are for smashing the State; the government is part of the State; therefore we are for smashing the

government; and we use any means necessary to do that, including General Strike". Gradually, as the slogan was hoisted more and more prominently into the headlines of the IMG press, the right wing kernel within the ultra left rhetoric took over.

This exercise in the politics of centrism — defined by the evasion of political self-accounting under cover of ambiguous formulas ("General Strike to replace the Tories by ...") — has taken place, not against the protests of the USFI, but with its active participation, approval, endorsement! But the USFI is a specialist in reconciling, under the title "Fourth International", tendencies of widely different politics; whether the tendencies be separated by geography (different countries) or merely by the passage of time (the ultra-left IMG of 1972 and the rightist IMG of 1975).

#### IV

DISCUSSING THE QUESTION, does the FI exist, WF has tended to answer — despite inadequacies and grave faults there is a continuity and an organised force, and there has not, either by a single act or cumulatively, been a betrayal. For the FI current there has been no 4th August 1914 and no 30th January 1933. It was in that sense we wrote: "Committing gross errors, never really adequate in the post-war period, it (*the USFI*) had nevertheless not 'betrayed' Trotskyism, as the sectarian slanderers said" (*Workers Fight and the Fourth International*, page 10).

But this is to miss the point. The requirements and standards of judgment for a propaganda international are radically different from those for the Second and Third Internationals. It stands or falls by the substance of its ideological work, by its adequacy or inadequacy. There has been no '33 or '14; yet the actual position we are at, viewed from an assessment of the state of the movement and our tasks, is best expressed if we imagine 1914 and 1933 telescoped

Organisationally we are at best in 1933 — we need a movement for a new communist international (the tasks of the movement for the Fourth International demystified).

But in 1933 there was a direct, short and very adequate continuity with the ideological foundation work of Lenin and the Communist International, and with Trotsky's and the Left Opposition's critical work on communist problems. We are much less favourably placed after the ideological ravages of the last third of a century.

In that sense, ideologically, we are much nearer the position of revolutionary Marxists after the collapse of the International in 1914. The shock and earthquake then was sudden; the rottenness of twenty years and more suddenly revealed itself on the day of August 4th, in political collapse. To revolutionaries like Lenin the most revered teachers of Marxism were revealed as servile, sterile theoreticians. The roots of the corruption had to be searched for. Decades of evaded problems, blunted Marxism, vulgar evolutionism imperceptibly substituted for dialectical materialism. Decades of rotten, accommodationist tactics, of straight textual and political bowdlerisations. (In her famous speech to the December 1918/January 1919 Spartacist conference, Rosa Luxemburg polemicalises, gently and generously, against Engels' 1895 Introduction to the "Class Struggles in France", which appeared to justify a purely parliamentary strategy. She died never knowing that the Introduction had been cut by the leaders of the German Social Democracy before publication, and Engels was on her side!) The task of Lenin and the communists was to dig down to the roots of the practice of the corruption of the Second International — to relate critically to the history of the workers' movement, to excavate the theoretical heritage, cleanse it of

falsification and expose the bowdlerisations (as for example Lenin did in "State and Revolution"). That was the task, the essential preparation for the Third International — and also for the Fourth.

The derelictions of one third of a century impose a combination of both situations and both tasks on us: that is the logical conclusion from our 1973 decision and our practice, and we must either face it or re-examine our 1973 decision and our practice.

The situation today lacks even islands of healthy political culture from which to transplant a new spread of proletarian parties — like that which the Bolshevik Party represented after 1914. The plethora of self-deluding "Fourth Internationals" is one serious complication we face — which is why we here define our position on them so sharply.

## V

LENIN'S WELL-KNOWN ARTICLE on "The Third International and its place in history" presented the following outline scheme: The First International represented theoretical foundation work (Marx and Engels); the Second, a broadening of both the workers' movement and a diluted Marxism, against a background of organic growth of capitalism; the Third had the task of refocusing and reconstructing the diffuse workers' movement for the task of the conquest of power.

We know what actually happened to the Third. And the Fourth? It was historically an appendix to the Third, the fighting rearguard which retained its political vigour and political creativity so long as the world and the categories on which its bedrock analyses (those of the Communist International) rested remained the same, more or less, and so long as Trotsky was alive. Otherwise, apart from being the Communist International's rearguard, and apart from the creative work of Trotsky, there never was a meaningful Fourth International, despite the colossal, elemental role of Trotsky, and despite the heroic efforts of the FI cadres to reorientate the revolutionary masses back towards the politics of communism. When we talk of our tradition, or the tradition of the CI and of the FI, by now, one third of a century after Trotsky, we mean overwhelmingly — our traditions are of the CI. Those traditions were continued by the Left Opposition and personified and developed by Trotsky, who, in the 1930s, in an epoch of savage reaction, defeat Stalinisation totalitarianism, the very attack on reason and rationality in working class politics, personified revolutionary socialism in a way that was unique, and comparable perhaps only to Marx himself.

Faced after world war 2 with massive changes in the world, the result of permutations produced by the whole previous series of working class defeats and the survival of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the FI current became a tendency struggling to renew itself, and to correct itself (and to correct Trotsky — especially on the question of Bonapartism, particularly the Stalinist variant whose unforeseen independence was the centre of the nexus of problems facing the FI). It failed widely, repeatedly. Into the modern world have survived mutations

Taken as a whole, the work of the last one third of a century is an attempt on the basis of 'Trotskyism' to tackle the problems of the real world; as such, though marred by scholasticism, primitivism, and a relapse to evolutionism, it has some value and as an attempt at continuity must be related to. But even on questions such as the post-1949/51 codifications on the deformed workers' states, the achievements are best regarded as working hypotheses, which we agree with while insisting on more work and

refusing to separate the record of the FI on the political questions (political revolution) from them. The conclusions drawn from those codifications by all the segments of post-1951 Trotskyism show their inadequacy as a guide to action; the plethora of workers' state theories (including reactionary ones such as Grant's) demonstrates their incoherence. And this is on a basic level. Much of the work of the FI currents self-evidently is junk. (We speak specifically of the mainstream: the others have produced, even when criticising real faults of the mainstream, nothing but junk!)

## VI

TO THE PERMANENTLY SELF-TRANSFORMING jelly-like mess of the 'mainstream', the sectarians of the International Committee have counterposed an attempt at rigidity: rationally before 1963, in a quasi-religious manner since (WRP/SLL, OCI).

Often sectarian formations preserve basic ideas in a dehydrated form during a period of decline and loss of norms and standards. Why is there almost no element of this in the anti-USFI sectarians?

Because their attempt to resist the chameleonism and the jelly-like political malleability of the "mainstream" has been vitiated by a fundamental instability and has itself been as jelly-like: they have a common root with those they wish to denounce, in the positions of 1949-51 and after. They make 'orthodox' assertions, uneasily allied with the positions of 1949-51 and after.

The 1953 split was a gut reaction by the SWP to attempts to draw conclusions from premises they shared and held on to: they were themselves later to draw them uninhibitedly, before again, recently, partly recoiling. Mixed in with this from the beginning was the poisonous factionalism of the British section (now WRP) and that of the French specialists in "anti-Pabloism" — who were in 1950 denouncing Pablo for considering the Chinese CP Stalinist, and who at the 1951 Third World Congress moved (without his agreement) Mandel's "Ten Theses" — which, if the term had any meaning, they should have seen as an arch-"Pabloite" document, given its position on China — as their initial answer to the "Pabloism" which they have been fighting ever since!

After 1963, when the SWP fused with the International Secretariat to form the USFI, the rump 'International Committee' degenerated to unrestrained, poisonous factionalism. While slanderously asserting the USFI was reformist for Russia, they were silent on China where it was reformist, because of their own ambiguities, which were to lead them to a brief period of explicit Maoism in 1967.\*

The other sectarians, IS, were sterile because they broke with the fundamentals of Bolshevism, as for example on the question of the nature of the revolutionary party. Where they were more realistic than the FI currents, as they often were and are, it was the result of vulgar empiricism, not Marxism. On nominal adherence to the fundamentals of the CI and of

\* For example, the 'Newsletter', forerunner of the 'Workers Press', published two photos of Trotsky and Mao, with the caption: "Trotsky and Mao: scientific ideas"!

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Trotsky's FI (e.g. on the conception of the party) — alas no more than nominal, and with all the characteristics described above — all the post-FI Trotskyists were the sectarians in the 'good' sense vis-a-vis IS. From them and through them passes much of what remains alive of communism — and a great deal does remain alive.

## VII

THE CHANGE in the formula to sum up Workers Fight's position on the Fourth International, from "critical support for the USFI", to "for the regeneration of the Fourth International", with explicit recognition of the USFI as the mainstream, was decided in January 1973 after a discussion lasting over six months.

"Critical support" was felt to be unsatisfactory because the 'critical' support was usually ignored or misunderstood and we appeared as USFiers who unaccountably refused to join. It was misleading for this reason but particularly because for the group there was more criticism than support for the USFI as an ideological tendency. It was a liability because organisationally "critical" was everything where the USFI in Britain presented itself as an organised tendency with which we were — unavoidably — openly at war.

"Regeneration of the Fourth International", explicitly fixing the USFI as part of a current, had the advantage of distancing us, expressing publicly the distinct identity which we felt. It explicitly focused on and expressed the extent of our "criticism", indeed our alienation from the "Fourth International" groups, by defining them as degenerate and epigonic. It placed the USFI firmly within the galaxy of these "FI" groupings, rejecting and debunking its claims to the authority of "the Fourth International" and the pretence that it is the FI, thus focusing our criticism and explaining our refusal of USFI discipline. Simultaneously, however, it identified the USFI as the mainstream of post-Trotsky "Trotskyism".

In addition, "regenerate" was a multi-dimensional concept (both ideological and organisational), superior to talk of "reconstruct the FI"; that factional catchery against the USFI by tendencies whose bankruptcy establishes beyond question that the USFI is indeed the mainstream.

It thus focused on the root problem, the internal collapse of doctrine and consequent political destructuring, the inadequacy and the ideological chameleonism that is responsible for the state of all the 'Trotskyist' groups, including the USFI, while allowing us to admit the existence of the USFI as a meaningful political organisation.

It maintained the sharp line separating us from the "anti-Pabloites" in that way, explicitly denied that solving the problems of the tendencies was a matter of organisational juggling ("rebuild", "reconstruct" the FI, etc.) or that they were free from the sins of the USFI.

In sum, it preserved that which was most important in our decision in 1969 to orientate to the USFI — utter repudiation of the anti-Pabloites; recognition of what had been achieved by the USFI (or rather that apart from the USFI nothing had been achieved that merited even consideration); distance from and non-fetishisation of a tendency (the USFI) whose defects were only too obvious and would have been politically crippling for our work.

WF decided to orientate ideologically towards the USFI in 1969, found itself juggling with slogans in January 1973, and now finds itself reviewing those decisions in the light of the past 2½ years experience.

Ideologically, the course of our development has been laborious and



piecemeal. Emerging from the sectarian background of hysterical and lying "anti-Pabloism", WF has had to shed this miseducation and become aware of the stark ideological poverty, regression, and disintegration of which it is such a putrescent expression. This process was, for us as for many others, not helped but hindered by the opportunist politics of the USFI, off which the "anti-Pabloites" feed: it is no slander but scandalous truth that before 1967 the USFI did not stand for a supplementary — "political" — anti-bureaucratic revolution in China, no more than it does for Vietnam today. WF has groped toward conclusions step by step, through a process of critical analysis and re-analysis. For WF our 1969 decision (whose precondition was the change in its position on China by the USFI in 1967\*) was a matter of drawing conclusions honestly about positions and relations within the "Trotskyist" tendencies — that is, achieving a rational and realistic perspective on those tendencies; it was a prerequisite to a rational view and rational criticism of the "Fourth International".

It is ironic that having broken with some of our former associates — in Ireland — in defence of the USFI against the bankrupts and slanderers of the post-1963 IC, we now adopt a qualitatively more critical attitude to the whole FI current than the IC elements have ever done. The detour was a necessary precondition for healthy development — dialectical, not linear development. It was necessary to get out of the cul-de-sac of the anti-Pabloites, where pseudo-explanations hindered rational analysis of the real problems.

If it is argued that we have come full circle and now say again much that we said in 1967, we answer: yes, we have. But the circle has been an unavoidable reconnoitring exercise, and though the movement has been circular it has been on an upward spiral.

## VIII

"FOR THE REGENERATION of the Fourth International" was an open-ended admission of the immense of work our previous study had shown us as being needed, and which we had still to do. Though work on the Fourth International is far from completed, certain conclusions can and must be drawn.

They are already implicit, logically, in our attitudes in the 1973 Conference resolution and in the official pamphlet published by the group on the Conference ("*Workers Fight and the Fourth International*"). Continuing work on the Fourth International, linked to the further practical experience, observation and reflection on the USFI, the so-called

\*But even here things are more complicated than we saw then. There is, despite the scholastic form, a rational kernel to the debates in the FI current on whether or not China is stalinist. If the USSR bureaucracy seized power as usurpers, have no necessary role in the economy, and are indeed the enemies of rational working-class planning, the Chinese bureaucracy (like the Vietnamese, the Yugoslav, or the Cuban) led a revolution, achieving as much as remnants of the October Revolution. One can't analogically draw an equals sign applying the labels for Russia. Massive problems of analysis and explanation exist. The ISFI section of the USFI attempted a degree of intellectual rigour in dealing with these problems, albeit abandoning the Trotskyist programme in passing. The CCP had led the revolution: no political supplementary anti-bureaucratic revolution was necessary. What does it mean, then, to suddenly call for political revolution? Logically it places in question the whole previous analysis, including the very designation "deformed workers' state". If the FI current since world war 2 presents a picture of ideological collapse and destructuring, the 1969 call for political revolution is part of a destructuring within the USFI itself.

Tenth World Congress, etc., has shown that these conclusions must be drawn, and that by so doing the group will progress a step in coming to grips with this central question.

## IX

THE FORMULA "REGENERATE" is multi-dimensional, but significant because of its political dimension. With three exceptions\* the Trotskyist movement has been essentially an ideological current. (And two of those three exceptions — Ceylon and Bolivia — belong primarily to the period of the acute post-war crisis of Trotskyism.)

All the questions of "mainstream" etc. have been a valid consideration, and for WF both vital and inescapable. We could not avoid the integument of our birth and the epoch of the communist movement into which our tendency was born. Because of our own origins and entanglement in the internal quarrels and squabbles of the family of post-1951 (Third World Congress) 'Trotskyist' groupings we could only arrive at the possibility of an overview of the whole galaxy by the route of establishing clearly the map of the relationships to each other and the trajectories of its elements.

And only having done that, established to our own satisfaction what is the mainstream, could we realise that we have had the proportions wrong even when getting the inner relations right (as we believe we have done). The proportions concern the relationship of the 'galaxy' to the communist tradition and the tasks still to be done. But the inner relations are immensely less important than the proportions, however important those inner relations are, or rather have been, for WF, having to navigate amidst the lies and ignorance of the "anti-Pabloites" and the opportunism and adaptationism of the USFI, and simultaneously having to locate the only element of ideological continuity with the Communist international; amidst the conditions of ideological regression in which whole dimensions of communist consciousness have been lost and whole sections of the very programme — the basic programme itself — have been bowdlerised by all the currents (for example the question of the supplementary political evolution in certain Stalinist states, described by them and us as deformed workers' states). The "proportions" deal with what the 'mainstream' has done and what remains to be done — politically and ideologically.

## X

IN 1973 we faced more of the implications of the reality of the USFI — but were cautious and hesitant in drawing out the full implications of what we said and decided to do in relation to the USFI. We said the USFI could not claim, or exercise, the authority of a democratic centralist communist international, said it could only be considered as the mainstream. We should then have drawn the logical conclusion from the combination of our picture of its inadequacies, which we called 'degenerate' 'Trotskyism', and our inability to become part of it organisationally.

\*The three exceptions were: Ceylon, where there was a freakish development of a centrist, or perhaps left social democratic party, within the FI — certainly from about 1955 no other characterisation of the LSSP is accurate; Indochina, where the Trotskyists were the major working class force and were physically smashed and defeated by imperialist reaction and the Stalinist, peasant-based movement; and Bolivia, about which we are ill-informed, but in which the rôle of the POR/Lora in 1971 was certainly no better than that of the POUM in the Spanish Civil War.

We committed ourselves to the basics of the post-1951 FI, noted their incompleteness and inadequacies — but flinched from defining the sum total of those inadequacies: that the ideological and programmatic work of the 'mainstream' is not an adequate basis for an international; that even where, as on the analyses of the Stalinist states other than Russia, WF is in the post-1951 current, that current itself is massively inadequate, politically incoherent, incomplete. (How else, unless fundamental analysis and practical conclusions are unrelated, explain the record of the FI on a workers' programme for China, Vietnam, etc?)

According to the logic of our existing position, no body with the right to claim to be the Fourth International exists; there exist political mutants and massive historical lacunae in theory and analysis.

Not to see that clearly and say so in 1973 was a grievous failure. In politics, whether dealing with the next organisational step or defining the ideological tasks, the question "what do we do next" is a make or break one. To answer it we must know where we are. By failing to draw out the full implications of the 1973 decisions, we behaved with the caution of people conscious of heavy responsibility and of the momentousness of the decision, but we deprived ourselves of a clear appreciation of the state of the movement and our necessary role and tasks.

## XI. Conclusion

WF MUST DEFINE the condition of our movement, the Trotskyist movement of which WF is part, as one of a 1914 situation ideologically expressed organisationally in terms of 1933.

The "Fourth International" is an ideological and organisational chaos: we must rework the postwar efforts of the "Fourth International" current in the spirit of Lenin's post-1914 work on the previous labour and Marxist movement.

The heritage of the Communist International and the early Fourth International, definable, perhaps arbitrarily, as the first two congresses, is immense. From the later period there is little other than negative experiences to digest and understand.

As an ideological formation which had its belief in itself broken after world war 2 and then oscillated with the winds, changing colours regularly, the "Fourth International" has been a centrist force. It has been too small (with exceptions like Ceylon) for organic Second-International-type corruption. As an ideological current, it has perpetually bowdlerised even the basic programme of the movement in the interests of accommodation to one or another 'revolutionary' force. Today it is, and since the late '40s has been, an unstable centrist force, organisationally a rotten bloc whose pretensions are positively harmful.

Its accommodationist, unstable politics — whose hallmark and central concern is to avoid that 'sectarianism' which Trotskyists call ideological

intransigence — together with its organisational reality, mark it as in the tradition of the Right oppositional currents (Brandler, Lovestone), not the communism of Trotsky.\* In its political positions vis-a-vis the bureaucracies in the deformed workers' states† its record is 100% in the Brandlerite tradition. In so far as an organisation (the USFI) has survived, the political record, specifically on the deformed workers' states, means that it has been conquered by and represents Brandlerite, not Trotskyist, politics.

To the degree that a propaganda organisation is wrong and inadequate, then it is and must always be a roadblock not a bridge. Centrist pretence that what needs doing is already done helps prevent doing it; it is effectively to disarm. The record of inadequacy and failure bluffed and blustered about in the name of the "Fourth International" and of Leon Trotsky, in a spirit of inappropriate sentimentality, obscures, hinders, and mystifies what we need to do: therefore it militates against it being done. WF can no longer indulge in ambiguity about the USFI: events like the IMG's nationalist antics on the Common Market leave little room for tolerance, or evasion of a long-overdue accounting and conclusion:

**There is no Fourth International in the tradition of Trotsky; the tasks facing us are a combination of the tasks that revolutionaries faced in 1914 and in 1933 — ideological regeneration and organisational reconstruction. Our slogan is — "Build a communist international in the tradition of Leon Trotsky".**

*August 1975*

\*For our purposes this is the most appropriate historical analogy, coming as it does from the Communist International. However, there is a precise historical precedent in the example of the De Leonite current. De Leon was one of the earliest and most acute critics of the Second International, well over a decade before its collapse revealed the full extent of its rottenness to Lenin. They had consequently a respectable if rather sectarian independent revolutionary tradition. Many De Leonites joined the Communist International. In Britain the vast majority did. Others, especially the US parent party, didn't, though they supported the Russian REVOLUTION] With the emergence of Stalinist rightist and ultra-left politics their criticism soon took on validity. However, while criticising the CI and the CPs they remained entirely uncritical of the bureaucratic practices in the USSR, and thus were a peculiar 'left sectarian' parallel formation to the Brandlerites. In the late '30s they suddenly announced, without any real explanation, that Russia was after all state capitalist. They had proved unable to abandon their own politics, to learn from the Bolsheviks, or for a long period to seriously criticise the regime...

†That is, excluding the degenerated workers' state of the USSR and its directly controlled satellites.

# NINETEEN

# THESES

**"NINETEEN THESES ON THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL"** —  
*document from the Workers Fight discussion on the Fourth International,*  
*December 1972 — January 1973.*

## I: INTERNATIONALISM

There is no Trotskyism without internationalism. Trotskyism also requires the creation of a revolutionary party. Otherwise there is only a programme, which demands an international party. The problem is to create an International.

## II: THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The early Communist International was the highest peak of Marxism as "science of revolutionary practice" ever reached, before or since. There was a massive development and accumulation of advanced ideas and analyses and of a world wide revolutionary army, with the Soviet Union as its territorial bastion. The rise of the bureaucracy and its seizure of control led to a dramatic reversal for the forces of revolution. The ideas were still valid, alive, adequate to relating to the world and revolutionary tasks. The revolutionary army was under the control of the bureaucracy and the bureaucracy's agents. It suffered increasing bowdlerisation of communist ideas and programme.

Trotskyism arose first and foremost as a defence of the programme. Its forces were minimal. Its ideological contributions: criticism of Socialism in one country; of the Anglo-Russian Committee policy; of the neo-Menshevik policy in China; of the 'Third Period' ultra-leftism. In all these the Trotskyists were defending the fundamentals of the programme of the Communist International, despite their tiny revolutionary minority being counterposed to the revolutionary army (revolutionary in intentions) assembled under the banner of the October Revolution. The major ideological development of Trotskyism and the FI movement was the analysis of Stalinism.

Throughout the '30s, there was a tragic dichotomy between the programme and the theoretical conquests of Bolshevism, held to by infinitesimal forces, and the massed armies of the revolution, now the dupes of Stalinism. Trotskyism was marked by having inherited its fundamental programme and ideas "ready made", valid and applicable to the world it operated in. Its function in the 1920s and '30s was to defend and apply those ideas. That was both its strength and the roots of the crisis

of the 1940s and beyond.

### III: THE VANISHED LEGIONS OF BOLSHEVISM

Deutscher's image of Trotsky as the sole survivor of Atlantis — the vanished legions of Bolshevism, annihilated by Stalinism in the late '30s — will do for the whole Trotskyist movement. The possessor of a revolutionary programme and analysis of the world, and of revolutionary perspectives of a titanic scope, it was itself organisationally puny.

But its conception of a revolutionary perspective was never a Menshevik-platonic one of speculation; it was a Bolshevick conception of a guide to deeds, action by revolutionary forces. It spent the '20s and '30s watching helplessly the mass struggles, and the successive defeats of the revolutionary working class, seeing what was happening with all the clarity of the continuators of Lenin's Communist International, yet isolated and powerless to affect developments.

The conflict between revolutionary perspectives and feeble forces, between the 'objective processes' and the subjective activity of both the Trotskyist forces and the revolutionary working class, has dogged Trotskyism consistently — rending it repeatedly, generating one-sided ideological developments away from it — generating speculative vulgar evolutionism and spontaneist conceptions on the one side, acceptance of other social forces than the proletariat as the entrepreneurs of the revolution on the other.

Already at the end of the 1920s the contrast between its 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 Russian-based Trotskyist movement into three segments: Those who saw only what the industrialisation turn in Russian was doing, and ignored how it was done and by whom it was done — Preobrazhensky, Piatakov, 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 effect on the lives and rights of the Russian people was — neglecting and dismissing what was done, and its relationship to the Trotskyist programme — the State Capitalists; And those, like Trotsky, who resisted the decomposition, the mutually repellent one-sidedness, ignoring neither 'what' nor 'whom'. The pattern was a recurring one.

### IV: TROTSKYISM AS AN IDEOLOGICAL CURRENT

Trotskyism never represented anything substantial (Ceylon, Vietnam, and Bolivia excluded) except as the custodian and defender of the ideas of the early Communist International, which it developed, especially regarding Stalinism (a new phenomenon) and, partly, Fascism. It was always an ideological current par excellence; and can only be judged as such, not by such standards as the FI itself applied to the CI. That is not a negligible thing; without the heroic rearguard action of Trotskyism the effects of Stalinism would have been truly and totally annihilating for communism. But we are concerned here with a 'cold' assessment of the reality of the FI, in all its aspects.

### V: WHY WORKERS FIGHT DISCUSSES THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The assessment of the Fourth International must be an assessment of an ideological current, primarily. Nor can such an assessment be obscured by

the undoubted fact that it is an international ideological current. We need an International; but that cannot lead to indifference to the political content of such an International, especially an ideological, propagandist International, any more than the existence of a 'Party' and the consciousness of the need for one, can lead to indifference to its programme, practice, record.

The FI must be the startingpoint: the high point of post-Lenin communism; undoubtedly the custodian of the ideas of communism; undoubtedly the regroupment of the revolutionary vanguard. What happened to it is crucial for an understanding of communism; the process of understanding is an inescapable part of starting again, even if we conclude it to have been a failure.

#### VI: TROTSKYISM TO 1938

The pre-1938 history can be briefly outlined:

- a) Origins and initial confinement in Russia;
- b) First international conference in 1930;
- c) From 1930-33 the Trotskyist movement regarded itself as an opposition in the CI;
- d) In 1933, the call for a Fourth International;
- e) From 1933 to 1936 the Trotskyists conceived of the movement towards the Fourth International as a process ending in a big regrouped Fourth International;
- f) Trotsky in 1936 calls on the International Conference to declare itself, meagre propagandist forces, the FI. The Conference disagrees.
- g) In 1938 a one-day conference declares the Fourth International. Perspective of mass upsurge in/after war, of Stalinist instability.

#### VII: THE FOUNDING OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The 1938 ideas were adequate to experience, therefore a general guide to action, lacking in forces. The only substantial forces were in the USA and Belgium. Trotsky's writings admit that the FI's theoretical basis is no more than re-assertion, and the need to develop certain analyses, e.g. concerning imperialism. The 'Transitional Programme' was fundamentally derived from the theoretical advances of the early Communist International. (Therefore fetishisation of the Transitional Programme is simply stupid).

#### VIII: WAR

There was organisational disruption and atomisation of the Trotskyist forces in Europe. The International Secretariat was in the USA. In France, there was an ideological collapse before social patriotism. The perspectives for Russia underestimated the stabilising effect of the Nazi treatment of the occupied areas. The perspectives for revolutionary upsurge in Europe were totally vindicated.

But the contradiction between objective possibilities, including the subjective drive of the working class masses and the expectation of revolution, and the labour bureaucracies, especially Stalinist bureaucracies, remained unsolved. Isolated, persecuted, assassinated, impotent — Trotskyists saw CPs reconsolidate capitalism; and 'Red' Army snuff out the revolutionary upsurge in Eastern Europe post-war.

The 'perspectives' were fundamentally right, seen as Marxist perspectives — the forces to realise them were inadequate, were defeated. Eastern Europe was stabilised; capitalism was consolidated and stabilised; in Yugoslavia and China, then in Vietnam, Stalinist formations, cut off from the proletariat, overthrew capitalism.

#### **IX: THE CRISIS OF TROTSKYISM**

The crisis of Trotskyism began essentially in 1943/44 — as a result of its inability to realise its revolutionary perspectives and the subsequent evolution on the basis of (a) proletarian defeat in Eastern and Western Europe; (b) the independent revolutionary processes, giving rise to social/political mutations, eventually called deformed workers' states by the FI.

The dogmatists run away from the problem; the USFI receptiveness to the problems of the movement has led, given their theoretical inadequacy, to a destructuring, decomposing of its politics into a number of not at all clearly related elements, and thus a history of political chameleonism (over-adaptation), political instability; often its 'analyses' have been confined to general panoramic descriptions and its scientific 'prognoses' to hopes of events outside their control, simply duplicating others that have happened (cf. Algeria/Cuba).

The separation dogmatism/adaptationism, though a convenient shorthand, is partly artificial. The dogmatists (SLL, 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 hid 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.

#### **X: THE THIRD WORLD CONGRESS**

At the 1951 Third World Congress, Trotskyism reconstituted itself on the basis of analysis of massive changes in the world, analysis made by its own tiny and inexperienced forces, minus Trotsky.

Its problem was to reconcile the revolutionary perspectives with the continuing bureaucratic control; its concept of Stalinism with its expansion; its programme of socialism with the bureaucratic forms of the existing states in which capitalism had been overthrown. Its fundamental task, as a primarily ideological current, was to integrate the new experiences with its previous theory — fully, so as to recreate a theory that would be as sure a guide to action as that of Bolshevism up to world war II, when the weakness of the forces holding those positions allowed unexpected developments. In addition, the struggle of the FI to actually build revolutionary parties, and to elaborate tactics appropriate to the goal in the given situation created parallel problems, which intermingled with and cut across, and in fact bedevilled the process of ideological self-reconstruction.

The FI must be judged by its success in achieving this fundamental task, of ideological clarification, which is an essential precondition for building revolutionary parties.

#### **XI: TWO TRENDS**

Leaving aside the various 'new class' groups (state capitalists, bureaucratic collectivists, etc.) two fundamental tendencies emerged within Trotskyism, expressing in their own way the problem of ideological rearmament of



Trotskyism; the now USFI and the International Committee (SLL/OCI). In addition a number of ideological/organisational satellites of both tendencies existed.

One (IC) represented the retreat from the real problems of Trotskyism as applied to the developments in the real world, into dogmatism, based on the previous strength of the movement. The other (USFI) represented the attempt to come to terms with the real world, but has been characterised, in contrast to the dogmatists, by an over-receptive, over-impressionable, over-accommodating relationship to various political currents.

The dogmatists undercut the scientific basis of Marxism, by choking it off from the revivifying experience of all events after 1938; the USFI in the 20-year history since 1953 has consistently repeated the fundamental ideas of communism, and the elementary aspirations of Trotskyism, but as an often compartmentalised ideological baggage, not always related, or related clearly enough, to the practical orientation, expectations, commentaries on events.

## XII: THE PROBLEMS OF THE USFI

The dichotomy between the concept of world revolution and the fact of the genuine revolutionary forces being tiny has generated a whole current of vulgar evolutionist speculation. This has led to results ranging from passive (necessarily) expectations of the revolution happening 'inexorably' (Algeria, Vietnam now) and tendencies towards evolutionary-type deep entry (the image of getting the right train).

The attempt to assimilate the experience of China, Yugoslavia, Cuba, etc. into their theory as a guide to action has led to an extreme credulousness in the face of opposition/revolutionary currents of various sorts. This is not a subjective fault necessarily (better this than the arrogant Europe-centred dogmatists). It results from attempting to re-accomplish the tasks of bringing together all the threads of the complicated processes in the world into a unified conception, as did the early Comintern, but without that organisation's vast range of contact with the details of world reality, or its resources, theoretical, practical, intellectual.

The USFI 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 'euphoric' crystal-ball gazing. Permanent revolution has been seen as a general scenario, a self-propelling 'process', rather than what it really is, a fusion of different movements reacting to different (bourgeois-

democratic, socialist) tasks, a fusion realised by revolutionary practice.

The USFI has made correct, though incomplete, explanations of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions in terms of the overall objective '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 ignored the incompleteness of the revolution in these countries. It has glorified bureaucratic formations such as those of Mao and Tito. At times it has explicitly denied the need for a supplementary 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 various ways, and for various periods, massive credit, amounting almost to a self-cancelling-out by the FI, has been extended to ruling Stalinist bureaucracies such as Tito's and Mao's. For whole periods the forces of the USFI have mimicked and even attempted to disguise themselves as left social-democrats, advocating fundamentally reformist ideas (in Britain the Healy group and the Week; in Belgium Mandel).

There have certainly been tendencies (sometimes leading to breaks from the movement) towards liquidating the programme of Trotskyism — especially on the question of the political revolution in China and Yugoslavia, and even in Cuba, though that is a special case\*. But never a definitive break with the programme, never adopting the standpoint of the bureaucracy; rather the result of the ideological disarray and theoretical destructuring produced by the attempt to assimilate reality to the theory of Trotskyism.

### XIII: THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

A peculiarity of the IC, particularly the post-1963 IC, is that its forces opted for dogmatism after they had accepted as part of their dogma the major codifications produced by the attempt to come to terms with post-war reality, particularly those of the 1951 Congress. They retreated to dogma, cutting them off from a scientific assessment of reality, and as a result their theory has no possibility of being a guide to the action they must take in the real world. Thus the most 'theoretical' (i.e. dogmatic) of them, the SLL, is utterly empirical in practice, having no living theory to steer by.

Having baulked only at declaring Cuba a workers' state, their view of the world is entirely schizophrenic. Calling China a workers' state, because they were in the FI in the early '50s, they still operate with a West European concept of class struggle as being of the most advanced proletarian kind or nothing; they are thus in the position of saying that a workers' state came into existence without anything resembling what they would recognise as class struggle occurring!

\*Castroism was a genuine revolutionary movement right up to 1968 (at least). There is a bonapartist formation in Cuba, with a functioning bureaucracy. But this is much less than is the case for the USSR. The masses have been armed and mobilised. There is populist/type democracy but no genuinely accountable workers' democracy. It is not foreseeable what will be the degree of the bureaucracy's resistance to workers' power. Therefore: (a) a political revolution is necessary; (b) it is not clear whether it will be a massive anti bureaucratic workers' movement or more like the 'police actions' which Trotsky spoke of in relation to the early Stalinist regime.

In their purest form, these 'old Trotskyists' (the OCI, POR-Lora, RSL — not IC, but that's an accident) are (a) evolutionists; (b) workerists in the crudest sense. Fundamentally they are spontaneist. In fact, continual proclamations that "that's not the question, the question is to build the Fourth International" are, at root, paradoxically, spontaneist. Because, by brushing aside the concrete political questions, they reduce the party to a non-political fetish, a magic ingredient to add to the proto-revolutionary masses. They 'resolve' the problems of Trotskyism (Bolshevism deprived of the mass forces necessary to make its perspectives conscious elements in reality) by retreating to an exceptionally poverty-stricken neo-Kautskyism. They are organically right-wing through adaptation to the "workers' bureaucracies", particularly the social-democratic.

The SLL is fundamentally of this sort, only with CERTAIN 'additive' which stresses, abstractly and meaninglessly, the role of consciousness in history: this has only added a verbal 'left' incoherence to the organically right-wing politics of the SLL.

#### XIV: THE MYTH OF 'PABLOISM'

All the Trotskyist forces since the war have encountered certain problems and committed grievous mistakes: of over-accommodation to the existing labour organisations or even bureaucracies; political chameleonism; vulgar evolutionism; muddle and confusion regarding, or even abandoning part of, the fundamental programme of Trotskyism for the Stalinist states. All or some of these have been denounced by the IC forces as 'Pabloism' (what is denounced as Pabloism, what is meant by the term, shifts and changes enormously).

In actuality, the term 'Pabloism' has and can have no precise meaning because there is hardly a single mistake, however grievous, that the IC forces themselves, collectively or separately, have not committed, usually with that crassness which is peculiar to them. 'Pabloism' is primarily a myth generated by the self-righteous dogmatists. It actually obscures and prevents discussion of the real problems of the movement taken as a whole and understood rationally in relation to the problems encountered by Trotskyism, by attributing to only one section of the movement the 'sins' common to all the movement, and arising from the post-war crisis. The phenomenon of the anti-Pabloites is the quasi-religious *reductio ad absurdum* of the primitive dogmatists — and the road separating blind dogmatism from mysticism and unreason is a short one.

The crowning absurdity of the "anti-Pabloite" sectarians, venting their rage on a myth because it has posed them real problems, is this: they say Pabloism primarily represents (or represented — it changes in form like a genie, particularly when yesterday's 'Pabloism' is today's practice of the 'anti-Pabloites', as when the SLL in 1967 came out for Mao and attacked Isaac Deutscher for criticising the cultural revolution) a capitulation to Stalinism, and as one of the proofs they say the 'Pabloites' supported the Stalinist 1956 invasion of Hungary. This is totally untrue!

The current general summing up of 'Pabloism' is 'liquidationism', organisational and political. A *tendency* towards liquidationism has been a feature of the USFI. But also of the IC! The most liquidationist group today is the OCI, which calls for a united front government (the CP and the Socialist Party together with a stable French bourgeois state equal, it seems, a ... workers' government) — irrespective of programme! This position is denounced in the Transitional Programme itself, the fetish of the OCI. The IC is actually the most fundamentally liquidationist: dogmatism destroys, rules out, science, and if science is not the basis of our

programme ultimately we liquidate scientific socialism back into primitive utopian socialism. This too is the **tendency** of the OCI-SLL.

#### **XV: MUTATIONS AND THE MAINSTREAM**

There are a whole series of political mutations which have emerged from 1938 Trotskyism. Of these the USFI is the one which, sharing our fundamental ideas — Russia, China, Cuba, etc. — has attempted to grapple most seriously with the problems posed by post-war developments. Necessarily any development of our understanding of these problems must relate to the experience of the USFI. Nothing better exists, but we are not shopping for ready-made lines in a super-market. On a massive number of questions ranging from the precise characterisations of various types of Stalinism through the use of the theory of permanent revolution to the present ultra-left tendencies in the FI, the achievements of the USFI are glaringly inadequate. That is the concrete manifestation of the destructuring process.

#### **XVI: THE ORGANISATIONAL REALITY OF THE USFI**

In addition the **practice** of the USFI has **consistently** been wrong and inadequate to a very serious extent. 'For example, while the French OCI "anti-Pabloites" are certainly a tendency which hides its fundamental social-democratic orientation behind the hue and cry about the "capitulators to Stalinism", and their trade union practice has been utterly scandalous — it is still a valid question whether entry into the CP in the early '50s could have been other than organisationally liquidationist.

The **organisation** of the FI was always puny as well as lacking after 1940 a politically tested and authoritative leadership of a stature to head the world movement.

Today within the allegedly democratic centralist international in actuality there is federalism. There has been and is an observable tendency for big groups to develop (a) independence; (b) satellites (OCI, SLL; SWP, Ligue Communiste). Clearly this is the result of lack of a solid world structure, of a really authoritative world leadership. Ceylon also illustrates this, where an allegedly international, democratic centralist Bolshevik cadre organisation actually sheltered a mass party which was entirely social-democratic.

Inevitably there is an element of organisational fiction, bluff and artificiality about the FI as it has existed and exists. For example, the accounts of the Irish sympathising section of the Fourth International in the other language press of the International bear no relationship to the reality as we know it. It is important to keep this in mind so that (a) the FI is assessed as it should be: primarily an **ideological** grouping and (b) to debunk those who fetishise the 'International' which cannot even be the beginning of the mass International needed and (c) to counter our own subjective tendencies to mistake wishes for realities and thus to give too ready credence to the organisation claims of the International.

We must oppose the IMG myth of the SWP being the 'bad side' of the FI and the Ligue Communiste the 'good side'. In the first place, the SWP is politically **better** than the LC on more than one important issue (China, Vietnam). In the second place, the SWP-LC differences do not at all exhaust the differences within the FI. Each major section has its own crotchets and particularities.

Within the general current represented by the USFI — as within the IC current and within the 'new class' current — there have been and are a vast variety of political practices. Clearly, the USFI 'world view' does not lead

organically to clear directions for political practice.

### XVII: THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IN BRITAIN

In Britain, the FI, though it warned us a year ago to join it or be damned, is actually the creator of the two most virulent of the pseudo-Trotskyist sects (SLL and 'Militant'). Apart from its politics and its actual practice at any moment, the experience with the FI in Britain earns it no authority at all.

In the past, WF has been ambiguous on whether or not we considered the IMG to be a 'typical' section of the FI. We were right not to jump to hasty conclusions.

The fact is that the IMG is neither 'typical' nor 'untypical'. There is no such thing as a typical section of the FI. Basically, the IMG today is a bad attempt to 'render the Ligue Communiste more profound' and adapt its methods to Britain (notably the 'periphery to centre' strategy).

### XVIII: WORKERS FIGHT AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Fundamentally, though the concept of an international party based on an international programme of the permanent revolution, and the fight for such a party, is our starting point, the forces in WF cannot build the full Fourth International. We could conceivably build a revolutionary party in Britain. The ultimate responsibility for our role in this is ours. We can't abdicate it.

Critical support for the USFI, despite all its opportunist faults, has meant for WF fundamentally an ideological break with the "anti-Pabloites" and all they stand for. As such we have proposed and defended it at a number of aggregates. It would be disastrous to change the substance of it now. From the FI discussion, having decided on the organisational conclusions, WF must map out a whole programme of theoretical research and self-education, covering a whole period. The USFI's political contribution cannot but be one of our major starting points. At the same time, this position, given the IMG, is organisationally embarrassing for us. If a better formulation of our position as defined above can be found, then we should adopt it.

### XIX: PROPOSALS

- a) We should not accept USFI discipline now.
- b) Our primary task, **the one we can actually apply ourselves to now**, 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 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".
- c) Any practical affiliation to the International must depend, therefore, on:
  - (i) how the IMG would relate to our fundamental tasks in Britain;
  - (ii) what it would mean for the programme of theoretical research and development proposed in 18 above.

# WORKERS FIGHT AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

RESOLUTION OF WORKERS FIGHT SPECIAL CONFERENCE  
ON THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, JANUARY 1973

1. Our primary task, the one we can actually apply ourselves to now, is to build a revolutionary communist organisation in the British working class.
2. Essential to that task is a whole programme of theoretical research and self-development, necessarily taking the form of an assessment and re-assessment of the whole of Trotskyism since 1940, including its USFI mainstream. This is not theoretical scepticism, nor a declaration of 'open season' on the history and traditions of the movement, either before or after 1951. We

explicitly declare our adherence to the traditions of Trotskyism and affirm that, all legitimate criticisms granted, no other fully revolutionary tendency, advocating the full programme of proletarian emancipation and the establishment of states on the model of the Paris Commune and the post-October Soviets, has existed for half a century. Any advance will be on the basis of that record, tradition, political codification and analysis. But the unsatisfactory and inadequate nature of the movement for 25 years now, displaying all the features of an inner collapse of doctrine and consequent attempt to relate to the world by way of chameleonism and adaptation, has its roots in a series of unresolved theoretical problems.

The current public division in the USFI on Vietnam — i.e. on the major question (Stalinism) where adequate re-analysis and the integration of that analysis into Trotskyist doctrine has been the central problem of post-war Trotskyism — is a graphic expression of this: at bottom it is a programmatic division. The apparently very real prospect of a new split (SWP, Canada, Australia, India) has fundamentally the same significance as has the coexistence within the USFI of a very wide range of political practices, in no sense arising only from application of similar programme and principles to different circumstances. The building of revolutionary parties (and therefore the FI) demands a critical re-working of our history, given that the 'working' so far has led to confusion, zig-zags, and near chaos. This necessitates distance from and open and public criticism of the USFI.

3. The element of 'support' for the USFI in our position is that it is the mainstream issuing from the historical tendency of which we are a part; the element of criticism is in all the foregoing, and also in the implications for our own practice of USFI discipline, which would be utterly destructive.
4. The USFI British section is an unstable quasi-Bordigist sect, whose role in British revolutionary politics has rarely been other than harmful with the exception of its solidarity work, such as in VSC and on Ireland. Even here it was a substitute for building a revolutionary party in the British labour movement, and was the opportunist side of the coin of the SLL's criminally

sectarian refusal of solidarity work with the Vietnamese.

It represents insufficient forces in an absolute sense and specifically in its weight within the working class (WF, one quarter its size, has scarcely less weight) to justify entering it to join in the factional scum to fight for our politics. Better, more fruitful, more constructive — and immensely more healthy — work can be done outside the USFI British section. Indeed, remaining outside is a precondition for its being done. The IMG is an intellectual discussion club lacking even intellectual interest: its brightest 'insights' would, in a mature organisation, merit an hour's discussion and the recommendation of a booklist. The IMG, inseparable from the organisation of the USFI, makes, by what it is, any affiliation and acceptance of USFI discipline unthinkable. By its ultra-factional attitude, its understanding of the value to it of the exclusive USFI 'franchise', it has and will deliberately make any informal organisational relationship impossible.

No organisational relationship with the USFI is feasible, therefore. In any case we must face the fact that the IMG is not meaningfully separable from the USFI. The fact that the British section is as it is cannot be seen apart from the considerations in 2.

5. The positive side of this is that we therefore have no prohibition on relations with tendencies such as Lutte Ouvriere.

6. We relate to the USFI primarily politically — dialogue, discussion, criticism, exchange of material (if possible: it is unlikely that it will be possible. Though they demand of us that we join, they refuse to give us the documents for the 10th World Congress — thus exposing the arid organisational fetishism which is an essential part of their approach, and at the root of self-glorifying ideas such as epistemological centralisation.) We maintain the ideological orientation, the rejection of the myths of the anti-Pabloites, which we made in 1969.

7. The declaration of critical support, which has been our position hitherto, is taken generally as primarily an organisational support. It is exploited as such by the IMG, with which we compete politically and therefore organisationally. This is both misleading and embarrassing, and therefore we should make a full and public explanation of our position and then drop the essentially meaningless declaration of critical support from the *Where We Stand* column of *Workers Fight*. We must fight for the regeneration and development of the Fourth International, recognising the USFI as the mainstream of post-Trotsky Trotskyism.

# THE LOGIC OF 'SCENARIO POLITICS'

## THE I.M.G. 1972-76

As against the IS, the WRP, or the 'Militant' tendency, it is easy enough to give concise generalisations of the political differences between these groups and the I-CL. With the IMG, it is —if only because of the rapid changes in the IMG's politics—more difficult to sum up with a neat formula.

Yet it is necessary to try to arrive at some overview, to advance beyond simply being bewildered at the instability and the recurrent political stupidities of the IMG. It is doubly necessary since, as the IMG is the British section of the world tendency which we recognise as the mainstream of post-Trotsky Trotskyism, and since, indeed, we do share a limited common ground with the IMG on the level of basic reactions to such questions as the struggle in Ireland, racialism, women's rights etc.

### THE IMG IN 1971

In early 1972, just as Workers' Fight was commencing independent activity after being expelled from the International Socialists, the IMG underwent a 'cultural revolution' and a change of leadership. This date can be seen as an obviously convenient—though still somewhat arbitrary—starting point for our survey. (The survey is largely confined to the IMG's positions on domestic British politics, leaving out questions such as Vietnam, Ireland, Chile, etc, dealt with elsewhere).

From around 1967, the West European sections of the USFI turned from their 'deep entry' work in the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties, towards immersing themselves in the burgeoning student movement. In some countries, especially France, they grew considerably. But from about 1969-70 they faced the problem of how, from this student base, to relate to radicalisation in the working class.

'From the periphery to the centre' was the tactic worked out. It has been applied with some success in France. The Ligue Communiste mobilised its mainly student forces for a series of



national campaigns, focused around demonstrations etc.—Burgos Trials, Indochina, Chile, Lip, etc. They hoped, and in some measure succeeded, in getting sections of workers involved in these campaigns. In that way, they would build up contacts, first among 'peripheral' sections of workers—immigrants, women workers, white collar workers, young workers etc.—and later among the more central sections of the working class.

Certainly the Ligue was right in May 1968, as against Lutte Ouvriere, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste and the Maoists, when it focused on taking the students forward in struggle, rather than sending them one by one to the factories; and certainly such campaigns would be a necessary and invaluable part of a proletarian-oriented organisation. However, even at its most successful, the 'periphery to centre' tactic, elevated as it was into an all-guiding principle, had had political effects. It downgrades consistent work around the factories and thus: (a) tends to build an organisation of 'campaign activists' rather than stable cadres. It tends to make the organisation a 'federation of campaigns', rather than a coherent Leninist organisation consistently educating its members, and moreover makes it extremely difficult to integrate proletarian militants into the organisation. (b) It tends to seek to win people over through 'prestige', big demonstrations, spectacular campaigns etc. downgrading the propaganda tasks of the organisation. (c) In relation to the labour movement, it leads either to an ultra-left attitude of injecting politics from the outside, in the most literal sense, or to accommodation to the established leaderships for the sake of getting united campaigns.

However, in Britain, the tactic did not merely lead to political mistakes; it reduced the IMG to abject chaos. By late 1971 the IMG was thrashing around from one unsuccessful campaign to another (Black Defence, Ireland, Socialist Women groups, unemployment campaign, youth movement, Socialist Trade Union groups) accumulating only some 30 odd front organisations (one for every 11 IMG members) most of them empty except for IMG members.

#### THE 'NEW THINKING'

Thus when a group around John Ross and Tony Whelan came forward, in early 1972, with their 'new thinking', they were able to seize control very easily from the old, collapsing leadership round Pat Jordan.

The 'new thinking' presented itself as a critique of 'economism'. 'Economism' sought to 'mobilise the masses' by 'calls to action'. Following from this, economism had an 'administrative' conception of the party, and tended towards political opportunism, the better to get the masses mobilised. This tendency was shown by IS, the then SLL, and the SWP of America.

The correct definition of the role of the revolutionary party should be "presenting a rounded conception of the totality of social relations". Appropriate action would follow logically once the party had convinced the working class of that 'rounded conception': it was no business of the party to make

'calls to action'. \*1 The necessity of democratic centralism was deduced from so-called 'epistemological centralisation': for the party to develop its needed 'rounded conception of the totality of social relations', it must "intervene in all layers of society" and centralise the experience thus gained. The necessity of the International followed from the same reasoning.

These ideas amounted to the most passive propagandism; a view of the party as an academic 'educator', unconcerned for the class's ACTION. Moreover, the "epistemological centralisation" theory allowed for a purely RELIGIOUS adherence to the USFI; an adherence based on nothing to do with the USFI's POLITICS, but simply on the fact that it was an organisation intervening (rationally, though not of course in fact) in all areas of the world. \*2

However the 'new thinking' conquered the IMG rapidly and thoroughly; the Red Mole was a rather abstruse propagandist paper with headlines like "Struggle decides, Not the Law". From January, through its formal endorsement at the IMG conference in May, and until July 1972, 'new thinking' ruled supreme in the IMG'. While most IMG members clearly did not understand the long and turgid Red Mole articles and internal documents expounding the 'new thinking', and while the political 'numbing' effect of this lack of understanding was to have serious consequences, for a period the 'new thinking' did give the IMG a unity and an élan it has never had since.

The 'new thinking'—whatever its purely theoretical merits or failings—clung in with certain practical needs of the IMG. It gave a rationale for the IMG to shed the incubus of its numerous 'front' groups \*3. And it freed the IMG to orientate to the working class by—to put it crudely—enabling it to be ultraleft in propaganda, while not suffering the embarrassment of having to fight for active conclusions from that propaganda. Thus, in Spring 1972, when the NIRC fined the T&G £55,000, instead of issuing any call for action against the NIRC, the IMG simply echoed the evasive slogan of Jones and Scanlon—"No Recognition" And during the Manchester engineers' dispute of that period, the IMG'S policy was: assistance to the dispute through the Claimants' Union; no criticism in their paper of the CP leadership of the dispute. \*4

#### JULY 1972

Continuing militant economic struggles, with IMG giving practical assistance through Claimants' Unions and quietly adding adding its twopenny-worth of propaganda about the need to smash the state—that was the scenario implicit in the 'new thinking'. As soon as it met with a struggle which demanded more immediate political answers, the whole framework broke down.

In July 1972 five dockers were jailed under the Industrial Relations Act. A mass strike movement, of some 250,000 workers erupted and forced their release, though not before the TUC had been pushed into declaring a one-day General Strike for the following Monday.

Workers' Fight called for a General Strike to Smash the Act, as did the Left Faction within IS. The IMG found its neat compartmentalisation of propaganda and action completely broken down. It abandoned the taboo on 'calls to action'—and how! There were no less than 15 principal slogans in the Red Mole 'strike special' Missing however was any clear central direction, whether for the class or for the IMG.

In an inside page article, the IMG commented that the strike movement would probably lead to the overthrow of the Tory Government. "A Labour Government" ran its heading, "Yes, but but what next? ". Capitalist class rule, the article informed us, would continue. Something must be done about that. The answer, it concluded, was—nationalisation of industry, banks and transport!

As soon as the IMG came up against a real political problem its gaudy ultraleft garments fell apart to disclose.... Fabianism! Bizarrely the IMG COMBINED this Fabianism with a refusal to fight for the removal of the Tory Government. The slogan "Kick the Tories Out", they commented (correctly) was used by trade union bureaucrats to evade concrete struggles; therefore, they concluded (in a fine example of idealist logic) the answer was to reject that slogan, and instead call for "struggle against the State".

The shipwreck of the "new thinking" was completed when, later that summer, the Red Mole responded to the racialist outcry against the entry of Ugandan Asians with the headline "Asians: Big Chance for the Left". It was the "best thing for years" because "No attempt to offer a solution to the working class can be made except on the basis of a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism". The IMG would thus have a "big chance" to argue the case for socialism. The possible further developments of this theme are endless: "Moscow Trials: Big Chance for Trotskyists"; "Black Death: Big chance for doctors"; "Third World War: Big chance for internationalism"...

#### THE APRIL 1973 IMG CONFERENCE AND THE USFI

The public comments of the USFI on the 'new thinking' had been confined to a letter from Mandel to the IMG National Committee, dated July 1972.... despite the fact that the 'new thinking' had been evident in the public press of the IMG as far back as January. Mandel's letter made most of the necessary criticisms of the 'new thinking'—but the manner of making them was to say: 'Comrade Ross has many valuable insights; however, he could possibly lay himself open to misunderstanding on XYZ point...' Ross promptly replied that he was in full agreement with Mandel, except on the one point of the Transitional Programme; and that point, too, was soon cleared up by the happy discovery that Mandel and Ross were using the term 'Transitional Programme' in different senses.

However, by the latter part of 1972 two opposition tendencies— "BJP" and "H/K" had formed in the IMG. BJP was mainly composed of 'old guard' elements, round Jordan; H/K of disillusioned Rossites (Gowan, Ali, White, etc.) However, they were to block at the April '73 conference and later to fuse as the New Course tendency. (BJP had in the meantime shed a small grouping, "JAB", whose leaders

later went over to the WRP and the WSL). Both enjoyed at least tacit support from the USFI; and both counterposed a policy of "General Strike to kick the Tories out" to the Ross policy.

Thus the "General Strike to kick the Tories out" — only a few months later to become the dogma of the Ross tendency — was initially a factional counter-proposal against Ross! And, indeed, few other slogans could so thoroughly fly in the face of the 'new thinking'. A "General Strike" — the supreme 'call to action'! — and not to 'struggle against the State', but merely against the Tories!

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Shortly before the April 1973 Conference, the USFI issued 'Theses for Britain, soon followed by a document from Ali and Jordan of the proto-New Course tendencies, eagerly pointing out that the Theses were in fact a barely-concealed polemic against Ross. And yet at the end of the conference the Ross grouping still had control of the IMG. A few months later, they put out the USFI Theses, slightly revised, as THEIR document.

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The factional manoeuvres which accomplished this would have been impossible without the IMG membership having been battered into an ideologically 'punch-drunk' state during the introduction of the 'new thinking'. Nevertheless, they were remarkable in themselves.

In autumn 1972 the IMG had a conference on the question of governmental slogans. At this conference, Ross, while still belabouring the opposition for its 'social democratic' notions, accepted a clause saying that the IMG should in Trade Union branches support resolutions for a 'general strike to kick the Tories out'. No-one took too much notice of the clause, and there was no sharp and immediate change of line in the Red Mole.

But then, in February 1973, the 'General Strike to kick the Tories out' suddenly burst into the headlines of Red Mole. The following Red Mole carried an article by Ross, attempting with tortuous ingenuity to reconcile the old policy with the new one.

We are, he said, in favour of smashing the State. The government is part of the State. Therefore we are in favour of smashing the government. Moreover, the government — so Ross had conveniently discovered — was, right then, the key instrument of the centralisation of bourgeois strategy (whatever that meant). Therefore smashing the government was not only something we were generally in favour of, but the key demand. Naturally, we favoured the most decisive means of smashing the government — including General Strike. There was no question of limiting the General Strike in a social democratic way, since the replacement for the Tories was left open — it could be either workers' power or a Labour government....

Despite its peculiarities (e.g. the concept of smashing the State bit by bit!) this feat of logic-chopping enabled Ross to steal the ideological clothes of the opposition. Having neutralised their polemics against him, he took up two polemical cudgels against them — they failed to put the struggle against the government in the context of the struggle against the bourgeois state, and they argued for councils of action on a sectarian basis, i.e. that they should be formed round the

slogan 'General Strike to Kick the Tories out'. It is doubtful whether either of these charges was true; nonetheless, they served their purpose.

These antics of Ross — specifically, the adoption of the 'General Strike' call — forced into opposition those in the IMG who had taken the 'new thinking' seriously and had some intellectual self-respect. \*5 They formed the 'Left Opposition Tendency'. The LOT, unfortunately — and they regretted it later — continued to argue that Ross was a lesser evil than the "right wing danger" of H/K and BJP. Ross showed no gratitude: he used the LOT as a "chopping block" to free himself from the stigma of the 1972 record, arguing that the LOT's views may have been all right when the IMG was a small group, just beginning to orientate to the working class, but now the IMG was big and strong(!) and had some implantation (?) in the working class, the LOT was living in the past.

And so the period of the 'new thinking' was liquidated without the least clear accounting, and with the Ross grouping still in control of the IMG.

#### THE DEGENERATION OF THE IMG

The IMG was certainly a poor caricature of a Leninist organisation before April 1973. The conference did, however, signal a real degeneration.

The IMG's ultra-leftism had always — so we have argued — had a counterpoint. Yet in 1972 there was much that was, at least subjectively, creditable in the ultra-leftism of the IMG. For example: their paper stridently proclaimed their solidarity with the IRA. Sometimes it was so strident as to cut the IMG off from any hope of getting across except in the student milieu — "Avenge Derry! Open the Second Front!" was their response to the Bloody Sunday massacre in January 1972. But it is impossible to imagine the IMG membership of 1972 meekly approving the IMG's current crawling, servile support for the Troops Out Movement leadership's courting of Leo Abse, and virtually extinguishing solidarity activity or even propaganda. It took an intensive process of softening-up through unprincipled manoeuvring, from late 1972 onwards, to achieve that.

The 1972 ideas of the IMG were wrong, theoretically illiterate ideas, and they had a definite opportunist content. Nevertheless the IMG in that period was still guided by ideas — ideas, which, even though eccentric, could be discussed, evaluated, argued about. But the change of line on the General Strike had no possible basis in ideas. The line came first — motivated, in this case, by factional needs — the ideas and the arguments came later. This method is now well-established in the IMG leadership. On the Common Market, they argued that the EEC was the backbone of NATO and therefore of counter-revolution — falling into all sorts of factual nonsense (eg that NATO suppressed revolutions before it was even founded. . .) on account of having to get round the basic difficulty that NATO existed for a decade before the EEC.

'Dirty politics' have gained a hold on the public work of the IMG — and no less so on its internal life. The internal debate since 1973 has been dominated by two major blocs, under different names —

Majority Tendency/Tendency B vs. New Course/Wilcox-Klein Caucus/  
Tendency A. It is entirely impossible to make out any consistent line  
of political and ideological demarcation over these three years; certainly  
no such line is visible to the bulk of the membership of the IMG. The  
leadership runs rings round the opposition, stealing its ideological  
clothes, pinning the most imaginary 'deviations' on it \*6 and thoroughly  
browbeating it. \*7

#### THE IMG SINCE 1973

The political life of the IMG since early 1973 follows a well defined  
manic-depressive cycle:

February to April 1973: 'General Strike to bring down the Government'  
mania.

April 1973 to late 1973: The IMG became pretty much subdued in the  
aftermath of the conference. Instead of 'General Strike to bring down  
the Government', we heard 'Free the Shrewsbury pickets — first step to  
kicking out the Tories'. After some weeks' delay, the IMG had taken  
the Shrewsbury pickets issue up energetically. They made a few un-  
successful sallies at constructing a 'central strategy' round it — a register  
of militants prepared to join in flying pickets, repeal of the 1875  
'Conspiracy' Act, and unionisation of the police, were some of the  
demands being aired for brief periods. \*8

Later 1973 to February 1974: 'General Strike' mania redoubled.

February 1974 to late 1974: The election result abruptly deprived the  
IMG of their cherished 'central strategic project'. A whole period of  
floundering followed. The Labour Government was compared to the  
Allende government in Chile (which was logical, if kicking out the Tories  
had been the central question) — and workers were called on to  
defend it against possible sabotage or overthrow. The demand was raised  
for a "Labour government responsible to the organisations of the  
working class" and for a "TUC plan for the nationalisation of the  
economy under workers' control." Increasingly feeble attempts were  
made to invoke a general strike — first, "for a sliding scale of wages"  
then "to secure workers' demands on inflation and unemployment"  
(it doesn't really matter what the demands may be, as long as you  
have a General Strike!).

The Troops Out Movement, dominated at this stage by the IMG, held  
its first conference in May 1974. The IMG hailed it as a burgeoning  
mass movement, and, in Red Weekly, scornfully denounced the  
"solidarity first merchants" (i.e. Workers Fight). Within a few months,  
however, the IMG majority became convinced that TOM was not the  
promised mass movement. They dropped TOM — whereupon the  
leading TOM activists split from the IMG — and proclaimed instead  
a "conjunctural united front" strategy for Irish work.

The other main activity of the IMG in this period was anti-fascist  
work, where they switched in mid-course from an ultra-aggressive  
"Smash the Fash" line to one of saying more "politics" (unspecified)  
were needed. \*9

Late 1974 - June 1975: 'No to the EEC' campaign. (For which see

'Permanent Revolution' No.3 and the Workers Fight pamphlet on the EEC.)

June 1975 until recently: The IMG threw itself into agitation for the "Left to unite against Wilson".

This sort of political life is explicitly theorised in No.11 of the USFI Theses for Britain, which argues for the "General Strike to Kick out the Tories" as a way to . . . unite the IMG! "The absence of a unifying and centralising political line, axed (sic) round a key demand and a key political campaign . . . tends to increase centrifugal tendencies inside the organisation. . . the adoption of a central political line by the organisation greatly contributes to unifying the cadre. . ."

This focus on a 'central line' and its effect both on the public politics and on the internal life of the organisation can be seen more clearly in the WRP/SLL. At any particular time, the WRP/SLL has one key demand — be it "Make the Left MPs Fight", "General Strike to Kick the Tories Out", "A recall Labour Party Conference", or whatever. Everything is centred round that demand, and it is the answer to every problem. Actual problems of what to do now, of how to relate to real struggles, are left aside in favour of the current cure-all. The "key demand" also serves as the crucial weapon against the 'deviations' and 'revisionists' outside, or, if they should be so bold, inside the WRP/SLL, who are denounced for not fighting, or not REALLY fighting, for this demand.

The IMG leadership has adopted fundamentally the same method. There are some differences — most notably, the IMG tends to proclaim the general strike (or whatever) as the pre-destined "necessary culminating point of all the current struggles" (USFI Theses, No.6), while the SLL tends to simply denounce any struggles other than its recommended cure-all. Still, it has worked for the IMG, in its own terms. The "General Strike to kick out the Tories" slogan DID unify the organisation, leading the internal debates into obscure disputes about who was and who was not interpreting the slogan correctly. It did serve as a line of division from other tendencies. In winter 1973/74, the Red Weekly published a series of polemics against IS, the WRP and the Militant — all based not on unravelling the internal logic of those tendencies' politics, but on denouncing them for not taking up "General Strike to kick the Tories out". A more recent and even more WRP-ish polemic in Red Weekly belaboured IS for "refusing" to call for the removal of Wilson — as if IS were holding back despite a stormy working class outcry!

The "central line" method also served to help to recruit: in its most manic period, in winter 1973-74, the IMG recruited very fast indeed.

#### THE 'DEPRESSIVE' PHASES OF THE IMG

The WRP leadership has a highly developed eye for the main chance, no 'theoretical' baggage to worry about, party activity which is self-contained, and a membership which is sufficiently terrorised, isolated from political debate and rapidly-changing to accept front-page

headlines like "Four Days to Military Dictatorship" (February 1974). It can manage to do without the 'depressive' phases of the IMG. But for the IMG leadership, without these 'advantages', these phases — in which it tries out possible 'central demands', experimenting, testing, flushing out ideas, groping towards the next 'key political demand' — have a vital role.

An extraordinary list could be compiled of the various 'central demands' proposed (sometimes for periods as short as a week...) by the IMG during its 'depressive' phases. (A few have been noted above.) Indeed, the IMG leadership, curiously, manages to protect itself, both internally and externally, by the very number and variety of its stupidities. An architect whose design has one or two major flaws cannot avoid accounting for them. An architect whose design is crammed full of blunders and weird constructions which he constantly revises, may successfully pretend to a novel and advanced version of Rococo architecture (which culminated, appropriately enough for the analogy, in the building of brand new 'Gothic ruins' known as Follies...)

The existence of these numerous aborted efforts at a 'central demand' is, however, noteworthy. Each time we see the IMG leadership shuffling around the elements of reality as they see it, moving the "pawns on the global chessboard", on the look-out for a scenario to slot into.

#### THE USFI THESES: THE GENERAL STRIKE

'Scenario politics' could be defined as follows: one juggles speculatively with the various elements in the real situation; one establishes a particular combination which leads to an optimistic scenario; then one reads back a policy for the present day from that scenario. The archetypal example is the "War-Revolution" line of the Trotskyist movement in the early 1950s.

The point is not that we should not speculate on the future. We should. Nor that we should not construct possible scenarios, and take them into account in working out our policies. We should do that, too. The point is, to remember that reality is multi-dimensional; that there are objective processes in history, but that conscious intervention — "the consciousness of priests, or the consciousness of Marxists", in Lenin's phrase — can lend to one and the same objective process substantially different outcomes; that "men make their own history" even though they be impelled by forces beyond their control in doing so, and exactly how they will make it can never be mechanically predicted, for it depends on consciousness; that we should always be prepared for the worst outcome, instead of relying on some possible, or even probable, optimistic scenario; that we can affect future events not by hoping for them, but only by acting on and in present day events, above all by acting in present day events to build and clarify a revolutionary organisation capable of intervening with some weight in future events; that if we give enemies, or wavering allies, credit now for what they may do tomorrow, we thereby both free them from pressure from the left, and disarm the working class in the face of possible treachery of these enemies or wavering allies.



For revolutionaries, scenario politics generally leads to self-cancelling-out, to 'cheerful idiot' optimism that the revolution will advance, whatever we do. The 'Militant' is a very clear example of this sort of politics. But with the 'Militant' — and generally, including with the IMG — there is also a strong streak of voluntarism in scenario politics. When reality departs from the supposed mechanical advance of the 'revolutionary process', it becomes the job of the 'Marxists' to whip reality back into line. Thus the confidence of 'Militant' in the ability of their 'class appeal' to line up the Protestant and Catholic workers of 'Northern Ireland' in a common class front, as required by the 'Militant' model of the world. And thus the increasingly hysterical 'General Strike' shouting of the IMG in early 1974.

The most authoritative exposition of the 'General Strike' line is the 1973 USFI Theses, already mentioned. They start with a panoramic overview, in the first four Theses, of the "historic crisis of British imperialism", and deduce that a "head-on collision between Capital and Labour seems unavoidable in the period before us". The vagueness and lack of concrete relevance in this overview can be seen from the total confusion of time scales — at some points the document seems to be talking about the historic decline of British capitalism (which has been going on for at least 80 years), at others in a time scale of weeks or months. Moreover, the USFI, in its European Perspectives Document, manages to reach exactly the same conclusion of impending Armageddon for every other country in capitalist Europe!

No matter. Once this general panorama is established, it takes on the stature of a veritable Law of Nature — "growing class confrontation" is leading to one (and only one) "decisive" class collision. No doubt the USFI would concede that this "process" may be retarded, may even take steps backwards. Nevertheless, History must eventually march along this path, and only this path. \*10

In this situation, the IMG needs — so Thesis 5 maintains — a "central strategic project". If the General Strike slogan did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it!

There are, however, several contradictory definitions of this 'central strategic project':

1. "...the central strategic project can only be: support, extend, unify and generalise all current struggles towards the preparation of a general strike to bring down the Tory government and create a situation of dual power in Britain" (Thesis 5)

2. "...our central thrust (is) the perspective of a general strike to bring down the Tory government" (also Thesis 5).

3. "We cannot exclude that the general strike could actually take place when a Labour Government was in power" (Thesis 6: yet one clearly cannot have a "general strike to bring down the Tory Government" when the government is Labour!)

4. "Preparation of the appearance of organs of dual power immed-

lately before or during the general strike — or whatever other form the generalised confrontation between the two classes pending in Britain will take — is our main strategic goal...” (Thesis 7).

5. Thesis 5 speaks of the ‘central strategic project’ “incorporating and expressing the basic socialist solution”; and Thesis 7 describes the general strike as a “global class answer to the social crisis” — both implying that a general strike for workers’ power (not just dual power) is the ‘project’.

What the Theses actually want, clearly, is a scenario for dual power. Yet “General Strike for Dual Power” would be too crass an example of the politics of “wouldn’t it be nice if...” to be usable. So they find “General Strike to kick the Tories out” as a convenient formula. A Left Opposition Tendency document commented on the first “General Strike” Red Mole, that it “would make just as much (little) sense if the words ‘general strike’ were throughout replaced by ‘armed insurrection’.” Much the same could be said of the USFI Theses.

#### THE USFI THESES: DUAL POWER

‘Dual power’ signifies a condition where both workers’ councils and the bourgeois state hold power, without either being able to crush the other. In various forms and degrees, it has existed in Russia in 1917, Germany 1918/19, Catalonia 1936, France 1968, Quebec 1972, etc. A serious general strike, paralysing bourgeois society as it does, cannot but lead to dual power, unless it is derailed by reformists.

In a situation of dual power, the tasks and responsibilities of a revolutionary organisation would be raised to a high pitch. It would fight for the undivided power of the workers’ councils, and the arming of the workers. It would prepare for armed insurrection. The disastrous right-wing content of the “General Strike to kick the Tories out” slogan is precisely that it would AID THE REFORMISTS in that dual power situation — for the reformists would say, “yes, let’s have an election”. And, for all the IMG’s logic-chopping, most workers would see an election as a reasonable way of kicking out the Tories. This problem, of course, does not appear in the schemes of the USFI Theses: the bourgeoisie just stand inert as the Revolution beats them down.

The USFI Theses, despite all their focus on achieving dual power, are totally silent on the role of the revolutionary organisation IN the dual power situation. In some places they give the impression that once dual power is achieved, we are on the ‘home straight’ to revolution with no problems. Elsewhere, that ‘first time round’, there is no chance anyway of going from dual power to workers’ power. (The second estimate is probably correct — but it does not in the least minimise the role of the revolutionary organisation in ensuring that the best lessons are learnt from the dual power experience, that demoralisation is minimised, that the best militants are won to on-going revolutionary activity, etc.)

The second paradox in the USFI Theses is this. Their whole trend is to argue that the creation of dual power is sooner or later inevitable in the next few years — yet the IMG’s activity is supposed to be focused on bringing about this dual power which will happen anyway.\*11

### THE 'GENERAL STRIKE' IN ACTION — WINTER '73-'74

For much of 1973 the 'general strike to kick the Tories out' was merely low-key propaganda. But in winter '73-'74 it appeared that all the elements were there for that slogan to come into its own: severe economic crisis for the bourgeoisie, mass strike movements, and political crisis of the Tory government.

In October the National Industrial Relations Court fined the AUEW £75,000 over the Con-Mech dispute, and the Tory government introduced the Phase 3 pay curbs. The next month, the miners started an overtime ban in pursuit of their wage claim and a state of emergency was declared.

The political crisis deepened with the onset of the 'oil crisis', the decreeing of the 3-day week, an overtime ban by train drivers and discussions on the AUEW claim, and, in February, the miners proceeding to strike action. Heath called a general election, resulting in a minority Labour government which granted the miners' claim but persuaded the engineers to stay within Phase 3.

Workers Fight's response was, in brief:

— "A working-class policy for the crisis", focused around demands for work or full pay, nationalisation under workers' control of the fuel industry, and workers' inspection.

— Solidarity and support for the miners (especially on the picket line) and for other struggles against Phase 3. Other sections with outstanding claims to coordinate their struggles with the miners.\*12

— "Vote Labour and prepare to fight", giving that slogan a political cutting edge with a series of demands directed at the Labour leadership. We argued that the needs of the direct class struggle were primary and that the miners and the railworkers should not curtail their struggle for fear of losing votes for Labour.

— "Prepare for a General Strike". "If the government dares to impose a wage freeze", we argued, "the immediate answer must be a general strike".

The Left Faction inside IS argued a similar policy.

The IMG argued, from the start of Phase 3, that the task was to centralise all the existing struggles into a general strike to kick out the Tories. It had to be 'to kick out the Tories', since the Tory government was 'like an octopus'; if defeated on one line of attack it would simply try another. (The implication was that if the Tory government were removed, the bourgeoisie would NOT try another line of attack — or, at least, not seriously or effectively).

To argue for generalising and uniting the struggles was necessary. To extrapolate to a gradual amalgamation of all those struggles into a general strike was to depart into the politics of fantasy, totally losing any recognition of the sectional and defensive aspects of the struggle and of the role of the Labour leadership.

But if it were the case that all existing struggles could somehow be gummed together into a general strike, then the mere dismissal of the Tories — something to be accomplished soon in any case by an election — would be a petty aim for such a tremendous mobilisation.

As the crisis intensified, therefore, the IMG's politics fell more into utopian ranting about 'General Strike' on the one hand (headlines in almost every Red Weekly after mid-December) and implicit Labourist illusions on the other.

Red Weekly on 1st February, for example, proclaimed: "Workers have hundreds of legitimate grievances against the Tories (!) — Phase 3, the jailing of the Shrewsbury workers, the 3-day week..., the Housing Finance Act, spiralling prices, discrimination against women and black workers, the racist immigration laws. Struggles should (!) be launched around ALL these issues which can draw workers directly into the offensive against their common enemy — the Tory Government — on the basis of THEIR OWN DEMANDS. Turn the Miners' Strike into a General Strike".

The last sentence might with no less logic have read: "Turn the Miners' Strike into a Socialist Revolution".

As a result, the IMG ignored obvious defensive demands like 'Work or Full Pay' (basing themselves on the schematic assertion that this was an offensive, not defensive, struggle). The focus on the general strike to kick out the Tories was reconciled with the general election by arguing that "If such a strike were today in progress there would be no debate as to the fate of the Tories in the election — they would be resoundingly defeated" (Red Weekly, 15th February). Workers were called on to strike — in order to counteract the effect of the bourgeois 'electoral diversion' in 'fragmenting' the working class! Red Weekly even argued that workers should strike on election day and march en masse to the polling stations.

Thus, opportunistically, the IMG argued for a general strike as an ancillary for electoral politics; while, with ultra-left bravado, Red Weekly also said that if the Tories should win the election then a general strike must immediately reverse the verdict of the polls. Red Weekly argued that, if Labour should win the election, then "only socialist measures can protect working class interests from the crisis of British capitalism. A general strike would be necessary to implement such measures — the expropriation of the big firms, the setting up of workers' control, the establishment of workers' regulation of prices — against the opposition of the ruling class, and to back up (!) the demand that the Labour Government adds its seal of approval (!) to such measures" (Red Weekly, 15th February).

"What is this", Workers Fight argued in an Open Letter to the IMG, "if not a peculiarly contorted version of a policy which the IMG has frequently and justly attacked in the past — 'Labour to power with a socialist programme'?"

The Labour leadership did not figure as a significant active factor in the IMG's scenario. There was just the Tory government on the one side, and the movement towards a General Strike on the other. As to what would replace the Tories, the IMG was evasive. Sometimes they made general propaganda about the desirability of a regime of workers' councils. Sometimes — as in the article cited above — they projected a socialist revolution 'from below' which would then be ratified by a Labour government. And, when Heath hesitated a couple of days after the election result before resigning, the IMG issued a hysterical broadsheet calling for a general strike to "finish off" the Tories and for Labour to form a parallel government in opposition to Heath. The IMG opposition describe this well:

"Readers of the broadsheet were told that it would 'soon (sic) be necessary not only to drive the Tories from office but to smash all the institutions through which the ruling class exercise their power'.

Both IS and the WRP managed to mobilise for demonstrations against Heath without indulging in this sort of childish impatience and phrasemongering — in the event most copies of the broadsheet had to be thrown away because they had become an embarrassment. The pedestrian unreality of this rhetoric helps to explain a curious fact: namely that the lead articles in the Red Weekly, although made over in large measure to the politics of fantasy, are, by general admission, extremely boring and dull. The Jonesite fantasies have too little purchase on reality to represent genuine ultra-leftism. On the other hand they are sufficiently restrained by would-be Marxist pretensions to be incapable of the excited flights of fantastical politics to be seen in the Weathermen or Situationists”.

#### THE IMG AND THE LABOUR PARTY

The “General Strike to kick the Tories out” line, right from its first adoption in early 1973, had logically obliged the IMG to argue that the Tory government was THE vital government for the bourgeoisie, and that a Labour government would be a disaster for the bourgeoisie. Here, as elsewhere, the ‘line’ came first, the logical argument later.

The result has been a gradual rightward shift of the IMG, though still to this day it is slightly veiled by ultra-left rhetoric.

In 1973 the theory was developed that Labour was going through a ‘Left Turn’ paralleling such developments as the revival of the French Socialist Party.

In the elections of 1974, a vote for Labour was argued on the grounds that a Labour government would be WEAK. After the February election, Red Weekly persistently compared the Labour Government to the Allende government in Chile, and called on workers to defend it against attempts to sabotage it or overthrow it.

Apart from the factual misestimation (John Ross was instructing the readers of Red Weekly on how a Labour government ‘stimulated’ the struggle of the working class at precisely the same time as, back in the real world, the Labour Government was successfully defusing a very nasty-looking industrial situation for the bourgeoisie) — such speculative politics can only tend to disarm workers in the face of the Labour Government’s attempts, not to be ‘weak’, but to be ‘strong’ (i.e. to attack them); to disarm them in the face of Labour’s attempts, not to ‘stimulate’ struggle but to depress it; to lull their indignation against the real, present-day attacks of the present-day Labour Government by focusing instead on the possible horrors of a bourgeois overthrow of the government.

The general summing-up of the IMG’s line in summer 1974 was for “a Labour government responsible to the organisations of the working class, not to Parliament”. Let us concede to the IMG that when they said “Parliament”, they meant “bourgeois state”. (The days when governments were really responsible to Parliament ended at least 60 years ago). Then the picture we get is of a struggle to pull the Labour government away from the bourgeois state, and towards the “organisations of the working class” — i.e., since no workers’ councils exist, in practice, the trade unions.

Very fine — except that the trade unions, as at present organised and led, do not represent a different principle from the bourgeois

state. Indeed, the trade union bureaucracy is the chief pillar of the state. The specific means by which the British bourgeoisie has exercised its rule — since the 1920s at least, if not before — has been by relying on the trade union bureaucracy.

Of course, that does not exclude episodic, even serious, conflicts between governments and the trade union leaders; and it should not stop us demanding from time to time that the Labour government execute TUC policy on the Shrewsbury pickets, on Chile, etc. But a generalised slogan like the IMG's could do nothing but encourage illusions.

The anti-EEC campaign came as a godsend to the IMG. It linked in with a theory already enunciated in 1973, and implicit in the "government based on the trade unions" slogan: the "two class" theory of the Labour Party. This theory says, crudely, that the left wing of the Labour Party represents the (admittedly confused) proletarian component; the Jenkinsites represent the bourgeois infiltrators who have taken over the party. The fact is, of course, that the trade union stalwarts have frequently been — and now are again — the firmest supporters of the Labour right wing. They are as firmly tied to bargaining within the bourgeois state as is any 'infiltrating' intellectual.

Following on the EEC campaign, the IMG adopted the slogan "The Left Must Unite Against Wilson". It would only be a slight exaggeration to say that the IMG revived its "kick the Tories out" line by means of making Wilson a 'honorary' Tory. The Labour Party doesn't play the part allotted to it in the "General Strike to kick out the Tories" scenario: the IMG resolves the problem by attributing the fault to the right (bourgeois) wing of the Labour Party, lumping that wing in with the Tories (hence the scare-stories about coalition in Red Weekly during 1975), and 'projecting' a massive united-left struggle to kick them out.

As with the 'General Strike' line, the 'Left must Unite Against Wilson' line, based as it is on 'world-historic' wishful thinking, is entirely vague and evasive in practice. At times it anticipated the present 'class struggle opposition' line. All the various campaigns and struggles — from the National Abortion Campaign, through the Troops Out Movement and the Medical Committee against Private Practice, to the fight against the £6 limit — were somehow to be sewn together in a great patchwork quilt, amalgamated into a movement of 'the left united against Wilson'. At other times, the revolutionary left other than the IMG were denounced for failing to join with the Labour left in some entirely unspecified united action. Yet again, it took the form of pleading with the Labour lefts to join equally unspecified united action with the IMG. Take it whichever way you like, it was vacuous.

But the key thing was ACTION — united action! on what program? — well that didn't matter so much as being UNITED. And it wasn't just unity in action — strikes, demonstrations — that the IMG called for. They also appealed for unity in VOTING. Which implies that if Tribunites or Stalinists in a union branch should put down a resolution for import controls, the IMG should support it in the cause of 'left unity'. So (and why not, logically) the programme actually advocated by the IMG looked more and more like Tribune's. Their "workers' plan for the crisis", in a Red Weekly centre-spread by John Ross, was actually a STATE-CAPITALIST programme.

All the key elements of Tribune's programme were there, 'improved' in varying degrees.

Import controls, the IMG recognised, were perhaps somewhat chauvinist — still, as good socialists we could certainly demand a state monopoly of foreign trade. But since they were calling for a trade monopoly by an imperialist state, not a workers' state or even a 'Third World' state, this amounted merely to a 'Marxist' formula for the chauvinistic slogan. As regards a ban on overseas investment, the IMG didn't even have that many scruples — they simply supported it. (They didn't say whether they have recommended to the USFI that it instruct all its sections to promote this new socialist demand for banning overseas investment... which might, if successful, put the clock back economically over one hundred years!)

The IMG 'improved' the Tribune call for cuts in arms spending to 'abolition of capitalist defence spending': that is, to a demand that a capitalist government abolish the 'armed bodies of men' which make up the capitalist state!

Price controls are there too, despite the illusory nature of this slogan. So is a "plan to increase investment and expand production". All problems, it seems, will be solved in this booming planned capitalism "in one country" (as per dozens upon dozens of futile TUC recommendations) and we can have "wage increases — to reflate the economy".

One last twinge of conscience seems to have caught the IMG, however. They advocate a sliding scale of wages, to ensure that workers "don't lose their enthusiasm for the plan".

Too late, comrades of the IMG, too late!

### THE 'CLASS STRUGGLE TENDENCY'

The IMG's "kick out the Tories" line was ruined by its own 'triumph' when the Tories were voted out in February 1974. Likewise the final debacle of the "Organise to Sack Wilson" line was provided by Wilson's resignation. "Wilson has HAD TO go", claimed Red Weekly, putting a brave face on it; but their slogan of 'No More Wilsons' highlighted the illusions of their previous emphasis on the Wilson/Healey 'clique'. Who would be 'another Wilson' and who would not? Is it a problem of the top of the Labour Party being infested with crypto-Tories, or is it a problem of the overall bourgeois nature of the Labour Party?

Before Wilson's resignation, however, their emphasis had already shifted more to the 'class struggle tendency' strategy proclaimed in the new (1976) USFI Theses for Britain. The 'class struggle tendency' is, in essence, that 'Left' which was previously to be 'united against Wilson'. Quite explicitly, it is NOT to be based on fully communist politics, but on a more minimal 'class struggle' platform.

Now certainly any viable rank-and-file movement within the trade unions, or rank-and-file opposition within the Labour Party, would include large numbers of workers who were not fully communist; and it would not start out by adopting the entire communist programme from A to Z. But its revolutionary value would depend on a successful struggle for communist leadership within it. Without that struggle the movement would unfailingly become a centrist block on the political development of the working class. It is certainly not a question

— as the IMG approach implies — of calculating the minimum necessary portion of Trotskyist spice to render the 'class struggle tendency' stew edible.

The most backward reformist workers can be a 'class struggle tendency' inasmuch as they enter actual battles against the bourgeoisie. That sort of 'class struggle tendency' exists without revolutionaries contriving high-flown theoretical schemas for its promotion; indeed, if it were not for the existence of that organic class struggle, all the work of revolutionaries would be null and void. Our task is not simply to proclaim 'class struggle' but to seek to develop communist consciousness in that struggle, building on the specific demands of the specific struggles.

'Class struggle politics' in the sense of GENERALISED class struggle on all three fronts, economic, political, and ideological, is nothing other than that communist consciousness. Yet the IMG's projected 'class struggle tendency' is supposed to be based on a sort of arithmetical lumping-together of various sectional struggles — against the cuts, against restrictions on abortion rights, against the £6 limit, etc — to form (somewhat in the manner of ice floes drifting together) a broad left-wing (but non-communist) movement. Tacked on in the IMG/US-

FI documents is, of course, a statement that the IMG needs to maintain its full programme. But the PRACTICAL task is to 'project', invoke, promote — or substitute for — the 'class struggle tendency'.

The scenario is an almost exact reproduction of the 1960s strategy building a 'broad left wing' in the Labour Party, a strategy concretised in the publication of 'The Week' and the promotion of the Institute for Workers Control. Already the 1960s idea has resurfaced of pushing for a 'replacement leadership' — a leadership chosen so as to be 'credible' (thus, not revolutionary) but also to the left of the existing leadership.

On March 10th 1976 37 left Labour MPs abstained on the public spending White Paper, thus causing a defeat for the Government. The following day they ended their rebellion by giving Wilson a vote of confidence in his policies. Red Weekly made no criticisms of the left's voting. They quoted Tom Litterick approvingly on the course to be followed: NOT bringing down the Government, NOT "capitulation to right-wing policies", but "changing the composition of the Labour leadership. NOT TO A REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP... but to a leadership which clearly stands for the abolition of wage controls, the rejection of all cuts, and taking all measures necessary to ensure the right to work". (My emphasis, MT).

In other words: not 'capitulation to right-wing policies', but 'capitulation to left-reformist policies'. For what else is it to promote the idea that a non-revolutionary leadership can abolish wage controls, end all cuts, and ensure the right to work?

## CONCLUSIONS

"They have played the sedulous ape to every 'socialist', 'communist', 'revolutionary' current, and shown an inexhaustible capacity for seeing them not as they are but as they would like them to be — or rather, more or less as they should be within the framework of the USFI's teleological view of the "epoch" and the World Revolution", and its often revised scenerios extrapolated from that view, and with the roles periodically reallocated, according to current events, for the 'already written' drama."

For the IMG, in the last four years, the 'star' role in the 'already-



written drama' has been reallocated successively to the 'peripheral' sections of the working class, to the militant economic struggles of early 1972, to the hypothetical General Strike movement of 1973-early 1974, and to the Labour left from 1974 (and probably for some time in the future, especially if the IMG seriously enter the Labour Party). They never swing right over to a consistent liquidationism; they always have reservations and escape-clauses; every so often they lurch back to a more independent position or towards a new 'star'.

It is impossible to explain every single political stupidity of the IMG as products of some single fundamental error: the basic ideology of the USFI, as described above, provides the framework of instability within which sheer intellectual freakishness (in the case of the 1972 'new thinking') or unscrupulous factional manoeuvring (in the case of the 'General Strike' slogan) can have a big effect on the IMG's politics. The IMG's politics can vary in time as the politics of the USFI's sections vary with geography.

The Common Market issue can illustrate the specific nature of the IMG's opportunism, by contrast with IS's. When it came to 'theoretical' exposition of the case for voting "Out" and of the benefits for socialism of the "Out" campaign, IS was notably diffident and perfunctory. But their agitation was quite unrestrained: butter mountains, unemployment, the Social Contract, the dangers of Brussels bureaucracy — anything could be thrown into the cauldron of their anti-EEC argument. In sum, IS has its 'theory', or rather its variety of theories; but for day to day purposes the vulgar politics of 'common sense' will do.

IMG, on the other hand, while somewhat more restrained in their agitation than IS, revelled in producing any number of 'theoretical' schemes indicating how getting Britain out would forward the World Revolution; and how, of course, the IMG should therefore put its shoulder to the wheel.

Trotsky once remarked that the difference between Lenin and the Mensheviks could be summed up by the fact that, where the Mensheviks spoke of 'processes', Lenin spoke of 'tasks'. In those terms, the IMG is definitely on the Menshevik side. IS speaks of 'tasks' — but its 'tasks' are the petty tasks of day-to-day perspectiveless militancy, not firmly linked to clearly-upheld revolutionary aims, as were Lenin's 'tasks'.

For IS, revolution is something distant and notional, prepared for only by encouraging militancy and expanding their membership. The IMG link their day-to-day activity with revolutionary aims — but they reduce the 'revolutionary process' to a mystical unseen force, permeating, growing out of, and guiding every struggle.

#### THE IMG AND THE USFI

We cannot and do not judge an International primarily by its British section, let alone the last four years of its British section. Yet we cannot fail to use our direct experience as the chief test of hypotheses we may formulate on the basis of studying the world movement.

The evidence tells us that the USFI is fully responsible for the major errors of its British section (one of its more substantial sections); that its 'European Perspectives Document' served only to blur over political clarification in the IMG (at the height of the early '73 faction fight, ALL the bitterly contending tendencies, with the exception of

the tiny and marginal pro-SWP tendency, were declaring whole-hearted support for the EPD); that the errors of the IMG concern not only possible mistakes of assessment of the situation in Britain (where the USFI could fairly disclaim responsibility) but major international and theoretical issues (the EEC, the General Strike, Ireland) on which the USFI is clearly responsible.

We have no reason to suppose that the International can guide other sections better than it can guide the IMG. And what sort of an International is it that cannot do that?

Some will accuse us of inventing political 'justifications' for unwarranted factional separation from the USFI. Just the opposite is true. We have formulated and repeated the political differences while hesitating, for a long time, to draw sharp conclusions. We said: the Emperor has no shirt, no trousers, no shoes, we refused to say: the Emperor has no clothes. Now we must say it.

#### APPENDIX: FOUR BRIEF REMARKS ON THE IMG OPPOSITION.

1. They do not FIGHT the majority seriously. Above, for example, we quoted them as saying the IMG majority politics are "worse than genuine ultra-leftism". That's pretty bad! Cause enough for an all-out political fight against the majority. Yet the general approach of the opposition is extremely low-key and diplomatic. At the height of the 'Winter Crisis', they had in fact formally dissolved their faction, for the sake of unity at the 10th World Congress of the USFI.

In fact — curiously — they are to a large extent ideologically parasitic on the Ross grouping, their ideological staple being polemic against Ross's stupidities rather than independent ideas of their own.

2. They are paralysed by their attitude to the USFI. They endorsed the USFI 1973 'Theses for Britain' (indeed, as we have seen, the Theses were originally 'their' document) and in winter '73-'74 were reduced to abjectly protesting that Ross had misinterpreted the Theses. But they were originally 'their' document) and in winter '73-'74 were left abjectly protesting that Ross had misinterpreted the Theses. But inevitably Cardinal Ross, backed up as he was by Pope Mandel, carried more authority as an interpreter of the Bible than did a group of unfrocked bishops.

3. They were responsible for the 'General Strike to kick the Tories out' line — indeed, they initiated it. That they protested against the most weird examples of its use merely shows that they have weaker stomachs than the Ross grouping.

They also share full responsibility for the "No to the EEC" line.

4. A major point of argument between the opposition and the majority has been the Labour Party. In this debate, the opposition has made a good many valid polemical points; it has also pressed persistently for limited activity inside the LP/LPYS. However, the opposition's own political line on the Labour Party has been confused.

The BJP tendency accused Ross of not seeing "the difference" between the Labour Party and the Tories, in 1972. But BJP themselves apparently located that "difference" in a "hidden essence of Labourism" — made up of proletarian solidarity, class consciousness, etc!

Such arguments are as arbitrary, and almost as dangerous, as the recent discovery of the class-conscious "hidden essence" of the anti-EEC campaign.

In late '73, Robin Blackburn developed the theory that revolutionaries should seek a "united front with the Labour Party". What he meant by this, has never been quite clear, but the formula certainly lays itself open to rightist tendencies on the model of the OCI.

The 'Winter Crisis' document already cited speaks of 'part (?) of the inherited (?) programme' of the Labour Party being proletarian. This theory was reflected in an amazing off-hand statement by Tariq Ali at an IMG rally. In most advanced capitalist countries, he said, the majority of the working class is social-democratic — except in the USA, of course, where it is bourgeois-democratic...

The 1975 conference formula of 'Tendency A' focused on "challenging the monopoly hold of the Labour Party". If this actually means anything (which is doubtful) it could be a recipe for the most lunatic adventurism or for the most narrow electoralism.

[AUGUST 1975. UPDATED APRIL 1976]

\*1. Since 1972 a thorough whitewash job has been done by the IMG leadership on the 'new thinking'; but the IMG did say, literally, "no calls to action". The crudest expression of this was in the IMG's programme for the LCDTU (which was published in the Red Mole and reproduced as a pamphlet, so cannot be dismissed as an aberration of an individual comrade): "The working class has no need of anyone to make administrative 'calls to action' - strike on such and such a day, take this or that action, or, adopt this or that form of struggle..."

\*2. The ideas were, indeed, in obvious contradiction to the USFI's politics. For if the role of a party is defined as "presenting ideas", then the Vietnamese CP was certainly a straightforwardly bourgeois party - since the "ideas" it presented (e.g. in its published programme) were simply ideas of national-democratic revolution, accepting the continued existence of capitalist property.

\*3. The 1972 bonfire of "front groups" has had a lasting effect, in a generally sceptical view by the IMG towards ongoing campaign organisations. They have preferred ad hoc committees, conferences, etc. This expressed itself most crassly in the IMG's intervention at the 'Rank and File' conference called by IS in March 1974, which consisted of a leaflet distributed to the more than 500 TU delegates declaring 'Rank-and-File-ism Insufficient'. One might as well appear at one's union branch with a leaflet - 'Trade Unionism Insufficient'.

\*4. The comrades of the present Revolutionary Marxist Current, who led the IMG's intervention in that dispute, protest that our account in 'Permanent Revolution' no.1 does them an injustice. However, as yet they have not responded to repeated requests to write a correction.

\*5. The comrades concerned also say that they opposed the worst stupidities of the 'new thinking' at the time, in 1972.

\*6. Take for example Brian Heron's reply to the Wilcox-Klein document on 'The Winter Crisis' ('73-'74). He accuses them of tailing social-democracy: "In reality because they think that the vanguard are organised and politically focused around the Labour Party, this conception reduces itself to a debate with right social-democracy, inside the Labour Party and inside the 'bourgeois political order'". While the Wilcox-Klein line on the Labour Party was at least questionable, Heron's account is a slanderous caricature.

\*7. See Appendix for some brief comments on the IMG opposition.

\*8. The result of repealing the 1875 Conspiracy Act would in fact be to restore force to previous, more far-reaching, Conspiracy laws.

\*9. In September 1974 the IMG turned up at Hyde Park for an anti-NF demo all wearing crash helmets (to convince the masses of the need for workers' self-defence, you see...). IS left Hyde Park to meet the NF (Workers Fight mostly went with them) and the NF in fact redirected their march from Hyde Park to Lincoln's Inn Fields. The IMG subsequently justified themselves staying put - not by saying that a united stand was better than sporadic 'publicity politics' sallies against the NF, which would have been reasonable - but with the claim that they had been conducting "the political struggle against the CP" in Hyde Park.

\*10. When the Second International put its faith in the 'objective process', it was at least referring to a real, material - even measurable - process: the growth of industry and of the working class, the increase of socialist party membership and votes, the expansion of the trade unions. The USFI's "objective process", very often, sadly, has no tangible reality at all, being merely an abstraction from the USFI's hope of future big victories.

\*11. Think a moment. How can a small revolutionary organisation "prepare dual power"? It cannot achieve the mass upheaval in the consciousness of millions of workers necessary to create dual power - only the "old mole of

history" can do that. What can it do? — raise consciousness, fight reformism, promote workers' democracy and self-organisation, render its own forces more clear and coherent — i.e. carry out normal revolutionary activity. There is no special "preparation of dual power". In the period 1973-74 the IMG attempted such "preparation" in the form of casting the Committee of Action as embryo Soviets. The results were ridiculous.

Thus, in sum, the USFI Theses enjoin the IMG to do what it can't do, and fail to emphasise what it can do. The consequences could only be disorienting.