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Comrades are asked to make a contribution of 20p if possible towards the cost of duplicating and mailing IBs.

Further resolutions, amendments, discussion articles etc. should be sent to the centre, if possible typed A4 on Bonco stencils.

TWO MISUNDERSTANDINGS: REPLY TO ELLIS

Carolan, Hill, Kinnell

Ellis's polemic (this IB) is based on two misunderstandings.

1. Far from proposing that we drop the paper as a pre-emptive 'subterfuge' against the witch-hunt, we are proposing that we should fight to maintain the paper and continue it for a period even after it is made 'illegal' (if it is). See Carolan's resolution in IB24: "In the event that the Marxists are outlawed by whatever process, my proposal would be that the Marxists maintain the paper and its organisation as at present and also seek alliances to create a new publication..." etc.

2. We do propose that <u>if</u> despite our efforts the paper is made 'illegal', then we should develop another paper capable of organising the left in the LP and TUs. But we <u>took it for granted</u> - and we thought everyone else would take it for granted - that this paper would enable us to express <u>our</u> ideas adequately, and that if certain things could not be said in the paper we would supplement it by magazines, pamphlets, etc (and the 'illegal' paper for a period). All tactics, manoeuvres etc make no sense unless the League can maintain its basic ideological role.

The stress we put on the issue of being ready for tactical manoeuvres on the paper, without sectarian preconceptions, was in response to several comrades arguing that we must maintain the present paper <u>come what may</u> and that, if the witch-hunt won (which they seemed to take for granted) then we should go for 'illegal methods of work'.

READING ON IMPERIALISM: SOME NOTES

To study modern monopoly-capitalist imperialism is to study the world economy over the last 100 years. A vast range of theoretical ideas and empirical research is therefore relevant. The list below is extremely selective. (Moreover, much of it assumes a knowledge of basic Marxist texts). Even so, it represents a lot of reading. The list may be useful, however, to comrades willing to put some effort into theoretical self-education, and save them from getting completely lost in the mass of relevant books and articles.

The list focuses heavily on Latin America: this does mean, however, that comparison of different theoretical views is sometimes easier because the same country is under discussion from the different views.

BASIC MARXIST TEXTS

Lenin, 'Imperialism, the highest state of capitalism' (Moscow pamphlet)

Bukharin, 'Imperialism and world economy' (Merlin 1972)

Luxemburg, 'The Accumulation of Capital' (RKP 1951).

SURVEYS

Tom Kemp, 'Theories of Imperialism' (Dobson 1967). Covers Hobson, Luxemburg, Lenin, Stalinists, and 'political' theories of imperialism: a "scientific dissection of opposing theories" (from a Marxist viewpoint), rather than a positive empirical study.

Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, 'Studies in the theory of imperialism' (Longman 1972). A collection of articles under 3 headings: theories of imperialism (i.e., mostly, Marxist theories); theoretical aspects of contemporary imperialism (Magdoff on 'imperialism without colonies' and Sutcliffe on 'imperialism and industrialisation in the 3rd World'); and 'case studies in the working of imperialism' (Egypt 1789-1882, India since independence, Guinea to 1958, Belgian imperialism in the late 19th century, French expansion in Africa, British capitalism in Latin America before 1914.) (The case studies are sometimes from Marxist, sometimes from decidedly non-Marxist, viewpoints).

Michael Barratt Brown, 'The economics of imperialism' (Penguin 1974). A convenient, short and clear summary of the whole literature (Marxist and non-Marxist), with empirical background. Marxist-inclined.

Ernest Mandel, 'Late Capitalism' (NLB 1975), chapters 3, 10, 11. These chapters summarise some main facts about post-war development and survey a lot of the literature. They can be read separately from the rest of the book.

SOME POST-WAR MARXIST MATERIAL

Paul Baran, 'The Political Economy of Growth' (Monthly Review Press 1957). "The principal obstacle to rapid economic growth in the backward countries is the way in which their potential economic surplus is utilised. It is absorbed by various forms of excess consumption of the upper class, by increments to hoards at home and abroad, by the maintenance of vast unproductive bureaucracies and of even more expensive and no less redundant military establishments. A very large share of it... is withdrawn by foreign capital". Baran's book was a pioneer of modern studies on imperialism from the angle of how it 'underdevelops' poorer countries; the basic idea taken over into these studies is that it 'underdevelops' these countries by siphoning off profits from them. The 'underdevelopment' is measured by comparison with what Baran sees as the success of Socialism In One Country in the USSR.

Andre Gunder Frank, 'Capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America: historical studies of Chile and Brazil' (MR Press revised edition 1969). This book takes off from Baran's ideas and develops two further ideas:

a) A polemic against the idea shared by bourgeois theorists and traditional Stalinists that Latin American economies are 'dual' economies,

with a progressive capitalist sector alongside a backward feudal sector: "no part of the economy is feudal and all of it is fully integrated into a single capitalist system".

b) Capitalism creates a pattern of metropolis-satellite or centre - periphery relations: primarily internationally but also within countries. Internationally, "the metropolis expropriates economic surplus from its satellites and appropriates it for its own economic development". Thus: "the development of underdevelopment".

Frank has a political conclusion: "The historical mission and role of the bourgeoisie in Latin America - which was to accompany and to promote the underdevelopment of its society and of itself - is finished. In Latin America as elsewhere, the role of promoting historical progress has now fallen to the masses of the people alone... To applaud and in the name of the people even to support the bourgeoisie in its already played-out role on the stage of history is treacherous or treachery".

This is aimed against the Latin American CPs. It should be noted, however, that Frank is not very consistent about his political conclusion. Despite the above he comments, for example, on Brazil before the 1964 coup: "The progressive forces, including Brazilian nationalist business interests, had offered (president) Goulart an alternative... (but) Goulart again tried to put off demands of the progressive forces..." ('Underdevelopment and Revolution' p.346-7).

Harry Magdoff: 'The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of US foreign policy' (MR Press 1969). This sets out to show in some factual detail "that there is a close parallel between, on the one hand, the aggressive United States foreign policy aimed at controlling (directly and indirectly) as much of the globe as possible, and, on the other hand, an energetic expansionist policy of US business".

Ernesto Laclau, 'Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America', in New Left Review no.67, May-June 1971. This is a critique of Frank. He argues that Frank mis-defines capitalism as just a market economy, a system of exchange. But capitalism is a mode of production - and non-capitalist modes of production have been important and still exist in Latin America. Frank, Laclau complains, bundles together centuries of world history into one set of concepts (capitalism, metropolis-satellite), but: "It seems to me more useful to underline (the) differences and discontinuities than to attempt to show the continuity and identity of the process from Hernan Cortes to General Motors". Baran's model (which underlies Frank) is, he argues, "consistently less applicable today to contemporary Latin America." Laclau, however, agrees with Frank in rejecting the 'dual' economy model. The capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production in Latin American countries are closely linked into one - capitalist - economic system.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso, 'Dependancy and Development in Latin America', in New Left Review no.74, July-August 1972. Giving facts on post-war development in Latin America, Cardoso concludes: "The idea that there occurs a kind of development of underdevelopment, apart from the play on words, is not helpful. In fact, <u>dependency</u>, <u>monopoly capitalism</u>, and <u>development</u> are not contradictory terms: there occurs a kind of <u>dependent capitalist development</u> in the sectors of the Third World integrated into the new forms of monopolistic expansion". (He especially highlights the shift of imperialist investment in Latin America and elsewhere from raw materials into manufacturing).

(Note: There are many who argue that Cardoso, in retaining Frank's idea of 'dependency' or 'periphery' while opposing the notion that it means across-the-board underdevelopment, is trying to square the circle. See for example cd Ellis's articles in the Internal Bulletin. The arguments against 'dependency' theory are summarised in chapter 7 of Bill Warren, 'Imperialism, pioneer of capitalism', New Left Books 1980. Warren's general views are not necessarily shared by all opponents of 'dependency' theory.)

Bill Warren, 'Imperialism and capitalist industrialisation', in New Left Review no. 81, September-October 1973; Arghiri Emmanuel, 'Myths of development versus myths of underdevelopment', and Philip McMichael, James Petras, and Robert

Rhodes, 'Imperialism and the contradictions of development', both in New Left Review no.85, May-June 1974.

If Cardoso represents a cautious and selective critique of the Ba Frank underdevelopment theory, Warren represents the most extreme all-out assault on it. He argues that empirical evidence shows that "a major upsurge of capitalism is taking place in the Third World", and that on the whole imperialism is likely to promote capitalist development in the Third World. The 'underdevelopment' theory is likely to make socialists dupes of Third World bourgeois nationalism. (Warren's book mentioned above is a longer development of the same argument).

Emmanuel is the author of an influential book ('Unequal Exchange', New Left Books 1972), which analyses imperialism in terms of exchange relations favouring rich countries (i.e. they get high prices for their products) and exploiting poor countries (i.e. they get low prices). (His political conclusion is that "the contradictions between classes within the advanced countries, which still undoubtedly subsist, have nevertheless become historically secondary. The principal contradiction, and driving force for change, are henceforth located in the realm of international economic relations").

He concedes to Warren that there has been a 'wave of industrialisation' in the Third World, and "an improvement in the bargaining position of host countries vis-a-vis foreign resource companies", which some have wanted to deny out of dogmatism. He agrees that: "The mere arrival of foreign capital in a country... enslaves or develops the country just as much as any other capital, neither more nor less". But he argues that Warren exaggerates his statistics - and that world capitalist inequality is self-reproducing because new capitalist investment will generally flow more to richer areas.

McMichael and others also criticise Warren's use of figures. They conclude that: "Capitalist development in the Third World today means dependent growth in a small proportion of countries, for the benefit of a small proportion of the population".

Ruy Mauro Marini, 'Brazilian "interdependence" and imperialist integration', in Monthly Review, December 1965; 'Brazilian sub-imperialism', in Monthly Review, February 1972. These are a pioneering study of sub-imperialism - defined as "the form which dependent capitalism assumes upon reaching the stage of monopolies and finance capital" - in Brazil following the 1964 military coup.

Andre Gunder Frank, 'Crisis: in the world economy' and 'Crisis: in the Third World', both Heinemann, 1980 and 1981. These books give a bulky, but vivid and readable, introduction to the crisis of the 1970s, with a lot of factual material. The scrapbook-type style makes them quite suitable for dipping in and reading individual chapters and sections.

Walter Rodney, 'How Europe underdeveloped Africa', Bogle-L'Ouverture 1972. Rodney was a black Guyanese Marxist, assassinated by political enemies in 1980. This book is of course outside the Latin American focus of the rest of this list; but it is a detailed and closely-argued exposition of the 'development of underdevelopment' through a historical account from the 15th century to the end of the colonial period. Its political limitations are indicated by the fact that a final section was provided by a minister in the Tanzanian government.

Cunliffe
Kinnell

September 1982

PS: This list is limited, of course, not only by our concern to keep it short, but also by our ignorance. It would be useful if comrades who want to recommend to our special attention books or articles not mentioned above (or want to argue that some of these mentioned above do not deserve attention) would write in, so that their suggestions can be circulated.

P.S. Comrade Traven has recommended to us, as a book giving a useful introduction and overview:

Anthony Brewer, 'Marxist Theories of Imperialism', RKP 1980

Struggles with the police Dupont

.e its beginning in the early 19th century the police ha ...ays been a class weapon of the bourgeoisie.This is evide in its functions(since even the impartial protection of pri property means the protection of the ownership of the means prodactyon by a few capitalists and the expropriation of the mass of the population).It is evident in their control(since even the most accountable systems of policing have reserved key areas of control for a state machinery that exists beyond the will of the people themselves).It is evident in their internal organisation(since the very relations of hierarchy and authority which the police express are one aspect of bourgeois domination). The struggle for socialism is a struggle for the abolition of all 'special' forces elevated above society and for the performanceof policing functions through the self-organisation and self-activity of the working class.

.owever,the relation between the police and society is not static.While the police are always an instrument of the ruling class,the nature of this instrument changes,depending on relations between the classes.It is obvious that the police under bourgeois democracy and the police under fascism are not the same thing,even though they are in each case an instrument of the bourgeoisie.The ruling class does not exist in a vacuum.It stands to definite relations to other classes. The type of policing which exists is one expression of this relation;changes in the character of policing express changes in the nature of these relations.

To describe a bourgeois-democratic police as if they were a fascist police only obscures the issue and in particular obscures the need to resist moves in this direction.

In the recent period(under Labour and Tory governments) there has been a significant increase in police powers.This has taken the form,for instance,of:more financial and manpower resources; more arms;provision of special riot equipment(gas,rubber bullets,high-speed land rovers,shields,armoured cars etc);centralisation of the police into larger and more integrated units; the growth of special units like the SIG,the PSUs,the Special Branch;growth of computerised control systems(like the Hendon .ational Computer);automated eaves-dropping equipment(system .x telephone system); etc.Ireland has provided the cutting edge for many of these developments.

At the same time there has been an extension of police powers in law.The PTA has given the police power to arrest and detain anyone suspected of 'use of violence for political ends.The Scottish Criminal Justice Act and the current Police Bill are increasing police powers of arrest,detention,search and interrogation.The courts have through common law minimised the right of suspects to stay silent while under interrogation and have sanctioned the use of evidence by the police even when it has been improperly or forcibly extracted.

Political control over the police by open and democratically elected bodies has been eroded.There has been a move away from a degree of accountability to elected representatives of local government to,on the one hand,Chief Constables,who have become local potnetates,and on the other hand,the Home Office,shielded from any public intervention beyond the turnover of Home Secretaries and the occasional question in parliament. The powers of Police Committees are far less than the old Watch Committees,though Simey has shown in Merseyside that they can be effectively used(at least for propaganda).Even their limited powers are too much for the police who are campaigning for their abolition.

The police have been increasingly mobilised as a political force.Chief Constqables,the Police Federation,the Ass.of Chief Police Cfficers have shown an active political presence and have vocalised their extreme right wing views on everything from picket lines to hanging.

Within the police itself there has been opposition to these tendencies.The liberals(like Alderson)campaigned under the banner of community policing,but they have generally been squeezed out.Their 'community policing' ideas have been appropriated as an adjunct to the 'reactive' policing of the right-wingers,offering both a soft face for public consumption and a kind of Fifth Column in the community.

These facts point in the direction of a major change in the nature of policing,from on characteristic of bourgeois democracy to one characteristic of Bonpartism.This process is not yet complete,but unless active steps are taken by tha labour movement to stop it,it will proceed further and constitute a major setback for the labour movement and for all democrats.

This changing form of repression comes packaged in a changing form of ideology.The increase in police powers is presented as a practical necessity in the face of rising crime rates; the undercutting of political and legal constraints on the police is presented as necessary for police 'impartiality'; military-style operations against black communities are justified in blatantly racist terms(e.g.'black-mugger' scares). This ideology is totally irrational: more power and less accountability have made the police worse,not better,at crime prevention and detection and they have led to a more overt, right-wing partiality.The 'black-mugger' scare is entirely fictitious.Yet this Thatcherite ideology is effective: not so much inside the labour movement but among the petty bourgeoisie radicalised from the right and a section of workers and unemployed disaffected from the labour movement.

It is wrong to characterise this shift as one from 'consensus' to 'repression' as the CP tend to do.This implies that increased repression automatically leads to loss of legitimacy by the police.But the state does not carelessly surrender the legitimacy it has built up.Socialists have to break the ideological grip of the state in this area as in any other;the state will not do our work for us.

Working Class Responses

The right-wing leaderships of the LP and TUs have been anxious to show that they are no less committed to law and order than the next conservative.They have sought to deflect the issue of police powers and racism by focussing on wider social,economic and political questions,like bad housing,unemployment & Thatcherism.They have hidden behind the coat-tails of Scarman, calling for more police-community liaison & consultation,the aim of which is to create an aura of 'community-backing' for police operations.This was effectively done after recent police raids on 'squatters in Brixton and is the fruit of Scarman's intervention.

Radical democrats(CCL,most left Labour) have fought against current moves to erode existing levels of accountability and for the introduction of increased levels.Some are more radical than others',but their demands include:extended powers to

Police Authorities,more democratic representation on them, an extension of the system into London;all major police matters to be debated in parliament;abolition of laws which grant police excessive powers(SUS,PTA,Immigration Act etc); scrapping of militaristic police units(like the SPGs and the PSUs).Their basic perspective is democratic:i.e.to bridge the gap between the ideal of the police as guardian of the community and its practice as a force alien from the community.

At the other end of the socialist spectrum,it is argued that the fight for accountability is lost from the beginning(i.e. utopian),since the police - as the repressive arm of the state- are immune from popular control.They argue that any participation on police authorities and the like would only lead to incorporation and the defence of legal rights is illusory given the record of the judiciary in siding with the police. What is needed,they say,is an exposure of the class nature of the police,a sweeping away of democratic illusions, and on this basis the establishment of popular organs of self-defence.The general orienation is ~~xxxxxx~~combatative:not to reform the police but to prepare for and organise resistance against the police.

Marxism is not the same as radical democracy.The police in our view are necessarily a class force:there has never been a golden age ~~xx~~ when the police were purely democratic nor could there be in the future.The existence of the police,far from being a condition of democracy,is proof that society is not yet democratic,that the people have not yet fought to rule themselves.It is an illusion to think that accountability is in the interest of the police themselves or that the police can be persuaded to welcome it.The reverse is true: the police have shown total hostility to even the mild measures of accountability to which they are presently subject.

Neither is marxism the same as left nihilism.We recognise the difference between deomcracy and Bonapartism as different forms of the capitalist state.We do not see the 'rule of law' as a mere mirage.A struggle is being waged to bring the police under some kind of democratic control and to curb their most outrageous powers.This is not in itself a 'reformist' struggle but a key way in which workers' control can be fought for now.Denunciation of this struggle serves only as a cover for passsively abstaining from it.The danger of incorporation does exist;but it is up to us to insure that accountability is not used to draw democrats into the police web but as a base and forum for socialists to push for ever more democratic demands and to win new adherents.

In principle we do not counterpose 'dual power'(workers' militia,self-defence,resistance against police on the picket line and on the streets) to struggles for reform of the state(i.e. more accountable policing).We learn to combine both forms of struggle.In practice we have to see where the weight of our intervention ought to be.Too often comrades mechanically apply Trotsky's writings on the struggle against fascism in Germany in the 1930s to now.His emphasis on workers' militia and on not relying on the state was put in the context of a mass fascist movement,a state incapable of fighting fascism and impending civil war or extermination.For us the situation is entirely different.It is utopian to rely on workers' militia alone and abstentionist to denounce struggles to reform the police.Our task is to cobine the democrats of the official labour movement and the militants(esp.black youth) on the streets.We should offer a revolutionary marxist lead,not tail one or other side.

Denunciation of calls for police accountability is a political irrelevance. The basis on which the League could set up a united front on this issue with numerous local and campaigning bodies might be the following:

* Disarm the police force
* Abolish all special units
* Independent complaints procedure
* Police racism to be a criminal and disciplinary offence
* More powers to local police authorities, including that of hiring and firing Chief Constables
* Democratic representation on local Police Committees, and the exclusion of unelected magistrates from them
* London to have its own democratic Police Authority
* Right of blacks to establish self-defence committees against racist attacks and police harassment
* Right of workers to defend their own meetings and picket lines
* Right of suspects to silence under interrogation and to see a lawyer
* Repeal the PTA, the Scottish Criminal Justice Bill, the Immigration Act; and oppose the Police Bill
* Right of elected local representatives and their advisers to scrutinise police stations and other custodial institutions.

This list is obviously tentative and subject to revision.

STATEMENT OF THE PROLETARIAN TASKS TENDENCY

1.11.82

1. The Proletarian Tasks Tendency bases itself on the method and programme of the Transitional Programme. It is for the reconstruction of the Fourth International on a principled basis and is in solidarity with the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee. We are in agreement with the call for an open world conference of the Trotskyist movement for the purposes of discussion and outlining the possible foundation for the unification of the world Trotskyist movement. Our tendency is in fundamental agreement with the document The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle and believes that the Fourth International must operate under democratic centralism in its national sections and as an international tendency. This however requires a serious process of discussion and joint international work.

2. The critical task for our tendency is to seek to implement in the struggle of the working class policies of the Transitional Programme. We see the Transitional Programme not as a formula to impose on the working class with ultimatums or commitments of 100% agrement but as economic and political policies that can be taken up by the working class in relationship to the actual level of class struggle and advance their political consciousness and defend their living conditions. In other words, 'transitional demands' that advance the working class politically and organisationally from its present position.

The method of relating the Transitional Demands to the actual conditions and experiences of the working class is tied as well to the view that the working class will best advance in political consciousness when the policies of the programme are actually taken up in their daily struggle with capitalism. It is within this process that the party can advance the working class politically and train and develop its own cadre as Bolsheviks and not as 'armchair Marxists' or sectarians with the 'correct formulas and idealist schemes' as to how the working class defends itself and the party is built.

The Proletarian Tasks Tendency will support and build trade union caucuses that actually seek to develop workers in struggle with policies of the Transitional Programme. The main requirement of these caucuses is not abstract formal agreement on a programme but a commitment to implement policies of the Transitional Programme in the struggle of the working class.

At the same time we will pursue a united front policy with other left caucuses and organisations such as Teamsters for a Democratic Union for an advance in democracy within the trade union movement, against corruption, for unemployed councils and for the formation of a labour party based on the trade union movement as well as other issues of importance to the working class.

3. A major electoral vacuum exists in the United States that contributes to the isolation of the left and the political backwardness of the working class. There is no mass labour party or socialist electoral alternative for the mass of working people in the United States and the task of changing this must be a crucial political responsibility of our tendency and all other Trotskyist and Marxist forces in the United States. Our tendency gives critical support to working class and Socialist parties such as the Socialist Workers' Party, the Communist Party, the Peace and Freedom Party in California and the Socialist Party. In those Socialist electoral parties that we would join such as the Peace and Freedom Party, we would seek to make the central electoral policy the necessity of a mass labour party democratically run and based on the trade unions.

At the same time we call for a united socialist electoral bloc against both major capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans. A united socialist electoral bloc of the left would if successful be a serious socialist electoral alternative for the working class and would help contribute to a political break by the trade union movement from the capitalist parties. This political break is absolutely crucial to defend and advance the interests of the working class.

4. The Proletarian Tasks Tendency believes it is necessary and principled to give critical support to trade union election campaigns such as those by TDU leader Camarata, Steelworkers Sadlowski and the Miners for Democracy candidate Miller in his first election. The PTT will intervene to encourage the political development of workers who support these trade union oppositions and support an alternative trade union leadership from the present policies of the present trade union leadership.

5. The PTT will produce a regular bi-monthly publication that will outline its views, allow for contributions of supporters and develop a periphery nationally. We see the regular publication of a tendency's perspectives as vital to give political clarity and develop its work in the labour movement. It will have a high priority for our tendency and will increase to a monthly when it is feasible financially and organisationally.

6. The PTT will have a dues structure and democratically elected national organiser. The national organiser will be responsible to circulate documents, produce the publication and present a financial report to the members every 6 months. There will also be an elected editorial board to carry on the work of the publication of the PTT.

(The PTT, formerly the minority tendency in the RWL-USA, has now split and is a separate group. It is basically composed of comrades of the old SL-DC.)

A COMMENT ON THE TILC RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA

advantage of any state reforms, lest they legitimate the state by using them or become incorporated by the state, It tells the black workers not to place immediate democratic demands on the state.It counterposes arbitrarily the workers struggle this coin is that since workers are told in effect to abstain from politics the seizure of power is pictured not as the culmination of mass working class political activity but as the work of the armed wing of the ANC - remote from workers struggles. The tactic of boycott will be appropriate in pre-revolutionary situations like in 1905 in Russia, but at present it serves only to impede the political development of the black working class. This is not of course to say that sham institutions, like the proposed parliment which will exclude Africans, should not be boycotted. Of course they should. But boycott is made by the CP orthodoxy into a regressive principle. This is the substance of a working class perspective. We should not be diverted from it - as other Marxists have been - by empty notions like 'reform is impossible under apartheid, under imperialism in crisis etc.'

We should be aware that although there is a 'growing working class movement' in SA, this movement at present is mainly a trade union movement and is only beginning to develop a political voice. There is no working class party and the petit-bourgoise perspectives of the ANC-CPSA go far wider than their limited organisation inside the country. We can and should play a role in analysing and circulating what comprises a working class politics. We can be especially useful in breaking down the aura of 'exceptionalism' which the ANC-CPSA has spread around SA and in putting the struggles there in the context of international class struggles.

The resolution states that to be victorious the struggle in SA must be developed as a workers struggle for power. It goes on 'No-one who exploits or oppresses workers anywhere can ever be the real ally of the black workers of SA. Their real struggle is to destroy all oppression and exploitation, not re-organise it'. This formulation ignores the fact that the immediate struggle of black workers is for democracy in SA, for the overthrow of aparteid. In the course of this struggle black workers will and must ally with all others who oppose the regime, including some sections of the black and white petty bourgoise. To deny the need for such alliances or to say that the immediate struggle is only one for socialism denies any specificity to the national question: to the fact that black workers are oppressed as blacks aswell as workers. There is a danger of ending up in sectarianism in reaction against the classless politics of the ANC-CPSA.

The CPSA's ''two stage'' programme creates a rigid divide between the 'democratic' and the 'socialist' stages. What this means in practice is subordinating the immediate social and economic struggles of workers (over trade unions, wages, working conditions, occupation of factories etc) to the democratic political demands shared by workers and the petit bourgeoisie. We oppose this subordination since it undermines the struggle of workers and in a highly proletarianised country like SA undermines the democratic struggle as a whole. We support the struggle for democracy, but a struggle led by the working class turning into a fight for socialism. Lots of sectarians have come a cropper by denying any democratic stage at all. We must be sure not to join them. In some respects the class struggle in SA does come within the rubic of the theory of permanent revolution.

A last point on the question of solidarity. The resolution states that 'it is only through working class action to black supplies of arms and related materials that this supply can be stopped'. We should be wary of dogmatically raising one form of struggle as the only valid form of struggle. It is not impossible for an arms embargo to be imposed by the state at least formally. The demand for an effective embargo is one that we must fight for inside the Labour Party and we must fight to see that it is implemented. We can wage this fight in alliance with all who oppose apartheid. The question of workplace to workplace links, which the resolution mentions, must be given high priority, since it is the crucial missing link as far as the building of working class solidarity is concerned. Direct links between SA and British unions at all levels are called for by most unions in SA. It is not true, by the way, that 'any direct appeal for support from inside SA is illegal and subject to massive penalties'. Independant non-racial unions inSA have forged a wide network of links internationally; we must make sure that they spread deep inside the rank and file of the UK LM. We must fight the propaganda put out by SACTU and the Anti-Apartheid movement that such links would violate the boycott campaign. Our job is to boycott the regime and not the black workers who fighting against it.

A COMMENT ON THE TILC RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA*

DUPONT

The TILC resolution on South Africa correctly points to the intensification of class struggle in SA and the need to develop a perspective of workers' struggle for power. It also correctly argues for a re-orientation of solidarity activity away from the symbolic outrage against apartheid and toward a position of class solidarity. All this is very important in an area where traditionally the organisation and perspectives of struggle have been dominated by the Communist party in alliance with liberalism. There is no doubt that the growth of the workers' movement in SA - independantly of the CPSA and the ANC - has opened up a new period of class struggle in that region. The potential is now present for the development of a revolutionary workers' movement, depends of course not just on objective circumstances but on the leadership, ideas and organisation which SA workers build. We should not be passive onlookers in this process and the TILC resolution provides a good starting point for intervention - in terms of perspectives for the struggles for power inside SA and for active solidarity here. However, there are in my view some problems with the document which ought to be discussed.

My first question concerns the nature of state repression in SA. The resolution says that trade unions have grown in SA in spite of 'repeated arrests, nonstop police harassment and victimisation by employers....prohibitions on almost every single meeting and the fact that every single strike that has occurred has been illegal'. This is not quite true. Some unions, particularly those like SAAWU - which have offered a high, nationalist political profile - have been hit very hard by the state and have suffered badly for it. Other unions like those in FOSATU, which have emphasised grass roots organisationin the workplace, have been able to build up a deep and extensive organisation with relatively less state repression. They have even waged their first legal strike. The overall picture in other words, is a differentiated one of intense repression in some areas and and relative indulgence in others.

Later in the article it is argued that the 'deepening economic crisis' in SA will mean that 'the ruling class has no option - it must lash out in an attempt to claw back every gain won by the workers'. It is certainly the case that SA capital faces a crisis of profitability, which manifests it self in lack of competiveness with other capitalist countries where productivity is higher or labour is even cheaper. Gold has so far allowed SA to ride this crisis in partic ular by subsidising the importing of high technology. The fall in the price of gold does expose the underlying tensions in the SA economy; but the basic question facing SA capital is whether the gold umbrells lasts long enough for production to be reorganised to make SA capital internationally competitive. All this reguires not only technical changes in the form of new technology but social changes in terms of the relations between labour and capital. SA capital needs in some of its key areas a more stable, more skilled, more educated black workforce - one that does not constantly threaten industrial and political instability. This is particularly important given SA's reliance on foreign investment and given the notorious sensitivity of forgein investment to any hint of trouble. After Soweto for example, it temporarily dried up.

This is why the apatheid regime has not only repressed the union movement, but in the face of tis resiliance and militancy, has tried to accomodate to it. Its efforts at the present time are directed toward coupling repression (eg. the murder of Neil Aggett) with channelling unions into the machinery of a reformed industrial relations system. The state has had to bow so far to the requirements of companies like Fords which have been willing to recognise unions in return for industrial stability.

The state strategy is an attempt at divide and rule. It threatens the harshest repression against the 'political' unions while granting concessions to what it s sees as the less political. It hopes to create a black labour aristocracy in the industrial, urban areas while expelling the mass of blacks to those repressive wastelands they call 'homelands'. There is no doubt but that this state strategy is coming unstuck. It is riven by its own contradictions and in particular by the refusal of advanced black workers to settle peacefully for minor economic gains.

This combination of intensified repression with reform raises the question of how black workers relate to those reforms. The traditional policy of the ANC and the CPSA - a perspective which has dominated SA resistance politics - is that the apartiad state should under all circumstances be boycotted. This fetish of boycott is essentially a petit-bourgeois postion . It tells black workers not to take

THE LABOUR PARTY - Ellis

This is a brief comment, primarily on Carolan's resolution on the MP, but also on Cunliffe's position as presented in his resolution and at the NW Aggregate. My intention is to spell out areas of confusion and/or disagreement as regards both positions.

The Terms of the Debate

As with the Falklands/Malvinas debate, the current dispute on the question on the MP to those of us not present at the NC discussions seems often to consist of arguments about who said what when, and whether or not the other side is slandering them, etc. I am not competent to pass judgement on these questions. The main point is that it all contributes to general confusion as to what the debate is about. Cunliffe's contribution at the NW meeting was extremely defensive ("we are not saying what Carolan says we are saying") - the end result being a picture of nuances within general agreement (so why all the fuss?). On the other hand, Carolan's resolution is full of references to views of a 'dual O' etc., and Carolan clearly believes that there are significant differences. Carolan argues that the differences are in reality about MP work now, rather than possible tactical differences in the future. For the uninitiated it is all very confusing. But general lines are beginning to become clear to me - and I am unhappy with both.

2. Carolan's resolution

Central to Carolan's resolution is the argument that "the British O now is indivisable" (p. 1), that to pose a clash of priorities between MP & TU work is false, and that the notion of separate methods of recruitment amongst trade unionists & MP members implies a "dual O", syndicalism and other "deviation".

Leaving aside the (to me anyway) uninteresting question as to whether anyone holds this "dual O" view much of this is unobjectionable. But it seems to me that Carolan poses a false dichotomy between on the one hand "subterfuge" to keep in the MP, not isolate ourselves, etc., and on the other an "Oehlerite binge" proclaiming ourselves an alternative to the MP. Clearly these are not the only options open to us. It is quite possible - I am not putting this forward as an immediate tactical option - to maintain an understanding of the MP, maintain a presence in it in some form, maintain an overall assessment of its potential, and perspective for trying to change it whilst ceasing to carry out MP work as we currently do - i.e. deprioritising MP work. It is possible rather than desirable, and I am not advocating such a "turn" here and now. My point is to stem the (I think) false option Carolan presents as being open to us in the event of radically changed circumstances in the MP.

The issues as I understand them resolve into two main areas:

i) Do we under most circumstances require "our own" press (whether or not it has WSL written all over it)?

ii) Under what circumstances do we manoeuvre, make compromises, etc., to remain in the MP? Clearly these are closely related, but they are not the same (e.g. it is theoretically possible for an organisation to undertake only partial entry, and so have both a press and be in the MP).

i) Do we need our own press? We obviously have no need of a press merely to declare the existence of the WSL. What we do need is some form of guarantee that we can present, undiluted, our ideas to as wide an audience as possible. Carolan is absolutely right to stress that workers are won from reformism to Marxism by experience rather than preaching. But arguing too far along such lines can lead to the conclusion that we need no vehicle for our ideas at all, and merely pop up every now and then to point out particular betrayals, highlight particular questions, and "experience" will do the rest. It is experience plus the presence of revolutionaries clearly and constantly putting forward a revolutionary alternative to the arguments of the reformists that will win workers to Marxism. Struggle combined with argument (rather than preaching) is essential to the building of a revolutionary party.

The question therefore is that if we were to abandon our own press for a joint paper with, e.g. B, would we be able to guarantee that we can put across our own ideas clearly? And to as wide an audience as possible?

It is at this point that the question of MP work versus other work seems to me to take on a more specific meaning - i.e. it is not simply at the level of "principles" but at the level of practical work. Maintaining a MP "legality" certainly ensures that we can continue to relate to those forces at present within the MP, to whom MP concerns are vital, but it would mean that we would be presenting a confusing "legal MP" face to those other forces who are either not particularly interested in the internal affairs of the MP or who are hostile to it. A joint paper with B would in that sense "fudge" our own political voice in an unhelpful way. We would be relating in a thoroughly unsectarian fashion to only a limited audience (in the MP), but relating badly to the immediate concerns of other sections of workers and the oppressed. Almost by definition, it seems to me, the "tactical compromise" entailed in abandoning our own press for the sake of the MP legality entails an increased MP focus for our work which would inhibit other areas of work.

There are, of course, further considerations. To the O bureaucracy, the right wing and the "soft" left, an organisation composed of ourselves and B would be a very subtle distinction to the existing S*A. How long would the joint paper last? When would we abandon that to maintain MP legality? Especially in the long term we have to recognise that the O bureaucracy will want to purge us not because of where we say things, in what paper, but because of what we say. At what stage does MP legality entail hiding our politics as well as our organisation?

An independent voice is a vital tool for us. A joint paper with centrists doesn't seem to me wrong in principle, but under these conditions at best would seem the thin end of the wedge. It is not a question, as Carolan puts it, of "fetishising forms' - which in any case is a silly expression since when Marx speaks of the "fetishism of forms" he is talking about the appearances of bourgeois society and the acceptance of those appearances by classical political economy; he is not talking about Trotskyist newspapers. If a joint paper/organisation with B was to be at all serious it would merely postpone the decision as to whetehr we abandon any voice at all - if it did not provoke merely a new assault from the right wing that would be a testimony to its ineffectiveness. There could be a case therefore for "buying time, or even going on the offensive by such a manoeuvre, in conditions in which we may even have control over the new paper/organisation. Even in that case it would require a radical change in the focus, as I understand it, of B-type groups. But it has not, to my knowledge, been motivated as an exercise in "buying time"; and if it were, we should still be discussing what we do when it also is threatened with purge.

We need to be able to relate directly to militants with answers and perspectives for immediate problems. Reformism is not a "question of leadership" simply in terms of treachery o. individual leaders: the politics of reformism is inadequate in the here and now; it cannot equip militants with arguments to win the mass of workers to a struggle to defend their interests. That is why we need our own voice. In the present circumstances I think it also means that our own "voice" must be our own paper.

ii) Under what circumstances do we make tactical retreats? There has been enormous confusion is this debate as to the time-scale we are talking about. A perspective of a short term manoeuvre as part of a left fightback to reverse the decision of the register and go on to the offensive is one thing. A perspective of heads-down deep entry in a police-state MP is something else entirely. I am fairly convinced that the situation Carolan has in mind is a kind of "half-way purge", in which we are in danger of expulsion, but abandoning the paper would prevent expulsion without seriously threatening our capacity to put foraard our ideas. I have already toughed on the complications in this scenario. But there are others.

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The threat of expulsion presupposes either that a fightback in the constituencies has been defeated, or that none has taken place. Some CLPs are probably dying to expel us, others may be in the balance. But the majority are unlikely to lie back and expel people without a fight. I am not at all convinced that us abandoning our paper will make the slightest difference in their willingness to fight.

For the moment, therefore, the register is virtually inoperable. The right wing, as far as I can see, will only be able to carry through expulsions at the point at which CLP disaffiliation is raised, at least in the majority of cases. Then we have to make a political choice (rather than a technical one about whether to produce a paper). Do we push for continued resistance? Or do we offer to lay down our paper? To do the latter would be to lead the retreat of the left. To do the former may well expose us to a soft-left cave-in. Which do we chosse?

Carolan has related to me a story about an SLL member in Salford expelled after 15 years in the MP after he was told to "come out" as an SLL member. The lesson, I take it, is that the MP isn't always as reliable as you think. Obvc sly we should not invite expulsions, and rush into MP meetings shouting "WSL!" But the stark political choice I outlined above seems to me a real one.

Or to put it another way, the question of "subterfuge" is not so simple. It is one thing to use "subterfuge" to get into an organisation: it is another thing if you're a well-known member of it and want to stay there. Subterfuge in this instance is primarily not a deception played on the NEC - but played on the CMPs. And as such, it is either unnecessary, or unlikely to work.

The entire debate seems to me to be taking place as if the struggle in the MP did not exist, as if there is just us on the one side & the NEC on the other trying to outmanoeuvre each other. Carolan appers not to tkae into account either the actual potential for resistance within the CMPs, or the fact that we are not first on the list (M are and therefore our response has to be guaged in this sense by theirs [if they keep their paper and we abandon ours it will look pretty silly]), or, most important of all, the implications for the struggle in the MP by the purge actually goes so far as to directly threaten us. The reality, for the vast majority of MCPs, is that if we are expelled, the left will have suffered a very severe defeat and the O bureaucrats and the right wing won a medium-term decisive gvictory.

Finally two brief points on the register. The mood in the MCPs remains deficient, and the CLPD is not a reliable "rough guide". We should not even talk about registration at this stage. Second: suppose we do attempt to register. If they let us that is surely only an indication of their lack of intention to expel us, at least for now. Again, the conclusion that we slould sacrifice our paper does not follow.

My conclusion therefore is that the actual context precludes any significant tactical compromise as either necessary or likely to succeed. The real discussion we should be having is on our perspectives should the conflict reach the point at which CMO disaffiliation is likely. If the left suffers a defeat of such proportions that it fails to prevent widespread expulsions, then (and only then) we should deprioritise our MP work in the form of partial fraction work - obviously cds stay in where they can- and maintain both our paper and overall political line. Such a defeat will of course be an extremely serious one for both the working class and for our perspectives. To cancel ourselves out in the face of it would be a wrong choice for us to make.

Carolan raises other points that I will not dwell on here, except to say this: if the MP in the future ceases to be as open and factional as in the recent past, it will change the conditions of the class struggle. Presumbaly we all agree on this. The restabilisation of the MP from the point of view of the ruling class poses the possibility of a future, quite stable, right-wing O government, and therefore the likelihood of class struggle against it. Of course it is unlikely that the working class will therefore "break with the MP" and we should maintain the perspective of taking up the fight witiin the MP. But under such

circumstances

a) the fight in the unions clearly takes on a new significance;

b) given the practical difficulty of fighting inside MPs, our focus of necessity is on building the action against the government, and we could not possibly limit the perspective of such action with a "first take over the CMPs" strategy (which implies years of struggle - possibly necessary years, we won't know, but not much to offer as a line of immediate struggle).

3. Cunliffe's position

I have already referred to Cunliffe's apparent defensiveness. This "brief comment" is already too long, so I will cut this section down. In some respects I agree with Cunliffe - i.e. on the question of maintaining our paper; if not the reasons for this. But Cunliffe's position on a whole series of issues strikes me as misguided. I think I would agree with Carolan on the "expose the bureaucrats" thrust to Cunliffe's argument: my objection to the paper is not its lack of denunciations, but its failure to counter reformist arguments effectively. I will comment here on one specific aspect of Cunliffe's position regarding the MP.

Cunliffe argues, on the face of it unobjectionally, that we need to draw "the most oppressed layers" into the struggle with us in the O as a whole, including the MP. This presumably goes along with the "turn the MP outwards" perspective.

All I want to say here is that whilst joining in the fight in the MP should be an aspect of the perspective that we offer "the most oppressed", it must not be seen as the whole story. In practice what it means, at least at the moment, is little more than going along to MP meetings (I am not disguising the crusial importance of particularly some MP meetings). We need to relate to the struggles of women, blacks, Asians, gays, the unemployed, youth, with an activist perspective as well: in the first instance the referencee of the MP to them is as a potential amplifier of their struggles. It is only by proving the value of the O and the MP to their immediate strrggles that the "join the MP" perspective makes any sense.

4. Conclusion

Finally, one general remark that I have not finished thinking through. Everyone now agrees it seems that the issue of "priorities" is a false one. I also agree, for the most part. But it seems to me that it is false to see the MP as the political wing of the unions and leave it at that. There is a difference between a political party and what are obviously much more basic working class organisations. An electrician has little choice but to be in the ETU, however reactionary its leadership may be, Membership of the MP is a question of political choice in a qualitatively differenc sense. In other words it is wrong to equate working outside of the MP to "abandoning reactionary unions" with shades of "left wing Communism"? I am not, I hope it is clear, advocating leaving the MP. But I think that some of the theoretical questions as to the nature of the MP and its precise relationahip to the unions (other than its technical relationahip) may be in need of clarification.