Ron Eccles

workers power

RESOLUTIONS TO THE CDLM CONFERENCE

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

Conference rejects the programme proposed by the organising committee. Conference resolves to commit the CDLM to the following programme:

I) The leaders of the trade unions, the Murrats, Duffys and Scargills, are either open bosses men, or, 'left' talkers who will always hold back from basing themselves on the independent mobilisations of the rank and file. The 'left' and the right are two sides of the same bureaucratic coin. If the unions are to become real fighting organisations of the working class then they will have to be transformed from top to bottom. The bureaucrats must be kicked out and the whole trade union movement placed under the democratic control of the rank and file.

2) To achieve this, militants in every union and workplace, every branch and every stewards committee, have to be welded into a rank and file movement. In every struggle, every partial dispute, revolutionaries must seek to unite those militants ready to fight, in joint strike committees and local action councils in every town, district and industry. Such bodies must be linked at a national level. These committees of struggle, along with factory committees and democratic combines, embracing all workers, will be able to really mobilise the rank and file, and, at the same time, unified in a national rank and file movement, they will be able to challenge the hold of the bureaucrats on the labour movement.

3) But such a movement will not emerge spontaneously. Nor will it automatically arrive at political answers that can serve as a real alternative to the bankrupt reformist strategies of the stalinists and social democrats. The intensifying capitalist crisis poses militants with political problems that a return to the 'basics' of trade unionism will not answer. The recent attacks on militants and the whole workforce at BL, the inability of many militants to bring their members out on May 14th (eg Longbridge), the inability of militants to take the May 14th action beyond the passive protest gesture that the TUC made it, the fact that the TUC were able to derail a potential general strike situation in February during the steel strike with very little difficulty, are all indications that, despite the reserves of militancy that still exist in the working class, there is a serious crisis of political leadership amongst the rank and file - at the level of the shop floor militants. The programme of a rank and file movement has to be judged by its ability to answer this crisis. For this reason revolutionaries must fight for a revolutionary programme as the basis for a rank and file movement, in every partial struggle of the working class. Nothing short of this will be able to answer the crisis of political leadership.

4) Jobs and wages must be defended against the ravages of the crisis.

For a sliding scale of wages. For automatic rises, to be decided by workers themselves, in line with a cost of living index drawn up by democratic committees of rank and file workers and working class housewives.

For the sharing of all available work in factories threatening redundancies, under trade union control. Our slogan must be cut the hours not the jobs. The number of hours in the working week and the speed of production to be controlled by workers in line with the amount of work available. For full pay regardless of the length of the working week, for full pay regardless of the amount of work that the capitalists reckon is available.

For the nationalisation of all firms threatening closure, under workers control and without any compensation to the bosses.

For direct action - strikes, occupations, blacking and solidarity strikes - to achieve these demands.

P.T.O.

The fight to defend jobs must be linked to a struggle to control production. Under capitalism it is utopian to call for workers' management - it is a recipe for the reformists to peddle the myth that workers can build islands of co-operative socialism in a sea of competitive capitalism. Workers take no responsibility for managing production under capitalism. Nor must workers enter into participation agreements that the capitalists use to ensnare trade union organisation and make workers co-responsible for redundancies, wage cuts etc. Against these pipe dreams a rank and file movement must fight for control over the bosses plans:

For the abolition of business secrecy - elected representatives of the shop floor must have the right to inspect all the deliberations, account books and plans of the bosses. On the basis of such information they must organise for direct action to impose a workers' veto on any plans that the workforce regards as against their interests.

For shop stewards' control of track speeds, hiring and firing. For full accountability of shop stewards to the shop floor through regular mass and section meetings and democratic section bulletins and factory newspapers.

5) Stop all cuts in welfare services. The working class' health, education and welfare must be put before the profits of the capitalists. All proposed cuts must be halted and all past cuts restored. This can only be achieved by mobilising public and private sector workers, manufacturing and service, instrike action and occupations.

Labour councils must be forced to refuse to implement cuts either directly or indirectly. No rent and rate increases. Labour councils must cancel their crippling debts to the banks and finance houses and overspend on programmes of useful public works - houses, schools, hospitals, nurseries etc. When Heseltine threatens to use the lawhe must be answered by strike action. No holding back on strike action to preserve Labour councils who refuse to carry out this programme, or who attack the jobs or wages of council employees.

For the defence of social expenditure through a sliding scale of rises, in line with inflation. For the nationalisation of the banks and finances houses, without compensation, under workers control.

6) For working class unity - Against all divisions in the labour movement:

For registration of the unemployed by the trade unions, for the right of the unemployed to be full members of the unions.

Against craftism. For factory committees and democratic combines embracing all workers as a basis for industrial trade unionism.

For a woman's right to work - against all women out first solutions. For free 24 hour nurseries and free abortion on demand to make this right a real one.

Open the unions to women workers - for meetings in work time on full pay and with child care facilities; for democratic women's sections with the right to intervene in all areas of union activity; for the right of women to caucus in the unions.

For direct action to achieve real equal pay and to defend existing protective legislation. No reliance on state tribunals.

Against all immigration controls, state harassment of blacks (via 'Sus' for example) and for labour movement support of black self defence against fascist and police attacks. Against the nationalist . policy of import controls, which divides workers and fuels racism.

Drive fascists out of the unions -no racists to be allowed to hold any office in the unions. For the right of black workers to caucus.

Smash the National Front and other fascist organisations. No platform for their ideas. Mobilise the working class in workers self defence squads to defeat them on the streets.

7) No common cause with the bosses. Their interest in oppressing other nationalities, in particular the Irish, is not our's. We must fight for unconditional support and solidarity, inside the British working class, with all those republican and socialist anti imperialist fighters in Ireland. This means fighting to build a labour movement based campaign to force:

All British troops out of Ireland now - for the right of the Irish people as a whole to determine their own future.

Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Smash the H Block concentration camps.

8) Take control of the Labour Party out of the hands of the bureaucrats (trade union and PLP). This means fighting for rank and file control of the bloc vote.

Against bans and proscriptions on left wing organisations in the Labour Party.

Force the Labour Party at every level to support the direct action of workers - the party must place its finances and apparatus at the disposal of workers struggling against their bosses or the state.

9) The central thrust of the Tory onslaught on the working class is their Employment Bill. In order to force through their attacks on jobs and living standards they need to weaken the trade union movement decisively. The Employment Bill is a political attack on the whole working class - it must be met with action by the whole working class.

FOR A GENERAL STRIKE AGAINST THE TORY ANTI UNION LAWS!

The fight for a general strike must be the major focus, the immediate task, of all rank and file militants. This means:

* Building Councils of Action, delegate based, in every locality to co-ordinate all struggles into a general offensive, and provide leadership for the strike that can challenge the likely sell-out plans of the bureaucrats.

*Build workers self defence squads. Every attack on a picket line by the SPG/police must be used as a demonstration of the need for workers to organise themselves into disciplined defence units.

*In every partial struggle, at every gathering of militants the general strike must be called for as the only means of combatting the main planks of the Tory policies.

While a general strike may bring down the Tories, to make that its goal, in advance, is to play into the hands of the parliamentarians and trade union leaders. These windbags would use such a slogan as a means of derailing a general strike and chanelling it into an electoarl outcome. The general strike poses the question of power. Workers can answer that question through their councils of action, by fighting for workers power. Our slogan must allow for this development, fight for it and not give the reformists the opportunity to demobilise the strike.

IO) The aim of a communist led rank and file movement, successful in its fight for a general strike, is not the return of a 'new' labour government. Nor is our goal an unspecified type of 'workers government'. The tactics with regard to any government claiming to be socialist will be worked out concretely in struggle. The goal of communists, however, should never be concealed from workers they are leading or seeking to lead - that goal is working class power, a workers state based on organs of direct struggle (councils of action, defence squads, factory committees etc.). Only such a state could carry through the total expropriation of the capitalists, the nationalisation of the entire means of production and distribution. Only in such a state can the working class, led by a revolutionary party, reorganise production in a planned way that abolishes the endless struggle to survive on meagre means, and instead caters for the fulfilment of human need.

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RESOLUTION ON BUILDING THE RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT:

This conference commits itself to building a mass shop stewards based rank and file movement. Such a movement will be built in the partial struggles of the class by linking together active militants against the employers and the trade union bureaucrats. Revolutionary communists will have to struggle to win the leadership of the rank and file movement. If they fail to do so the movement will necessarily prove incapable of taking the trade unions out of the hands of the bureaucrats.

Those militants meeting together at today's conference cannot simply proclaim the formation of such a movement. Instead we commit ourselves, on the road to building a rank and file movement, to the following joint actions:

a) A direct drive to form delegate based councils of action in every locality and a campaign to commit those militants who look to the Defend Our Unions Campaign and the Liason Committee For the Defence of Trade Unions, to activxely fighting for such a perspective.

b) To propose that our shop stewards committees, union branches, trades councils and Labour party branches should sponsor a national rank and file conference to organise the fight against the Tories and the trade union bureaucracy, who stand in the way of a successful struggle against the employers and the democratisation of the unions. Representatives of this conference should immediately approach the DOUC and the LCDTU and the Engineering Charter, to propose that they should jointly sponsor that conference which shall be organised:

P.T.O.

i) On a delegate basis
ii) To take resolutions and amendments from delegating bodies on programme and tactics in the fight against the Tories.
iii) To democratically elect a steering committee.

The immediate aim of this conference will be to organise militants in a sustained campaign of opposition in every plant and locality to -

* The Tory anti union laws
* Sackings and unemployment
* The cuts in public spending
* In support of all workers fighting to defend real wage levels and living standards
* Against all attacks on democratic rights - defend the rights of women, blacks and gays against such attacks.

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