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**THE
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THE MARXIST

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comment

US Elections — Japan — Spain

IN THE US THE ELECTION circus is over and the mini-democracy of the world's most powerful capitalist state has decided. For the next four years, from January 1969, the world will have to live with or cope with President Richard Milhous Nixon — that is of course, barring occupational hazards. He succeeds to the Presidential throne after a photo finish, on the votes of about twenty five per cent of the electorate, even if one discounts the large number, especially of Afro-Americans and other non-white citizens, barred on one pretext or another from registration as voters. The cynical performance of meaningless play-acting with vast and expensive organisations junketing about the country, the mock debate between Humphrey and Nixon, with loud off-stage noises from the racist Wallace, have exposed more vividly than ever before the true nature of capitalist 'democracy'. Even *The Observer* stressed the empty unreality of this farce by saying that 'American elections and American politics are seldom about principles' (11 3 1968), and by commenting a week later that Nixon gives the impression of being 'a hollow man, lacking inner conviction, with no touch of genius or original thought', and that 'during the election campaign his declarations remained studiously vague, even contradictory'. Nixon is thus in the happy position of having publicly committed himself to nothing.

His commitment is to Wall Street, for he is the Street's favourite. 'Wall Street is not feeling too unhappy just at present' says *The Times* (11 7 1968). This position he has well earned over the years.

He became their blue-eyed boy as an ardent anti-communist in the 'forties and 'fifties during his various electioneering campaigns and as a prominent member of the House of Representatives Un-American Activities Committee, when he hounded, ruined and caused to be imprisoned many with left-wing sympathies or suspected of having them. He was vice-president under president Eisenhower during the Korean War and the subsequent negotiations

which left South Korea a US puppet regime. He is thus well qualified to act for US imperialism in Vietnam and elsewhere in the world. Just as the pre-election party game revealed the identity of Republicans and Democrats, so the new Republican president will carry on without hiatus the previous Democratic president's work for his masters.

And in the background is the Vice-President-elect, Spiro Agnew, the 'man who could take over'. When Governor of the state of Maryland, a deputation of Afro-American students from a dilapidated negro college went to his state capital to plead for better educational facilities; he imprisoned 200 of them. He viciously attacked moderate Afro-American leaders in Maryland following the murder of Martin Luther King and denounced those who had permitted the 'Poor People's March on Washington'.

This is the leadership of the new administration which our British government will have to back just as they have Johnson. Otherwise the financial and economic backlash will leave deep scars; stirring will become even more uncertain of its footing; the squeeze on wages, housing, schools will get worse.

JAPAN

REPORTS OF STRUGGLES by students and workers against reactionary regimes and policies appear in the press almost daily, coming from all over the world — among other places mentioned recently have been Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Indonesia and Japan. The protests may concern local and — from a world standpoint — trivial matters, or they may be against matters of wide political significance. The spirit of rebellion against the norms and accepted practices of our contemporary 'civilisation' is sweeping the globe. 'It's right to rebel against reaction' says Mao Tse-tung, and the young are applying theory in practice.

The people of Japan have been resentful since the end of world war two of the use made of their country by US imperialism to perpetrate aggression in Asia, and remember with acute bitterness the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They resent the stationing of US troops at bases in Japan, the use of their ports by US naval forces threatening North Korea and supplying US forces with the means to sow destruction in Vietnam. They have long demanded the return to Japan of their island of Okinawa, now the main US military and naval base in that part of the world. They have long fought against the so-called US Japan 'Security' Treaty which permits this insolent use of their land and have against the anti-China policy of the reactionary State Government. A letter from a friend in Japan throws more light on recent events there. He writes:

'Maybe you read the news about the students' struggle in Japan on Monday, 21 October, 1968, in Tokyo and Osaka. Services on the Japanese National Railway lines were completely disrupted as a result of the struggle of anti-reformist students and young workers. They appealed to people to mark Anti-War Day and to prevent the transport of US jet fuel.

The students and workers also attacked the Defence Agency and the National Diet. Clashes with riot police took place at several places in Tokyo, and Owaka, and Kyoto.

In Tokyo at one of the largest railway terminals Shinjuka which is used by two-and-a-half million passengers a day, a thick iron plate prepared by the police as a barricade was broken by a pole held by about fifty workers. It was like a battle of medieval times before the castle gate. Tear gas and hosing by the police were defeated by hurled stones. Finally, the police were forced to retreat into the station and were driven onto the platform; they couldn't move an inch.

'On the same day, in Osaka, a Manchester in Japan and one of her largest cities with a multi-million population, the main street was completely occupied by demonstrators. So tightly was the crowd jammed in that the demonstrators couldn't hurl stones nor could the police wield their truncheons or use tear gas. Riot police were tossed by the moving and waving sea of people.

'The students and workers in Tokyo also attacked the Defence Agency and the National Diet where much the same thing happened.

'In the midst of this struggle in Japan's capital city a young American climbed onto a temporary platform set up on the roof over the entrance to the subway, crying out: "I am American, Now I tear up my draft card!" And he burnt his draft card in front of several hundreds of thousands. He then dived into the human sea and no one has been able to find him, that is, no one except his friends, the people.

Throughout Japan rallies were held at some 800 places which were attended by over one million students and trade unionists. After that demonstrations were held in protest against US imperialism and demands were made for the speedy return of Okinawa — the largest US military base in Asia — to Japan.

In 1943, on the same day, Monday, October 21, the send-off rites for university students going off to the front were held. The Pacific war situation had turned against Japan and under the university students mobilisation order, many students left for the battlefield. It was a day of cold rain. With leggings wrapped around their legs, with rifles slung over their shoulders, with square university caps, the huge number of students marched in front of Prime Minister Tojo. The sky above these students was dark and heavy. Most of them died on the battlefield. Some died pitifully, believing in the absolute victory of Japan. Others died leaving behind words full of distress as they were surrounded by death on all sides. A student soldier who died at the age of 20 wrote: "I go out to fight without thinking about the reason for fighting. There may be no one who can understand my words. At the present time I just don't have any spirit to take people's lives."

Through the war and through these deaths, the Japanese are able to fight against the true enemy.

I was one of these student soldiers who marched in front of Tojo. Even now I can vividly remember that cold rain and my torn shoes. After that cruel training I became an "excellent" pilot of a "Zero" fighter. (If you were an American, you knew this "Zero" fighter) and at last I was forced to enter into "Kamikaze" — Wind of God — suicide plane. Over ninety per cent of my friends were killed in the Pacific Ocean. Others were killed in China. Or Burma.

We fought against democracy without knowing the reason; today my students are fighting against imperialism. They will never march in front of the Prime Minister, but they will stage a demonstration

with staves in their hands and helmets on their heads, even under tear gas and the clubs of riot police. They know the only way to ensure that students' deaths in the fascist period were not in vain, is this. They know that fighting is the only way to avoid war.

'Whatever Johnson and his follower, Prime Minister Sato, may order against China, will they turn rifles against the Chinese? Never!'

SPAIN

The Marxist has received a statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain (M L).

The statement is entitled 'Against the Renewal of the Yankee-Franco agreements, for the overthrow of the oligarchy of Traitors to the homeland and for National Independence.' It points out that under the treaties concluded by France fifteen years ago, the US imperialists have billeted more than 15,000 troops of the 65th Air Division in Spain; have installed numerous military bases in all regions of the country; have seriously damaged the Spanish economy with 'American Aid', which is the dumping of US goods which have to be paid for at high interest rates; have gained control by their economic penetration of the largest and most important sections of Spanish industry and increased the exploitation of the Spanish working class. The statement continues:

'The presence of Yankee troops of occupation in Spain, and the buying of American armaments by the Franco regime, in virtue of the agreements of 1953 and 1963, also strike at the interests of all the popular classes of our country. The Yankee forces established in our country constitute, above all, an important reinforcement of the terrorist repressive apparatus of the dictatorship, aimed at the workers, peasants, democratic students and the Spanish people in general.

'The fact that our country is tied to the American war-chariot entails grave dangers for our people since the USA, with Franco's approval, is going to try and use our people as cannon-fodder in its wars of aggression.

'Facilitated by Franco's fascist government, Yankee imperialism has already sent to Vietnam Spanish medical personnel, to assist its armies which are carrying out against that country a ferocious and inhuman war of aggression.'

Dealing with the Revisionists, the statement says, 'For all of this, the policies of the Carrillist revisionists constitute a monstrous betrayal of our country and of our people's interest; the latter make out that in the present phase one should not pose the problem of denouncing the treaties with the United States nor direct the people's fight against Yankee imperialism, but that the problem should be left for "later." This anti-national policy is dictated by the foreign policy interests of the USSR revisionists, who follow the line of "Soviet-US collaboration" for world domination.

'The courageous and victorious people's war that the peoples of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Philippines, Indonesia, Burma and other Asian countries are waging against American imperialism and its lackeys, which is in the process of beating hollow imperialism's global strategy of aggression, constitutes a clear example of the road that our people must take to free itself from the Yankee-Franco yoke.

'The working people led by the working class in close union with the poor peasantry, as well as with the revolutionary students, must set up revolutionary anti-imperialist committees everywhere. These committees must constitute the basis and starting point of the wide democratic and national front uniting and coordinating our people's patriotic struggle for national independence and for a people's democracy. Anti-imperialist committees must be set up in the mines, factories, workshops, building sites, offices, institutes, university faculties, in districts, sports clubs and elsewhere. These committees must unite the anti-Yankee action of all patriots, independently of their ideology, and must undertake all types of action against the renewal of the Yankee-Franco agreements, against American imperialism's military, political and economic domination, and against its forces and for national independence and sovereignty. In the same manner, they must audaciously mobilise all the people in every possible way in order to prevent any Spanish participation in the ferocious Yankee war of aggression against Vietnam.'

BACK COPIES

Copies of back issues of the Marxist may be obtained for 3 shillings per copy (postage in the UK included). Overseas rates, including postage, are: Europe 4s 6d; Rest of the world 5s 6d.

Three Poems

by Bertolt Brecht

Translated by Mike Faulkner

WHEN LENIN DIED

At the time of Lenin's death
So it is told, a soldier of the funeral guard
Remarked to his comrades: I wouldn't
Believe it. I went there where he lay, and
Shouted in his ear 'Ilyitch
The exploiters are coming'
He did not stir. Now
I know that he is dead.

* * *

If a good man wants to go away
How can he be made to stay?
Tell him why he's needed still,
That will stop him going.

* * *

What could stop Lenin?

* * *

The soldier thought:
When he hears that the exploiters are coming
Maybe he is sick and will still get up.
Perhaps he'll come on crutches
Perhaps he'll let us carry him, but
He will get up and come
To fight against the exploiters.

* * *

Because the soldier knew that Lenin
Had fought his whole life long
Against the exploiters.

* * *

And when the soldier had helped
To storm the Winter palace
He had wanted to go home, for there
Already the landlords estates were
being distributed,
But Lenin had told him: Stay awhile!
Exploiters still exist
And as long as there is exploitation
It must be fought against
And as long as you exist
You must fight against it.

The weak do not fight. The stronger
Fight perhaps one hour.
Those still stronger fight for many years,
But the strongest fight their whole
lives long. These
Are indispensable.

BUT WHO IS THE PARTY?

But who is the Party?
Someone in a house with telephones?
With secret thoughts and decisions unknown?
Who is it?

* * *

We are the Party.
You and I — all of us.
It's standing in your suit comrade, and thinking
in your head.
Its home is where I live, and it fights wherever
you're attacked.

* * *

Show us the way that we should go, and we
Will go along with you, but
Don't go the right way without us.
Without us
It's the wrong way.
Do not separate from us!
We can be wrong and you can be right, so
Do not separate from us!

* * *

That the shorter way is better than the long,
no one will deny
But if one should know the way
And be unable to show it to us, what use is his
knowledge to us?
Be wise with us!
Do not separate from us!

THE OTHER SIDE

1934, in the eighth year of the civil war
Chiang Kai-shek's aeroplanes
Threw leaflets over the Communist areas
Setting a price on the head of Mao Tse-tung.
Prudent
In view of a shortage of paper
And an abundance of thoughts
The branded Mao read the sheets
Of single-sided print, collected them,
And had them circulated amongst the people
Usefully printed on the clean side.

The Vietnam Movement

Report from Glasgow Communist Movement and South West
London Marxist-Leninist Group

THE STRUGGLE IN VIETNAM profoundly affects the rest of the world. The immediate and crucial issue involved — liberation or slavery for the Vietnamese people — is at present the clearest concrete expression of the choice facing the peoples of the world vis-a-vis imperialism.

The successful challenge to, and erosion of, imperialist power in Vietnam is at once a consequence of its already weakened positions in the contemporary world, and a cause of the further weakening of those positions. The now clearly evident rapacity of imperialism has not terrified its opponents, but has, on the contrary, revealed its paper tiger nature. In the colonial and semi-colonial world the objective conditions are ripe (or rapidly ripening) for revolutionary armed struggle. In the European and North American imperialist centres the objective conditions are not yet ripe, but events are moving very rapidly.

In this report we shall concern ourselves largely with an examination of recent developments in the anti-imperialist movement in Britain. We shall not attempt to offer an analysis of internal or external factors responsible for these developments. It may simply be stated that such developments reflect the growing crisis afflicting the advanced capitalist countries.

Student Rebellion

The challenge from the youth and students manifests the crisis within the superstructure of bourgeois society. The national liberation struggles generally, and the struggle in Vietnam in particular, have provided the external inspiration for the recent awakening among the students. The inspiration of the Vietnamese comrades naturally leads to solidarity with them. The new consciousness which has begun to develop amongst students is influenced directly by the struggle in Vietnam. Solidarity with Vietnam leads to determination to emulate the Vietnamese, and so to the launching of purposeful action by the students on the issues which affect themselves. To recognise the importance of the national liberation struggle as an external factor politicising the youth and students is not to deny the primacy

of internal contradictions i.e. the actual conditions against which the students struggle in Britain. Such actions can no longer be regarded as simply reformist, even though they may be frequently aimed at securing particular reforms. Student action is now increasingly inspired by the conviction that there can in the long run be no compromise with capitalism. It must be destroyed.

Students do not remain students. As students they play a transient role which contains its own contradictions. They have definite privileges not enjoyed by the majority of the workers. They are an intellectual elite training to become part of the administrative elite. It is not intended that they become workers at the point of production. They are dominated by a competitive and reactionary concept of 'ability', and are expected to imbibe and digest the eclectic mystifications of bourgeois 'arts and sciences' and are then confronted with a series of hurdles in the form of examinations, which, if successfully overcome, will enable them to go out into the world and claim a considerable salary for peddling in one form or another the 'knowledge' they have acquired.

Crisis in the Universities

It is becoming understood that the institutions of 'higher learning' are part of the capitalist superstructure with a special function to perform in preserving the repressive class system. To the extent that students understand this and come to reject the role they are expected to play as post-graduates within capitalism, they are in fact rejecting capitalism. They are on the way to becoming revolutionaries.

The crisis within the universities is a crisis of the capitalist superstructure. Developing revolutionary consciousness amongst students is accelerating the crisis, but the development of that consciousness must be seen as a consequence of the developing political and economic crisis of capitalism/imperialism. This crisis is battering at the economic base of the system in Britain, and although a profound crisis within the superstructure can and

will help to accelerate the revolution in the economic base (i.e. its overthrow) the revolution in the superstructure can never precede the revolution in the economic base. The former is dependent on the latter.

Revolutions are made by classes, and students as such do not constitute a class. They can play an important part in initiating struggle against capitalism, but only the working class is capable of striking the decisive blows which will overturn the political and economic system. Only the elitism which the university encourages and which so many students cling to, can allow them to think of themselves as the decisive revolutionary force.

As the subjective and objective conditions for revolution ripen, the working class may be spurred to action by the students, but when the working class acts, there will be no independent role for the students. They will either be fully integrated with the workers under the command of the workers' revolutionary vanguard, or they will be with the enemies of the workers.

The growing identification of large sections of youth and students in Britain with the world-wide movement for national liberation can be seen in the changing character of political demonstrations — particularly Vietnam demonstrations.

Until about three years ago the CND was the only organisation capable of mobilising more than a few thousand people on a demonstration. When the CND and the British Peace Committee ran 'the Peace Movement', demonstrations were orderly affairs; big 'peace' jamborees with nicely organised petitions and polite letters to the British Prime Minister and US President appealing to them to 'desist' or 'dissociate'. The CPGB, which worked diligently to keep things orderly and peaceful, hoped, through the agency of the British Council for Peace in Vietnam, to be able to take the Vietnam movement along the same 'peace above all' lines. But times are changing and young people in particular are waking up.

Vietnam demonstrations in October 1967, March 1968 and July 1968 brought out larger numbers than the BCPV could ever mobilise. And these demonstrations have taken place under the slogans of 'Solidarity with the Vietnamese People' and 'Victory to the NLF'. It has been shown that it is possible to mobilise upwards of 50,000 people on the basis of support for the Vietnamese people's struggle against US imperialism.

In order to draw some conclusions from this we shall look at the demonstration which took place on the October 27 1968.

This demonstration was the subject of more advance press and television publicity than any similar event for years. For weeks previously the newspapers had been preparing their readers for the big day with stories of conspiracies and intrigues involving the occupation or destruction of buildings, bomb plots, and plans for the total disruption of communications in London. Special TV programs were devoted to 'The October Revolutionaries', and the general impression was created that on October 27 London was to see a repetition if not of Paris last June, then certainly of Berlin last April.

What, in fact, happened?

Certainly large numbers of people, mainly young people, were mobilised — probably upwards of 60,000 — which is more than have turned out on any previous Vietnam demonstration.

What did they do? The large majority were persuaded to march from the Charing Cross Embankment on a roundabout route via Whitehall, to Hyde Park. It was all as orderly as anything organised by the CND, and ultimately, we would argue, just as purposeless.

To much more effective purpose, a minority of several thousands broke away from the main column of march and went to the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square.

Lessons of October 27

We cannot look upon October 27 as simply another more or less effective demonstration of solidarity with the Vietnamese people. It could very well mark a turning point in the development of the anti-imperialist movement in Britain, and despite (or even because of) the anti-climactic nature of the event itself, we must not fail to study and learn from the demonstration, the forces involved in it and the events preceding it. Consideration of these factors means examining the principal organisations on the left in Britain today. Any organisation can be judged by its attitude towards the struggle in Vietnam.

Marxist-Leninists adopt a clear and consistent attitude towards the struggle in Vietnam. Their total commitment to the side of the Vietnamese people against US imperialist aggression is not some

vague expression of support concealing all kinds of qualifications about the justice of the Vietnamese cause or ability to defeat the aggressor. It is a clear and specific commitment to support the National Liberation Front which has shown itself to be the only genuine representative of the Vietnamese people's interests. Marxist-Leninists call for 'victory to the NLF' with complete confidence in the NLF as the leadership of the Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause.

The struggle in the south of Vietnam is for national liberation. It is a revolutionary struggle which takes the form of a people's war. The revolution which will be accomplished with national liberation, is the national democratic revolution. In countries like Vietnam, the socialist revolution must be and can only be preceded by the national democratic revolution. If the national liberation struggle has Marxist-Leninist leadership, as it does in Vietnam, the national democratic revolution will be carried through to the proletarian revolution. This has already happened in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh.

So Marxist-Leninists, who fight for socialism, support the programme of the National Liberation Front, recognising that it is not an immediate programme for socialism, but a national democratic programme which unites various anti-imperialist classes in a struggle against US aggression.

Lenin talked of two kinds of peace; an imperialist peace (i.e. peace in the interests of imperialism) and a people's peace (a peace in the interests of the people). A people's peace in Vietnam can be achieved solely through the defeat of the aggressors — i.e. through a victory to the NLF. The fact that many who may sincerely desire 'peace in Vietnam' do not understand this, does not alter the fact that it is so.

Marxist-Leninists recognise the NLF as the genuine leadership and representative of the people of South Vietnam in the struggle for national liberation. The NLF is also the political vanguard of the national democratic revolution. As peace can only come to Vietnam through the defeat of US aggression, and as that aggression can only be defeated by continuing the revolutionary war under the leadership of the NLF, 'Victory to the NLF' is the slogan consistent with complete support for the national liberation struggle and for a people's peace.

The attitude of those Marxist-Leninists who participated in the October 27 demonstration was that

a genuine demonstration of solidarity with the Vietnamese people's struggle should concentrate its main attack on the main enemy — US imperialism. Therefore the main target of the demonstration could only be the US Embassy in London.

Several weeks before October 27 a sharp controversy had developed about the target of the demonstration — whether or not the march should go to the US Embassy.

Representatives of various organisations in the Ad Hoc Committee which had been established to plan the march, argued strongly against going to Grosvenor Square. Although latterly it may have appeared that the organisations represented on the October 27 march agreed about everything except the route, this was not the case. In fact the disagreement over the target reflected deep political differences between the Marxists-Leninists and various other groups.

The three main organisations which were finally represented in the Ad Hoc Committee were the International Socialists (IS), the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Young Communist League (YCL).

First, let us consider the YCL. For the purpose of the October 27 demonstration, the YCL was prepared to support the slogan 'Victory to the NLF.' However, the YCL leaders do not really support it. During the last two years members of the YCL who have argued publicly in favour of a victory to the NLF have in some cases been expelled from the organisation.* Actually, the leaders of the YCL have always opposed any militant support for the NLF, preferring instead the peace-at-any price policies of such organisations as the discredited British Council for Peace in Vietnam. In the past their own efforts to form a block with the YCND and Young Liberals in a Youth Committee for

*In November 1966, George Bridges, the London District Secretary of the YCL sent a letter to members of the St Pancras YCL branch informing them that their committee had been suspended from membership of the League (later they were expelled). Amongst the reasons given was the following:

'The St Pancras committee supported a resolution at the Youth Forum calling for a victory to the NLF i.e. a continuation of the war, which is a policy of the Trotskyists.'

In the December 1968 issue of 'Labour Monthly', the same George Bridges, writing in his official capacity as London District Secretary of the YCL, has an article entitled 'Lessons of October 27' in which the following appears:

'The slogans on the march — "Victory to the NLF and the Vietnamese revolution." "Defeat US aggression". "End Labour government complicity" — correspond to the mood amongst the youth.'

Peace in Vietnam, failed to get off the ground. Finding themselves increasingly isolated as the Vietnam movement grew increasingly militant, the YCL leaders had no option but to climb on the band wagon, and while mouthing a few militant slogans, do their best to peddle their own capitulationist line from within. The YCL's real policy on Vietnam is the same as that of the CPGB, which is the same as that of the CPSU. In their view, the Vietnam war is 'bad' because lots of people are getting killed and also because it hinders the prospects of 'peaceful-coexistence'. They are primarily concerned, not with the liberation of the people of Vietnam, but with securing an end to the fighting; a 'peace' that will once again make it possible for the Soviet Union and the United States to pursue the Khrushchovian ideal of peaceful co-operation between the two 'major powers' to 'solve outstanding problems facing the world's peoples' — which is a revisionist/imperialist cover-up for US/Soviet collaboration to carve up the world.

The YCL leaders possess neither principles nor scruples. Like the leaders of the CP, they are prepared to pretend support for the NLF when it suits them, but in reality they are concerned only to see the war stopped so that 'peace negotiations' may begin. Their line dovetails perfectly with that of the imperialists who want to achieve at the negotiating table what they are unable to achieve on the battlefield. What the leaders of the YCL don't want is that the war should be stopped by the military defeat of the aggressors.

Trotskyism and Vietnam

The IS and the IMG are two varieties of left opportunism. Not only their opportunism, but also their political inconsistency, muddleheadedness and outright dishonesty may be seen from the position they have adopted vis-a-vis the Vietnam war and the National Liberation Front.

Although the IS and the IMG differ on many issues, they are at one in their commitment to the hoary old Trotskyist dogma which monotonously preaches the impossibility of establishing socialism in backward countries like Vietnam until 'we have made the revolution in the 'advanced' west.

Because the two organisations do have some differences, we shall examine them separately.

The IS claims to support the NLF and the 'Vietnamese revolution'. But in fact it regards the NLF as a 'Stalinist' organisation which, if victorious in the struggle, will establish in South Vietnam a system of state capitalism. In the view of IS the objective, iron-bound laws of social development

make it impossible to establish socialism in a predominantly peasant country like Vietnam, until such a country has first gone through capitalism. Ignoring Lenin's predictions in 'Better Fewer but Better', and totally rejecting the analyses of Stalin, Ho Chi Minh and Mao Tse-tung on the colonial revolution and socialism, the IS worships loyally at the shrine of Trotsky, who twisted Marx's views on the permanent revolution into a schematic theoretical dogma of 'Permanent Revolution'. The Trotskyist dogma, rejected by all the real revolutionary movements this century, is a form of bourgeois romanticism which never led any revolution to victory anywhere. It is a completely erroneous doctrine and we can see from the role of its adherents in history that it is ultimately counter-revolutionary.

So, loyal to the views of their martyred hero, the IS holds that socialism doesn't exist anywhere, and never has existed anywhere. What exists in China, Vietnam, Korea, Albania and Cuba — as well as in the USSR and East Europe — is state capitalism. The proletarian revolution waits on the workers of the 'civilised' west led by the IS.

The theory of 'state capitalism', which is regarded as an inevitable outgrowth of all revolutions in the colonial and semi-colonial world, is a peculiar IS innovation, which more orthodox Trotskyists such as the Socialist Labour League (SLL) regard as a gross deviation from Trotskyist purism. Of course any attempt to construct a consistent system of ideas on a false theoretical base must inevitably come to grief, and the IS, no less than the other Trotskyist groups, compound their errors, both in theory and practice, so that the only clear and unmistakable motive driving them forward is their gross practical opportunism.

The dogmatic IS commitment to the theory of state capitalism leads them to adopt an attitude of complete hostility to all existing states, which they regard as variants of capitalism. The 'purist' Trotskyist line (for example 'The Militant' and to some extent the SLL, regards the Soviet Union as a deformed workers' state controlled by a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy — but nevertheless worthy of unconditional support on the grounds that it is a workers' state!

Somewhere between the deviationist dogmatism of the IS and the purist dogmatism of the SLL stands the evasive opportunism of the 'International Marxist Group' (formerly *The Week*).

The IMG is the British section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Super-

officially their political line seems close to Marxism-Leninism, but that is only because they have chosen that it should appear so in order to poach on the Marxist-Leninist movement. Unlike other Trotskyists, the IMG will actually call some socialist countries 'socialist'. They do not readily criticise the DRV or the NLF and they appear very anxious to establish unity between all 'genuine revolutionaries'. They appear to be very flexible — apparently the enemies of all dogma. But they are just as dogmatic as the SLL and if anything more opportunist than the IS. They do not shrink from hiding their real views — indeed they rarely reveal them. Mainly because of their readiness to be all things to all men they succeeded in dominating the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign by raising a number of generally acceptable solidarity slogans. The hardcore members of the IMG are dedicated to building a Trotskyist movement in Britain. They are firmly committed to the whole range of erroneous Trotskyist dogma, but significantly avoid explaining how they square their declared support for socialism in Cuba with the article of their faith which tells them it is impossible to establish socialism in single countries before the revolution in the west. But as opportunism of this kind is a permanent feature of all such groups, it is hardly surprising that we should find so much of it around as the Trotskyists become more prominent in the youth and student movement.

IS and IMG Fakers

In relation to the Vietnamese movement a few points can be made about the involvement of the IS and the IMG.

- 1 Neither believes that the NLF is the genuine representative of the Vietnamese people.
- 2 Neither really supports the leaders of the DRV or the socialist system there. They regard both the NLF and Ho Chi Minh as 'Stalinist' (a term which is the most abusive epithet in their vocabulary).
- 3 Neither accepts the Marxist-Leninist theory on the development of revolution in semi-colonial countries.
- 4 While believing that it is objectively impossible for the revolutionary war to lead to socialism in Vietnam, both IS and IMG reject the leadership and programme of the NLF on the grounds that neither are socialist!
- 5 They both raise the slogan 'Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution'. It is a slogan which can mean anything or nothing. If it is supposed

to mean 'victory to the national liberation struggle and the national democratic revolution — the first stage of the revolutionary process and the precondition for socialism', then it is correct. But its authors intend it to have no such content. They do not accept the theory of the national democratic revolution leading to the socialist revolution. They reject the actual leaders and organisations prosecuting the revolutionary war. Therefore it is crystal clear that they are turning the real Vietnamese revolution into an abstraction. The NLF which they support is not the real NLF, with definite leaders, a definite programme and colossal, heroic achievements, but a figment of the Trotskyist imagination.

So it can be said quite categorically that the IS and the IMG are not genuine allies of the Vietnamese people in their struggle against imperialist aggression.

However, as always, a clear distinction must be made between the leaders and the political line, and the membership. The political line of IS and IMG on the question of Vietnam is not clear to the members of those organisations, who, for the most part, are genuine young socialist revolutionaries who have been misled into supporting Trotskyist leaders who in one way or another will seek to divert them from a revolutionary course.

BVSF

The main organisation to express unqualified support for the Vietnamese people's struggle and for the NLF, was the Britain-Vietnam Solidarity Front (BVSF). It was established about two and a half years ago following a split at the inaugural conference of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. The Trotskyists, who had a narrow majority at the 1966 VSC conference, refused to endorse the four and five points of the NLF and DRV and made open attacks on Ho Chi Minh. This led to the split and the immediate establishment of the BVSF, based upon a line of complete support for the stand of NLF and DRV. But unfortunately the BVSF did not really function at all until the beginning of 1968.

Throughout 1967 and up to July 1968 the most militant Vietnam demonstrations to take place in London were organised by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC). The demonstrations of October 1967 and March 1968 showed conclusively that it was possible to mobilise many thousands in solidarity with the Vietnamese people and for the defeat of US aggression. The Vietnam war had become a matter of passionate concern to growing numbers

of people — in particular youth and students. They were not merely 'against the Vietnam war', but were taking sides in the Vietnam war against US imperialism. But the only effective leadership of this growing movement was Trotskyist.

Then, in May, things began to change. Until that time the YCL and the CPGB had regarded the growing militancy of Vietnam demonstrations with alarm. (The EC of the CPGB had voted against participating in the demonstration of March 1968). But the YCL, concerned at its rapidly declining fortunes, decided to make a bid for leadership. For the first time they pushed the 'Medical Aid', 'Support U Thant' and 'Peace in Vietnam' posters into the background, and started talking about 'solidarity'.

The revisionist-organised world Youth Festival, which was planned to take place in Sofia in July, 1968, afforded the YCL the opportunity to combine the Vietnam issue with a publicity campaign for the Bulgarian jamboree. They invited various groups to join them in forming a broad committee to organise a demonstration in London on July 21. Of course they intended to run the whole show and persuaded the committee to endorse their plans to send bikes to Vietnam via the Sofia Festival. But the plans came unstuck when they failed to get a majority on the July 21 Committee. Organisations such as the BVSF, Folk Singers for Freedom in Vietnam, and the Internationalists secured a majority on the Committee and adopted a line of policy and slogans giving complete support to the NLF and calling for victory against imperialist aggression.

The YCL leaders, finding that their plans had come unstuck, pulled out of the July 21 Committee and set up another one of their own. They proceeded as though their rump Committee was the only authoritative one, and they collaborated with organisations like the VSC to turn the July demonstration into a rapid peace-nik jamboree.

In fact, they failed to do this, despite the fact that leading YCL members co-operated with the police in attacking militant demonstrators in Grosvenor Square.

The Britain Vietnam Solidarity Front emerged as a new force to be reckoned with and played an important part in mobilising militants through the genuine 'July 21 Committee for Solidarity with Vietnam'.

Following the July 21 demonstration, plans were made for the big march on October 27. The October

27 Ad Hoc Committee initially decided that the march would be organised under the slogan 'Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution' and that it should not go to the US Embassy. Here it must be stressed that decisions in the Ad Hoc Committee concerning the slogans and the target were made in an arbitrary, bureaucratic manner. The BVSF was excluded from the Ad Hoc Committee, and members of other organisations disagreeing with the slogans and aims announced by the Ad Hoc Committee were treated as disrupters.

On the initiative of the BVSF, another Committee was formed — the '27 October Committee for Solidarity with Vietnam', which began to plan for a parallel march aimed at demonstrating outside the US Embassy. During the weeks prior to October 27, press, radio and TV devoted more space and time to the forthcoming event than they had to anything similar for many years. The BVSF was singled out as a dangerous firebrand bunch of fanatics whose only purpose was to rush into a punch-up with the police. The Trotskyist-Revisionist Troika at the head of the Ad Hoc Committee for the round-London ramble helped out by labelling the BVSF as disruptionist and adventurist.

As we have commented earlier, the demonstration showed that it was quite correct to concentrate on the US Embassy as the main target. We have no doubt that the groups which came together in the October 27 Committee for Solidarity with Vietnam were possessed of the right line and in the main adopted the right tactics on the day. More than 5,000 people went to Grosvenor Square and the demonstration there was in marked contrast to the futility of the numerically bigger jaunt through Whitehall to a picnic in Hyde Park.

Left Sectarianism

However, we think it is necessary in the interests of the developing anti-imperialist movement to make a sober and critical assessment of the way we have worked as Marxists-Leninists in the broad front movement on Vietnam.

In our view the successes we have achieved during the past four months could have been considerably greater if we had been able to overcome the deep sectarianism which is still evident in the Marxist-Leninist movement. Unfortunately, the BVSF, which has done a great deal to mobilise militants for a principled line on Vietnam, suffers from sectarianism to a very pronounced degree. One of our first criticisms must be of those comrades within our own ranks who, although aware of sectarianism and disturbed by its influence, have not been prepared to involve themselves sufficiently in

our work and so help to fight it.

It is not possible here to deal at length with the principles governing broad front work, but a few comments are in order.

The statements produced by the BVSF are all too frequently written in a heavy-handed cliché-ridden style which is of no use to convinced Marxist-Leninists and frankly unintelligible to the broad mass of people for whom the statements are presumably intended.

We mention this because we are concerned that we should not alienate ourselves from people who can be won, and it seems to us that to some extent we have already done so.

Perhaps the worst example to date of what we mean is to be found in the October 1968 Bulletin of BVSF which was distributed on the march. One article in this bulletin has a full headline which reads 'YCL Revisionist Leaders Unmasked as Police Agents and Stooges of US imperialism'.

Now we do not doubt that the YCL leaders are objectively aiding imperialism and that they are quite capable of acting as police agents, and have in fact done so. But these things must be proved. They can be proved by arguing a careful case with all the relevant facts. If the conclusions are presented in a screaming headline at the top of an article which then leads in with similar assertions before presenting a case, the chances are that few who are not already convinced of the revisionists' chicanery will even bother to read it. In fact the Glasgow Communist Movement has been unable to use this kind of thing in work on Vietnam, because it alienates the comrades from their audience before they start.

Such a writing style either reflects or can lead to a sectarian working style. People can not be won if they are not permitted to develop in struggle, but are simply told: "We are correct, join us." We must instead show how we are correct both through concrete work and by drawing correct conclusions from this work. Winning people to our position does not mean their passive acquiescence, but rather their lively participation. Marxism-Leninism cannot be learned by rote.

In our opinion it is absolutely necessary to expose the role of revisionism in all fields of work. We do not think that in a broad organisation (which is what BVSF is supposed to be) the repetition ad nauseam of phrases like 'YCL revisionist renegades', which appears monotonously in the above-men-

tioned issue of the bulletin, is the most effective way to do this. It can be shown and must be shown that the Trotskyists and the revisionists are false friends of the Vietnamese people and objective allies of the imperialists. We convince no one by simply re-iterating that 'we are for revolution, they are for counter revolution'. In fact such methods, such an approach, is rather more likely to push many potential supporters into the embrace of the Trotskyists. Those comrades who equate sterile clichés with 'Marxists-Leninist language' would be well-advised to return to Mao Tse-tung's work 'Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing', some key sections of which read:

"The poison of subjectivism and sectarianism is hidden in stereotyped Party writing, and if this poison spreads it will endanger both the Party and the country . . .

"There are some who keep clamouring for transformation to a mass style but cannot speak three sentences in the language of the common people. It shows they are not really determined to learn from the masses . . .

"To separate internationalist context from national form is the practice of those who do not understand the first thing about internationalism.

Clearly, the BVSF, which is not a Marxist-Leninist party, but a broad organisation under Marxist-Leninist leadership, has not really taken these lessons to heart. Those of us who are active in the Vietnam movement must help to overcome these weaknesses.

Sectarianism is also evident in the policy statement of the BVSF, which pledges the organisation to fight for the 'unity of the whole working class in defence of their living standards and democratic rights and in their struggle for social advance'. This, it seems to us, is a commitment appropriate to a revolutionary party of the British working class, not to a broad front organisation of solidarity with the people of Vietnam.

We are confident that sectarian errors will be overcome as the movement develops and as Marxist-Leninists learn how to work more effectively in the broad movement and amongst the working class and people as a whole.

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Reports from Sussex Students

The following reports were sent to **The Marxist** from a group of students at Sussex University. They are organised in their own group which is called the **Sussex Communist Caucus (M L)**.

WHAT IS the objective position we are in as students in this time of intense anti-imperialist and working-class struggle? We face a contradiction as members of the petty-bourgeoisie, a class that includes most students, teachers and intellectuals. The petty-bourgeoisie are a transition class and thus have a dual character — in the time of the triumph of corporate monopoly capitalism, as capital and its government control all spheres of life, the petty-bourgeoisie as an independent self-employed class faces extinction: they must choose sides: either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. They begin to struggle in a confused way, at first proclaiming their independence from class struggle, blind to the fact that, as Mao says: 'In the world today all culture, all literature and all art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines.'

Almost all petty-bourgeois art of this century reflects this crisis (see Caudwell's essay on D. H. Lawrence, and John Harrison's 'The Reactionaries'). Bourgeois academics refer to it in idealist terms as the 'crisis of western civilisation.' But this spiritual crisis that we all experience is a class crisis: 'Not to have a correct political point of view is like having no soul.' (Mao Tse-tung.)

Artists and intellectuals by no means necessarily resolve this contradiction in a revolutionary way: more often rather than side with the proletariat they resolve their contradiction in a utopian way, taking refuge in primitive myths, or an idealisation of the past; for example Lawrence, Dos Passos, Pound, Eliot, Yeats. Thus Pound ends up broadcasting for fascist Italy; Dos Passos finally supports Goldwater; James T. Farrell backs Humphrey and US imperialist war in Vietnam; Bob Dylan supports Rockefeller, one of the biggest capitalists and imperialists in the world, for President of the US. As for the Beatles — from inside their Rolls Royces they sing 'Revolution you can count me out,' as they drive through India.

This is not surprising. 'The intellectuals often tend to be subjective and individualistic, impractical in their thinking and irresolute in action, until they have thrown themselves heart and soul into mass revolutionary struggle, or made up their minds to

serve the interests of the masses and become one with them . . . They can overcome their shortcomings only in mass struggles over a long period.' (Mao Tse-tung.)

But you may object and say are not students as an exploited class leading the world revolution? Students as such are not a class. But are English students 'exploited'? They represent an elite (less than ten per cent of the population). Very few Sussex students come from the working class. All choose to come to the University, which is an institution that trains us to better serve capitalism and imperialism. The average Sussex graduate will exploit labour and be earning £1,500 in a secure job by the age of thirty. The grants that Sussex students receive are more than the wages of many university manual workers, and more than half the basic wage of the average English worker. What worker is paid to set his own time schedule, read what he pleases, sit and talk in the snack bar, sleep with whom he pleases — all during 'working hours'!

Others may object that students are creating the revolution. But this overlooks the class contradiction, and that the students' struggles only reflects worker and anti-imperialist struggle. The struggle of the NLF preceded the anti-Vietnam war movement in American universities; Algeria, Vietnam and years of intense working-class struggles preceded Paris 1968.

Paris 1968 teaches us another lesson. Although the student struggle was very important, it was not ten thousand students, but the students in alliance with ten million striking workers that shook the fascist government. But even this — street fighting and occupation of the factories by ten million workers — was not enough. A proletarian revolution requires a revolutionary party to lead the workers and their allies in armed struggle, to seize state power and establish the workers' dictatorship over the reactionaries.

What is the situation of petty-bourgeois students beginning struggle but in isolation from revolutionary theory or a revolutionary party. They may attempt a personal solution and call it hippy or anarchist but in their art a latent fascism often breaks through. Thus, in a recent poem, Norman O Brown, the famous professor and author of *Love's Body*, writes that the proletariat '(if and when we perceive one) is us projected/a collective projection/a collective dream, or nightmare,' that 'Spirit gains its truth by finding itself in absolute dismemberment/ . . . the Spirit is Dionysus, the god who dismembered Dionysus, or schizophrenia,' and that 'Revolution really is madness/all the pathology

of the twentieth century/the madness of the mil-lenia breaking out/as Nietzsche prophesied.' Recently Barry MacSweeney, the 'twentyfouryearold youthfromthebackstreetsofNewcastle' who seeks a poetry chair at Oxford, wrote a poem which concludes 'let's tear down forests, drink the sea/dry, sprawl in the corn/madness.'

What kind of final solution is madness and dis-memberment? For which class is it a solution? Mac-Sweeney's grandparents were navvies, dockers and pitmen. Yet with petty-bourgeois swagger he brags to the *Sunday Times*: 'I'm not working-class. I do know wonderful working-class people, but on the whole they're a set of ignorant buggers.' His mother adds: 'Barry is an intellectual.'

Other students and intellectuals take up position which is their rhetoric claim to be 'revolutionary,' yet retain their petty-bourgeois confusion. For ex-ample, our particular Trotskyist sect ('social club') who end up supporting the state-capitalist Labour party at election time ('critical support of course'), applaud a spokesman for US imperialism when he talks about Hungary, and support in their own way 'the Vietnamese revolution' while condemning both Hanoi and the NLF in essence and scrawling over pictures of Ho.

There are also other students (some RSSF, Internationalists) who with anti-imperialist and working-class rhetoric falsely equate students with workers, seeking to channel student discontent into student revolution for students—'critiques of courses, of the norms of education,' and of student societies; the formation of 'student communes.' This is a myopic and selfish parody of the best achievements of the student movement in France and America. And it is cheap to take up slogans which call to mind the 1870 Paris Commune, the 1917 workers' and peasants' soviets, the Communes in China and the Proletarian Cultural Revolution when you are not talking about the struggle of an exploited class to take or retain state power, but of the attempt of an already privileged stratum (less than ten per cent of the population) to make the University more 'stimulating,' 'creative' and 'truly educational' for your own enjoyment. This sort of syndicalist-student power demand fosters the illusion that the University does not have to be sub-servient to the needs of capitalism and imperialism, but can be revolutionised within the system, and it serves to isolate students even more from workers who correctly resent students' demands for exclusive control of institutions they build, service and pay for. In China in the final stage of the proletarian cultural revolution workers with proletarian

consciousness have taken direction of the educational system—this is proletarian education not 'student power.' In spite of their revolutionary rhetoric, these students seem to think of revolution as something that will grant them special certificates of petit-bourgeois liberty: the right to till their own plots in the university in a 'progressive way.' In China in the Tachai Commune work points (wages) are determined by 'suggestion by the individual, discussion by all;' that is, a farm worker estimates what he should receive and the decision is made by the Commune, based not upon how much he has produced, but upon his effort, whether or not he has worked to his fullest ability to serve the people: the socialist system requires that the petty-bourgeoisie change their ideology to serve the working people this is in contradiction to the bourgeois self-interest in people's minds left over by the centuries-old system of private ownership. To lead petty-bourgeois students to concentrate upon critiques of their courses and self-interest demands is only to reinforce bourgeois self-interest ideology. This has nothing to do with starting on the proletarian revolutionary road, which will ultimately end with the destruction of the petty-bourgeoisie as a class and their final emancipation.

From this brief survey of some petty-bourgeois artists, intellectuals and student tendencies it should be clear that although we are reflecting the existing class and anti-imperialist struggles, that it is not an easy matter to resolve our contradiction, to place our struggle in line with the struggle against capitalism and imperialism, that is here with the working-class against the bourgeoisie for control of the state (and thus the culture). But from the Sorbonne, some of the struggles at Berkeley, San Francisco State, Columbia, and from some of the political struggles in England and Ireland we know that efforts in this direction are not impossible.

With this perspective, members of the February 21st Committee who last year punished the US imperialist speaker and conducted a campaign to expose Sussex's links with US imperialism have formed the Sussex Communist Caucus—Marxist Leninist (SCCML). This organisation is affiliated with the developing national ML students' organisation, is in contact with ML Vietnam, Anti-Racialist and Trade Union groups in England, is in contact with ML groups in America and France, and looks forward to the eventual establishment of a ML party in England that will put Mao Tse-tung's thought into practice in concrete struggles.

The SCCML believe that there are a number of

areas at a university where serious struggle may be initiated. For example:

- 1 No university official (eg, Lord Shawcross, director of Shell and adviser to US House of Morgan, one of the most important links between US and British imperialism) should serve as a director of a corporation.
- 2 There should be preferential admission for coloured and working class students: the bourgeois slogan 'maintain academic requirements and standards' must be opposed.
- 3 No grants from imperialist corporations or foundations (Ford, Rockefeller) or the US military should be accepted by a college or university.
- 4 No imperialist corporation (Plessey, Elliott Automation) especially those with links in South Africa or Vietnam should be permitted to interview or recruit on campus.
- 5 Revolutionary courses taught by revolutionary teachers that relate to the realities of class struggle in England.

- 6 No agitation on student grants or cost of housing unless it is combined with a better deal for university manual workers.
- 7 Abolition of grading, disciplinary committees and other aspects of the system that only serve the need of the corporation, government, job recruiter, etc.
- 8 Students should take part in a summer 'Work-in' to gain experience at the point of production and better integrate themselves with the working class.

More important, students must serve directly in workers' and anti-imperialist struggles: the 27th October Vietnam demonstration to the US Embassy, the 26th October march of the striking engineering workers. And after their short stay at the University (only three years), revolutionary students must not pass into the capitalist system, but must continue on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary road.

Sussex Communist Caucus (ML)

MARX ON THE PETTY BOURGEOIS

'... Rather it believes that the special conditions of its emancipation are the general conditions within the frame of which alone modern society can be saved.'
Eighteenth Brumaire

'But the democrat, because he represents the petty bourgeoisie, that is a transition class in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously mutually blunted, imagines himself elevated above class antagonism generally . . . but they with all the rest

of the nation form the people . . . They have merely to give the signal and the people with all its inexhaustible resources will fall upon the oppressors.'
Eighteenth Brumaire

'If by chance they are revolutionary they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; thus they defend not their present but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.'

The Communist Manifesto

Powellism

UNLESS we place Powell's recent speeches in a correct context we will only respond like disturbed and misguided liberals — that is, we will fall into his trap.

This is a time of crisis for world imperialism. The contradictions are intense. US imperialism and Russian modern revisionism are attempting to divide the world into spheres of interest. The contra-

dictions are intense between the imperialist powers who both compete with and collaborate with the dominant imperialist: US imperialism. The US, British, French, and West German monopoly capitalists engage in imperialist battles for markets, driven by a crisis of overproduction and a falling rate of profit in domestic investments. The pound, the franc, the dollar knock against each other — then they desperately prop each other up. Here in Britain the Labour Party state capitalists freeze workers' wages, impose deflation taxes, move to ban strikes, and engage in desperate imperialist competition — the 'export drive.' But US imperialism blocks out foreign markets, and at home there is a

falling rate of profit. British monopoly capital and its government take it out on the workers, and attempt to delude them with a scapegoat.

Imperialism, ie moribund capitalism, generates fascism. Enoch Powell exploits the seeds of racism that are the heritage of British imperialism's exploitation of the colonial and neo-colonial people, and that of the Labour government in its immigration bill. Don't forget immigrants come to Britain in response to advertisements. They are brought here as cheap labour — not out of British altruism.

Racism is not just an idea that appears from heaven, it arises out of economic conditions. In a time of economic crisis the capitalists deliberately raise the level of unemployment; the worker's precarious position under this threat turns them against each other on racial, cultural, sexual, age, skilled and unskilled differences. It turns them against the immigrants, since they are told by the bosses that these men are taking away their jobs.

However you needn't look as far away as Powell to see exploitation based on racism. Look at Shawcross, Sussex's big imperialist chancellor (Shell, Morgan Bank, etc) or at J C West, the pro vice-chancellor, who recently nobly gave his services in South Africa.

But within the country Powellism-fascism is thus in an objective sense primarily an attack on the working class. The workers are fed up with conditions of work, with their exploitation, with the wage freeze and with the decline in real wages, in relation to productivity and buying power, with rising prices, with the coming ban on strikes, with living and housing conditions, and with the treachery of the Labour Party government. Workers often simply lack consciousness of how to change these conditions, of how to become masters of the state. This is a political question and must be answered with Marxist-Leninist politics. If not, in frustration, some sections of the working class will seek a scapegoat, which of course solves none of their problems.

Fascism (the ideology of the petty-bourgeoisie in crisis, the prop of monopoly capitalism) is offering the working class a false solution. Racism-Powellism is politicising the working class very rapidly, opening up all the real issues only to obscure them; it is a device by which the ruling class tries to divide the working class and to turn the grievances which should spur working class revolutionary consciousness into racist false consciousness. **Race and immigration are class issues.** Make no bones about it, Powell and the smug little Monday groupies are only carrying on the job of the capital-

ists where the Labour Party government leaves off, preparing to perpetuate the power and the profits of the bosses.

Listen to Powell woo the working class: 'The entire trade union movement has been brought to accept that the trade unions are responsible wholly or partly, for rising prices and the falling value of money. It is really an astonishing spectacle; the trade unions have clapped the handcuffs on their own wrists, gone into the dock and pleaded guilty to causing inflation . . . whose claim on the national income has been rising? That of the employees? No . . . in fact every year since 1961 the income of the employees has been falling as a proportion of production, and that proportion is considerably lower than it was in 1938.' (*The Times* 11.5.68.) Sounds correct doesn't it? But by attacking the trade union bureaucrats Powell launches a concerted attack on the unions themselves. The historic function of fascism is — to smash all working class organisations, revolutionary organisations, as well as the trade unions! By debunking the Labour Party, by offering scapegoats in the form of 'immigrants' and the 'government,' Powell and his 'new Conservative' allies are offering the working class a bullshit alternative — a false 'alliance' of capitalists and workers such as Hitler, and more recently De Gaulle, offered — 'National Socialism' or 'participation.' Don't fool yourselves — Powellism will seem attractive to many workers who know that the Labour Party and their union misleaders do not serve the workers' interests. When the Labour Party is defeated in the next election many workers will be seeking new political alliances. They will turn to Powell and his dressed-up Tory individualism unless there is a revolutionary party organised and able to give leadership to the workers, and to show them that otherwise they will be leaping out of the frying pan into the fire.

The struggle against fascism can only be part of the proletarian revolution, communism. We must learn from the failure of the thirties — Spain, Germany, France. Workers know that liberal appeals against fascism offer no solution to their problem and will reject them as phoney. We must attack monopoly capitalism and its saviour fascism. These are the main problems of the masses; we must first tackle the question: 'What is the root cause of the workers' situation — is fascism, nazism or racialism an answer to these problems?' We must constantly and primarily agitate on the issues that capitalism is the cause of the workers' problems and that right wing violence does not remove the problems, and that only revolutionary struggle, led by a marxist-leninist party can remove capital-

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Trade Union Notes

by Tom Hill

THE RULING CLASS OFFENSIVE against the workers' living standards is arousing resentment and increasing resistance from the rank and file. For every dispute that makes the headlines, there are hundreds of other, small actions, which fill the employing class with dismay. The Donovan Report represents their considered view of the best way of attempting to contain this situation short of resorting to open suppression. The statements by Heath in which he calls for legislation which even he must know would be ineffectual, only serves to underline the dilemma which faces the ruling class. The reaction of the trade union hierarchy is equally predictable. It is retreating in the face of this offensive, even though at times it seeks to cloak the retreat by adopting suitable 'militant' postures.

The claim by the engineering unions is the most recent example of this retreat. Meetings between union leaders, employers, and Barbara Castle's outfit were given the full treatment by the propaganda organs of the capitalist class. For a short time it succeeded in its intention of convincing the union membership that big issues were being fought out, and that the wage freeze was being challenged by a determined union leadership. Yet in less than a fortnight the whole thing had fizzled out like a damp firework.

Was this because the workers became frightened when faced with the reality of a strike, or was it because they came to realise that it was just a 'public relations exercise' with the union leaders playing a prominent role in it?

The answer can be found in the claim itself.

It called for a three year agreement during the course of which there would be three extra days of holiday, progress towards equal pay, increases in national minimum rates of pay, and an all round increase during the three years, of thirty shillings per week for skilled men with proportionate increases for other grades.

The claim reflected the main contradictions in the wages structure in the engineering industry, namely;

- (a) between nationally agreed rates and actual rates;

- (b) between the lower rates paid to women than to men for similar work;
- (c) between the different rates paid for similar work in different factories and districts; and
- (d) the varying proportions of the total wage provided by bonus earnings.

These contradictions are largely the result of the favourable economic conditions since the war and the growth of factory organisations which took advantage of these conditions when the national leadership failed to do so. They are also the result of different levels of development of the factory organisations and the local environment in which they operate.

Because of uneven development, any nationally agreed settlement other than an all-round increase, would favour some workers, factories or districts, more than others. The amounts put forward in the claim were so low that even had it been conceded in full, a large proportion of the membership stood to gain nothing but the trifling all-round increase, plus holidays.

'We know what the average figure for a skilled man in the Industry is now and on that figure the only cost on average, even if you applied the £20 now, would be an increase in your overtime and holiday costs.'

'Again, on the present level of earnings for semi-skilled men, the only cost would be on overtime and holiday pay.'¹

If the full minimum pay demands had been met, they would have resulted in increases for women and labourers, but they would have been uneven in its effect on actual rates.

Although the claim reflected the contradictions it was formulated in such a way that it depended on the 'goodwill' of the employers in peaceful negotiations if it was to be successful. It was not intended as a means of mobilising the membership for struggle, and could only be regarded as an exercise in reformist manoeuvring.

The negotiations which took place between April and July 1968 were kept secret even from the full

Executive as Scanlon admitted. 'Mr Green has indicated one of the problems that we have had, namely, that, as a Working Party, we have kept to ourselves all the proposals and counter proposals that have been made and, because of this, the full Executive have not been mindful of all that has happened.'² When the membership became aware of the actual content of the claim, the interest in it waned.

Productivity conditions

The employers, well aware that the real danger to their interests lies in the factory organisations, sought the aid of the national officials to secure more uniformity in the acceptance of such things as shift work, more 'economic' manning of machines, job evaluation etc, at factory level. Most of the Union leaders are already politically inclined in this direction. They oppose the wage freeze but favour what Cousins calls, 'a dynamic wages policy.'

'We have said that we are for a highly efficient, high productivity, high wage industry, and we believe that our proposals together with some, if not all, of the conditions that you wish to attach would result in that.'

Some of the proposals for increasing exploitation outlined by the employers are already in operation in some factories.

The sum total of the exercise has been to pledge the cooperation of the Unions in increasing the exploitation of the membership in return for exceedingly tiny adjustments in wages and conditions.

Future role of the Unions

As each potential confrontation between Unions

and Employers peters out, with the workers receiving very little as a result, the tendency to regard these 'clashes' with cynicism becomes more pronounced. To a growing number of workers 'the Union' means the shop steward. If it were not for this, the decline in union membership would be more pronounced. There are those who question the usefulness of trade unions, and consider that they should be written off.

In our opinion this is a leftist error which cannot distinguish between dead wood and live trees.

It is extremely unlikely that British Trade Unions, formed expressly for the purpose of getting 'fairer shares,' can be changed into revolutionary organisations simply by a change of leadership. But they provide a structure at workshop level around which workers can be organised for purposes and policies other than those decided by the leadership at national level, provided the local leadership really expresses the needs of the members.

Factory organisations have serious weaknesses which will need to be overcome, but they possess one essential feature, they are close to the people and reflect their needs more fully than any other organisation at present in existence.

There is no fundamental reason why they should not become the focal point for leading mass struggle in the locality on such issues as Rents, Prices, Fares, etc.

Proceedings at a Special Conference between the Engineering Employers' Federation and Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.
26/7/68.

Student Reports

(Continued from Page 15)

ism, and replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with 'the workers' democratic dictatorship.

It is a step backward from the events since 21 February of last year that we are allowing the pro-Powell Monday Group resolution to be debated. There should be no free speech for fascists and akin reactionaries. This is why SCCML interrupted Paul Williams's speech with the slogan 'Workers not fascists in the university as in China.' Since then Williams showed his blackest colours at a London Monday Club meeting: he drank a toast to Powell saying that 'the Conservative Party coupled with the

name of Enoch Powell march together.' *The Times* report continues: 'what the Monday Club cares about is colour . . . it is passionately pro-Smith.'

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has correctly said 'everything reactionary is the same: if you don't hit it, it won't fall.' We must smash racist Monday Group pigs so hard that they don't dare to appear again. Sussex Students' Union must not only reject the Monday Group's racist motion: it must follow the lead of the University of Bradford Union and resolve that Powell should not be invited to peddle racist shit at Sussex. If Powell tries to appear at Sussex it will be the last time he will try to speak at a British university.

Sussex Communist Caucus (ML)

The Currency Crisis

by David Hall

1968 WAS PUNCTUATED by international monetary crises. The Bonn discussions yielded no more than a breathing-space before the next.

These crises derive fundamentally from the whole situation of imperialism today, centred around the efforts of the principal imperialist power, the US, to dominate the world. US aggression and economic penetration meet resistance from the peoples of the world. Contradictions between the US and its imperialist rivals sharpen. The result is overstretching of American power. This overstretching, mirrored in the US payments deficit, is at the root of international monetary tensions.

Against this background, the November crisis had of course its specific features reflecting the position of the main currencies.

First, there was the strength of the D-mark. West Germany was running a current surplus of around \$4 billion a year and its currency was strong against all others, not merely the French franc.

The franc was characterised as weak but this was one-sided. The French current payments balance¹ was certainly in deficit, but not much. With sizable reserves and an improving trend in the trade balance during the autumn, the current deficit should have been no threat to the franc. But capital movements made it vulnerable. The political nervousness of the French bourgeoisie caused a large capital exodus after the May/June struggles. In November this was resumed, partly because of continuing apprehensions about political stability and partly because the possibility of a revaluation of the D-mark made it attractive to move funds into Germany in the hope of speculative gains. As the reserves fell, inspiring doubts about the strength of the franc, the capital movement accelerated.

Why did not de Gaulle immediately devalue rather than see the reserves melt away? Partly because a loss of reserves reflecting a capital exodus is not the same as a loss caused by large current deficits. Current deficits represent a country's failure to pay its way and the gap has to be met either by borrowing or by handing over reserves to

foreigners. But the French capital exodus was the movement of money from one location to another. The movement as such did not change the money's ownership. The funds the French bourgeoisie sent abroad were still French wealth. It was not inconsistent with previous French policy, therefore, that in these circumstances the decline in the reserves did not lead to a quick devaluation, particularly in view of the internal problems, mentioned later, that devaluation would cause. Of course, there are limits to the running down of reserves which is acceptable and it is doubtful whether, having seen them fall already from \$7 billion to \$4 billion, the French Government could now permit them to fall much further.

A further reason for de Gaulle's refusal to devalue before the Bonn meeting was that he preferred a crisis, compelling wide discussion of monetary problems and opening up possibilities of change in the system, to patching the system through a downgrading of the franc which would reduce French influence. The franc, despite its aspects of weakness, was sufficiently strong to permit de Gaulle's tactics.

The really weak currency was sterling rather than the franc. The UK current deficit in 1968, after devaluation, was much larger than in 1967 before devaluation. The often-promised surplus continuously shifted into the future. Only recently did British exports, valued in foreign currency, pass their pre-devaluation level, while imports raced ahead in 1968. Sterling was also vulnerable on capital account.² The Basle support agreed in September did something to stabilise the balances held by sterling-area countries but the position remained that sizable foreign holdings of sterling could at any time be pressed on to the exchanges to the detriment of the pound's parity.

In financial circles the weakness of sterling was regarded as longterm. Continuing deficits in place of the promised surpluses made it a virtual certainty that Britain would not adhere to the repayment schedule laid down for its massive borrowings. Doubtless there would be not a default but a re-scheduling, but this would require a lengthy process

of argument, reinforcing and continuing doubts about the pound.

What of the dollar? In 1968 its weakness was concealed not remedied. The measures Johnson instituted in January failed. The trade balance greatly deteriorated, with the US trade 1968 surplus forecast at end-November by the Department of Commerce as less than a quarter of the original target. Government overseas spending and investment outflow continued. The burdensome Vietnam war persisted.

The US strove to bolster confidence by proclaiming 'improvement' in the balance of payment. This 'improvement' rested on a large inflow of foreign money. Between January and August foreigners bought \$1,295 million of US securities. Not foreign purchases of longterm domestic bonds amounted, for the same period, to \$1,264 million. Foreigners, the Germans in particular, deposited large sums in the US. The Americans thus borrowed lavishly and this, not any worthwhile improvement in their current balance, kept a dollar crisis at bay. But this crisis is an ever-present risk while over \$30 billion are held by foreigners, of which \$20 billion are deployed in the active and swiftly-growing Euro-dollar market and represent a mass of money which, shifted about internationally, can cause great strains on the exchanges.

The US imperialists have had to face a dire choice over their balance of payments. Their rising imports were vital in sustaining world trade in 1968. Cutting their imports to reduce their deficit would cut world trade and bring payments problems for other countries, leading to monetary crises. But failure to reduce the US deficit also means monetary trouble. This dilemma continues into 1969.

Thus in November the dollar and pound were basically weak, the French franc seemed weak, and the D-mark was very strong.

The D-Mark

The crisis in November derived specifically from the strength of the mark. That is why the initial efforts of the French, British and Americans were to get the mark re-valued. But the Germans disagreed. The present parity³ helps them to secure an enormous surplus giving formidable economic and political leverage. They declined to surrender this to assist their rivals. The most they were prepared to do was to make a gesture; that is, to lower somewhat their export subsidies and their charges on imports, in order to reduce their trade surplus by about \$1 billion a year. But this still leaves a surplus

of about \$3 billion, which is quite large enough to preserve German monetary ascendancy.

Once the Germans firmly refused to revalue, the Americans and British switched to joining them in demanding devaluation of the franc. They believed that this would ease some of the strains caused by the strength of the mark and, providing the franc devaluation was not big enough to prejudice American and British export competitiveness, would keep the monetary situation under control and buy time for further negotiations.

But the French opposed devaluation, notwithstanding their own desire for change in the franc-mark parity. It might seem that if the relationship between two currencies needs changing, the result is much the same whether the first moves up against the second or the second moves down against the first. This would be true in arithmetic but in the real world of politics and economics there is a vast difference between the two changes. Revaluation and devaluation are at opposite poles in terms of power relationships.

The French were thus against devaluing the franc. They fought to protect their position in the balance of power. It is unclear whether they used duplicity to encourage expectations of a franc devaluation in order to obtain large support credits without conditions. What is certain is that once having got both the credits and a German commitment to make export-import tax adjustments, the French refused to devalue.

This decision had both internal and international aspects. Refusal to devalue was accompanied by deflationary measures within France to divert resources to exports and to squeeze the workers through higher prices and taxes. These measures may cause political instability inside France but probably less than the alternative of devaluation, since devaluation would set off a rapid prices-wages race. In maintaining the franc, de Gaulle thus chose the policy less likely to renew the May/June movement, although there can be no guarantee of this and the struggles of the French people may well confound the bourgeoisie.

Internationally, no change in the franc left the problem of the mark unsolved. Strains on the international monetary system therefore continue, bringing nearer the time when a wide-ranging review must be made of the whole situation. This has been an objective of French policy for a long time.

The reactions of the Americans and British clearly showed that they appreciated both the frag-

ility of the present situation and the need to persuade the French to minimise disturbance to it. Johnson's fulsome cable of support to de Gaulle when he decided against devaluation was a public-relations exercise to strengthen confidence. Jenkins' measures in the UK demonstrated the urgent need to prop sterling. In economic magnitude his credit and taxation changes were not perhaps of decisive importance; they were one further straw — not yet the last — on the camel's back. But they were indeed important in their political impact. Increasingly the British people feel that they are being led down a hopeless road. Continuously they have been asked to make sacrifices to improve the country's position. Having made the sacrifices, they get no improvement but merely calls for further sacrifices. Cynicism about politics has been growing fast. A profound change is coming in British politics, with a great sharpening of the class struggle.

Will Jenkins' scheme for import deposits significantly strengthen sterling? Probably not. As details became clearer, it seemed that the reduction in imports might be of the order of £200 million. But Britain's adverse balance has been so large that an improvement of this size cannot achieve what the Government's economic strategy requires, namely a decisive swing from deficit into large surplus.

After the Bonn Talks

After Bonn, what is the perspective for 1969? The American deficit — that is, the real deficit behind the mask of borrowing — remains, and the collapse of the US visible trade surplus in 1968 is ominous for the future. The pound is chronically weak. De Gaulle's maintenance of the franc depends on his being able to contain the struggles of the French workers. The Germans have preserved the parity of the mark, which continues as a major factor of imbalance in currency relationships. The whole situation is very precarious.

In these conditions each country's defence of its monetary interests begins more and more to impinge on international trade. On the one hand in July 1968 there was the 'Kennedy Round' of tariff cuts to promote trade. But the 'Kennedy Round' is being overtaken by fresh curbs. The French have brought in import restrictions and have increased export subsidies; the British have introduced import deposits; the Americans have demanded 'gentlemen's agreements' with foreign exporters in order to limit imports into the US of such major items as steel. Thus currency conflicts have sharpened the trade war. To defend currencies countries are moving more and more to the impossible situation of every-

one trying to export more and import less. Currency and trade problems are inter-acting, with currency conflicts intensifying the battle over trade, and with the battle over trade reacting on the currency situation.

Things cannot remain as they are. The present monetary arrangements are leading to disruption of international trade, to recurring exchange crises and, in consequence, to heightened economic and political struggles within the capitalist countries. And while keeping the monetary system as it is causes conflicts, seeking to change it equally causes conflicts over what the changes should be.

The Bonn meeting settled nothing except the inevitability of renewed crisis. The French have fought for big changes in the present arrangements, which give hegemony to the dollar and have enabled the Germans to achieve financial primacy on the Continent. For the moment the French weapon is maintenance of the franc, for this has frustrated the kind of limited adjustment against the mark which might have afforded a longish breathing-space. But if defence of the franc becomes difficult, the French weapon can easily change to a sharp franc devaluation, putting strain on other parities and compelling wider action. With economic and political developments in the world building up pressures for reconstruction of the international monetary system to make it fit changing power-relationships, and with the French actively pushing for such reconstruction quickly, within the months ahead new tensions and crises are likely to bring major developments. Their specific aspects cannot be closely predicted but their essence will be a diminution in the monetary dominance of the US and a sharpening of class struggle within the capitalist countries.

Notes

1 Current Payments Balance

The monies paid into and out of a country are classified under two main headings; the current account and the capital account.

The current account involves the following:

- (a) payments to a country for goods it sells abroad as exports;
- (b) payments by a country for goods it buys as imports;
- (c) payments to a country for services it renders to foreigners — for example, shipping, insurance, banking, tourism;
- (d) payments by a country for services of this kind which it takes from foreigners;

- (e) government payments abroad for current overseas spending—eg, the cost of British missions abroad;
- (f) receipts by a country for similar spending carried out by foreign governments;
- (g) receipts and payments of interest on profits or investments a country has abroad or investments foreigners have made within it. Taking account all the above, there is in the end either an excess of a country's receipts over its payments, which means there is a current surplus; or an excess of payments over receipts, which is a current deficit.

2 Balance on Capital Account

This is the balance (surplus or deficit) reflecting the movement of capital into or out of a country. Foreign investment in a country (whether private or government agencies) means an inflow of money at the time when the investment is made, which gives rise to a surplus on capital account although the investment itself remains as a liability by the country to them for investors and, if they subsequently wish to withdraw this investment, it would result at that time in an outflow of money, causing a deficit on capital account. Similarly, when a country

invests abroad, the outflow of money causes at the time a capital deficit, balanced by the value of the overseas investment which could, at some future date, be realised and thus give rise to a capital receipt.

3 Parity of Exchange

The rate at which one currency exchanges officially for another is its parity.

The English pound has a parity of 2.40 dollars.

The Bretton Woods Agreement after the war created a system under which nearly all currencies fixed a parity related to the US dollar which, in turn, was valued at 35 dollars per ounce of fine gold.

The actual exchange rate may be slightly above or slightly below the official parity, because the Bretton Woods Agreement permitted a fluctuation of 1 per cent either way to allow for the ups and downs of demand for a currency by a foreigner according to the movement of imports, exports, etc. Thus the pound has an official parity of 2.40 dollars but can fluctuate within the range of 2.38 to 2.42 dollars.

If a currency cannot be maintained within these limits of fluctuation, its exchange is under pressure and this could lead either to a devaluation or a revaluation.

The Vietnam Movement

(Continued from Page 11)

At the moment most of the groups organised in the Joint Committee of Communists are engaged in work on a limited range of issues. We have made some advances on Vietnam and the student front in particular. We cannot go forward much further without a Marxist-Leninist Party. As we work to strengthen the movement we are working to build the party. We shall move forward faster and build our base more securely to the extent that we begin now to eradicate the harmful sectarian tendencies that are still present in our movement today.

The Marxist is at present published once every two months. As soon as finances permit it is hoped that more frequent publication will be possible.

The price of the Marxist has now been reduced by sixpence and will now be sold at two shillings per copy. We are relying on increased sales and donations from those who can afford it to compensate for the reduction in revenue. Please do your best to help in both directions.

Copies (up to fifteen at a time) will be supplied on a sale or return basis to those who are able to help us increase circulation.

Labour Battle Cry

'Let's go with Labour' is certainly a battle cry that the city could now adopt. Under the leadership of the Socialists the share markets have never had it so good. Share prices in 1968 have on average appreciated by more than 40 per cent.

In fact, unless the investor went into the fixed interest market it has been difficult to lose money. The twenty-year Government stocks in the 'Financial Times indices slumped by around 10½ per cent with twenty-year redeemable debentures close behind with a 10½ per cent fall.

From the Guardian 28/12/68.

So Easy

'Only Solution to Poverty — Extend Social Benefits' says a blazing headline over three columns in the Morning Star (9 11 69), organ of the British 'Communist' Party. Marxists will be relieved to know it's all so easy!

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE welcome comment, criticism and suggestions for future articles. We also welcome letters and communications for publication. Please write to Tom Hill, 11 Barratt Avenue, Wood Green, N22.

The Union Jeunesses Communistes in the June Rebellion

by Jean Baby, former member of the PCF who was connected with the journal 'Political Economy'

THE FIRST THING to notice is that in May and June there was a revolutionary movement in France, but no communist party to lead it.

The old French Communist Party, with its powerful bureaucratic apparatus, its undeniable influence on a large part of the working class, and its control of the staff of the main union headquarters, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), had for a long time, for reasons unnecessary to recall, been a revisionist party, more and more following the path of social democracy.

Not only did it do nothing to arouse the militancy of the working class during the tremendous strike movement, but it strove continuously to prevent the unity of the students' and workers' movements, to reduce the objective of the working class struggle to purely economic demands, and eventually to abandon the class struggle for parliamentary struggle. This resulted in presenting the Gaullist government with a sweeping electoral success. The *Times* (15.6.68) was perfectly right in saying that the French CP 'showed itself to be the most reliable ally (of General de Gaulle) throughout the crisis' (re-translated).

It is undeniable that this had unpleasant results for the French CP, of which we shall speak later.

As well as the CP there did in fact exist another Communist Party, formed at the end of 1967 under the name of 'French Marxist-Leninist Communist Party' (PCMLF). This organisation was the successor of the 'French Communist Movement' which, during the four previous years, had brought together various elements shocked by the opportunist line of the French Communist Party. Though laying claim to the thought of Mao Tse-tung and having at its disposal a weekly journal, *l'Humanité Nouvelle*, this party was never able to apply the fundamental principles which decide the life and success of a real communist party: the knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory and ideology, the unity of theory and practice, close ties with the masses, and the

practice of self-criticism.

The influence of this party was very small, its roots in the masses weak and, during the events of May and June, its role was practically negligible. This did not prevent it being banned, like other organisations of the left, which still further reduced its activity.

Lastly, there was an organisation formed at the end of 1965 by an important group of young students who had left the Union of Communist Students, that is, the CP youth organisation.

These young students, often of a high intellectual level, familiar with Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung, formed the Union of Communist Youth, whose aim was to prepare for the foundation of a real Marxist-Leninist party.

First of all they publish a theoretical review, *Les Cahiers Marxistes-Leninistes* (Marxist-Leninist Notes), of which the content was often too abstract but where essential subjects, in particular the Cultural Revolution, were studied deeply. Then they published a monthly journal *Garde Rouge* (Red Guard), on a more popular level, and finally a fortnightly, *Servir le Peuple* (Serve the People), intended especially to assist the union of students and workers.

From its beginning the UJCML understood very well that it had no future except as an organisation bound to the masses and taking an active part in class struggles. After the inevitable fumbblings they gained their first success in helping in the formation of committees of support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people. These committees, called 'Basic Vietnam Committees', had a quick success and at the same time caused some jealousy.

Nevertheless this activity was still essentially restricted to intellectual circles, the students especially.

In order to gain direct knowledge of the views of workers and peasants, members of the UJCML made various investigations, in themselves very interesting, which nevertheless did not rise above the level of many bourgeois investigations on similar subjects.

To try to surmount these obstacles a considerable number of members of the UJCML decided to 'establish' themselves, that is to say to abandon their work or studies in order to take jobs as ordinary workers in different French enterprises. This was the considered application of Mao Tse-tung's celebrated teaching — 'How should we judge whether a youth is a revolutionary?'

In the same abiding desire to unite truly with the working class the UJCML decided, just before the May events, to support the main trade union organisation, the CGT, dominated by the Communist Party, in the hope of mobilising the 'proletarian revolutionaries' who, within the CGT, were leading the struggle against the union apparatus corrupted by reformism.

The PCMLF was not pleased at the growing influence of the UJCML and was not sparing of harsh criticism.

The basic question was that of the party. The UJCML explained at length in its press that the party which it was necessary to form in France must take account of the lessons of the Cultural Revolution, hence its slogan: 'A party of the epoch of the Cultural Revolution'. In other words, a party which in its soul, in its methods, in its style of work, would repudiate the bad habits of the past, especially the 'bureaucratic centralism' that had corrupted most communist parties. But the PCMLF, which had maintained all the traditions of the Communist Party, did not see the lessons of the Cultural Revolution in this way.

* * *

This was the situation when the events of May and June burst forth. The partial struggles, often bitter, which had taken place in various parts of France, had suggested that class struggle was tending to increase, but no one had foreseen the breadth and the forms of struggle which were to appear. The way in which the movement began among the students quickly clarified the attitude of the various organisations.

The Communist Party immediately understood the danger for its own revisionist line which might be posed by a union between the student move-

ment and the immense strikes, with occupation of factories, which were spreading across the country. To guard against this danger the party denounced, in abusive terms, the 'petty-bourgeois leftism' of the students and at the same time mobilised its whole political and trade union apparatus to prevent them making contact with the workers. At the same time they restricted the workers' movement to purely economic claims. This political line is still unchanged.

The PCMLF restricted itself to general and ineffectual statements, without ever posing the problem of the unity in practice of the workers' movement with the peasants' movement.

The UJCML made a serious error at the very beginning, fortunately soon corrected, in underestimating the importance and truly revolutionary significance of the student movement. But in practice they spared no effort to break down the wall which the Communist Party had built between the young intellectuals and the workers.

Lacking a political leadership that was sufficiently strong and adapted to the new conditions of struggle, the student movement was wooed by various political tendencies. These included in particular the anarchists, whose star was Cohn Bendit; several rival Trotskyite groups, especially the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) and the Federation of Revolutionary Students (FER); and also the United Socialist Party (PSU), which found its main support in the student trade union organisation, itself very divided, the National Union of French Students (UNEF).

Obviously as a result of this state of affairs there was a certain confusion which the enemies of the student movement took pleasure in emphasising, as they still do. But as it all led to a multiplicity of discussions, meetings, posters, journals, leaflets, etc. the general result was, in spite of all appearances, a great work of political education, a political awareness, doubtless very imperfect but profoundly affecting all student circles.

In particular, most of them understood that the unity of workers and students was the indispensable condition for a new revolutionary upsurge. This is the main reason why the Communist Party, with its revisionist behaviour, has lost all real influence among the youth. This lesson has been understood, too, by a great many young workers who saw the Communist Party and the CGT at work during these two memorable months. Nothing suggests that these two bodies will be able to regain the ground they have lost.

The UJCMML committed, as we have said, errors of appraisal and even of political line during this period; but at the same time it gave proof of incomparable devotion and activity. Its influence has therefore considerably extended.

When relative calm returned, after the elections and de Gaulle's deft manoeuvring, many of those who had not understood that this revolutionary movement could not give rise to a revolutionary situation found themselves discouraged, even completely confused, and were thus led to make over-harsh criticisms of the organisations to which they belonged or in which they had trusted. On the other hand, external enemies who had infiltrated the organisations took up the job of belittling them, thus giving rise to a trend of liquidationism which tended to throw out the baby with the bath water.

Finally, one is justified in thinking that this crisis, not yet over, will be beneficial. It will have made possible serious self-criticism, already largely accomplished, and will have cleared the way for the formation of a real Marxist-Leninist party, which remains the indispensable weapon to struggle against revisionism and guide the working class in its future battles.

* * *

It is certain that the French bourgeoisie was frightened by the movement of May and June. In order to fight it they used both repression and concessions. In the field of repression the government first followed a cunning policy of lumping together, announced the banning of a group of what they called extreme left organisations. Among the organisations dissolved some did not worry the government in the least and might even on occasion have been useful to it. This collective ban avoided any emphasis on that, or those, which had a future and which might, by being singled out, have acquired lustre in the eyes of youth.

Second, police repression was increased. The threatening words of the Minister of the Interior, Raymond Marcellin, may to some extent have intimidated the weak or hesitant; the best strengthened themselves through difficulties. In the factories repression in the main took the form of sackings, but here the bosses feared the reaction of workers' solidarity, which had been stronger since the May and June events.

In the field of concessions, the Minister of National Education, Edgar Faure, showed considerable skill, but the reforms he agreed to, whether willingly or not, do not change the class character

and the incurable evils of capitalist education in the world of today.

As for the workers' movement, the promises of 'participation', in reality completely meaningless, were wrecked on the distrust or hostility of the workers.

* * *

In conclusion one can say that the revolutionary events of May and June have had profound effects. When General de Gaulle declared that the monetary crisis which had shaken France had its origin in the events of the spring, he was basically right. When the opportunists of the French Communist Party and various 'left' elements say that 'speculators' are responsible this is a typically revisionist statement. These famous speculators are capitalists just like the others, who look for profit wherever they can find it. Assuming — though it would be ridiculous — that they could be stopped and punished, the situation of the administration would not be changed in the slightest. The large-scale speculation unleashed in the last half of November is only a symptom of the rapid worsening or the general crisis of capitalism. Today it is showing itself particularly in the international monetary system.

In May and June students and workers waged a very broad struggle against a system which is decaying rapidly and in every way. What the movement uncovered is the fragility, unsuspected by most, of an arrogant administration which thought it could impose order, stability, peace and equilibrium on the world but which is basically incapable of doing so, however great the tactical skill of its leaders.

By showing that 'the king is naked', or at any rate dressed in rags, the students and workers have shattered the confidence of the capitalists in the administration on which they live. Looked at in this way, it is correct to say that the monetary crisis in France is bound up with the events of May and June.

Finally, it is clear that the movement that began in France is inseparable from similar movements which are now breaking out every day in this or that part of the world. The conditions of the present-day capitalist world have created the revolutionary student force. The students are only the advance party, but they herald the arrival of much more powerful reinforcements.

A Correct line is not enough

The following is an extract from the speech of George Dimitrov at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist-International, 1935.

Dimitrov pointed out in this speech that for the CI and each of its Sections the fundamental thing was to work out a correct line. But, he stressed, a correct line alone was not enough for concrete leadership in the struggle.

IT MUST be borne in mind that the masses cannot assimilate our decisions unless we learn to speak the language which the masses understand. We do not always know how to speak simply, concretely, in images which are familiar and intelligible to the masses. We are still unable to refrain from abstract formulas which we have learnt by rote. As a matter of fact, if you look through our leaflets, newspapers, resolutions and theses, you will find that they are often written in a language and style so heavy that they are difficult for even our Party functionaries to understand, let alone the rank-and-file workers.

The same applies in no less degree to our oral agitation and propaganda. We must admit quite frankly that in this respect the fascists have often proven more dexterous and flexible than many of our comrades.

I recall, for example, a meeting of unemployed in Berlin before Hitler's accession to power. It was at the time of the trial of those notorious swindlers and speculators, the Sklarek brothers, which dragged on for several months. A National-Socialist speaker in addressing the meeting made demagogic use of the trial to further his own ends. He referred to the swindles, the bribery and other crimes committed by the Sklarek brothers, emphasised that the trial had been dragging for months and figured out how many hundreds of thousands of marks it had already cost the German people. To the accompaniment of loud applause the speaker declared that such bandits as the Sklarek brothers should have been shot without any ado and the money wasted on the trial should have gone to the unemployed.

A Communist rose and asked for the floor. The chairman at first refused but under the pressure of the audience, which wanted to hear a Communist, he had to let him speak. When the Communist got up on the platform, everybody awaited with tense expectation what the Communist speaker would have to say. Well, what did he say?

"Comrades," he began in a loud strong voice,

"the Plenum of the Communist International has just closed. It showed the way to the salvation of the working classes' . . . The Plenum pointed out that the unemployed movement must be 'politicized'. The Plenum calls on us to raise it to a higher level". He went on in the same strain, evidently under the impression that he was "explaining" authentic decisions of the Plenum.

Could such a speech appeal to the unemployed? Could they find any satisfaction in the fact that first we intended to politicize, then revolutionize, and finally mobilize them in order to raise their movement to a higher level?

Sitting in a corner of the hall, I observed with chargin how the unemployed, who had been so eager to hear a Communist in order to find out what to do concretely, began to yawn and display unmistakable signs of disappointment. And I was not at all surprised when toward the end the chairman rudely cut our speaker short without any protest from the meeting.

This, unfortunately, is not the only case of its kind in our agitational work. Nor were such cases confined to Germany. To agitate in such a fashion means to agitate against one's own cause. It is high time to put an end once and for all to these, to say the least, childish methods of agitation.

Without Comment

'Mr Will Paynter, a member of the Communist Party who was general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers until his retirement last year, and Mr Leslie Blakeman, labour relations director at Fords, will, it is believed, be appointed the full-time members of the Commission on Industrial Relations under the chairmanship of Mr George Woodcock. An official announcement is expected early next week.

'Mrs Castle is certain to be criticized for choosing a communist for such a position. The TUC kept Mr Paynter off the general council.

'Mr Paynter is, however, universally respected for his loyalty to the miners and for his integrity. In a remarkable speech at last year's Trades Union Congress he urged the need to examine again the question of adapting trade union structure to industry and a strengthening of the authority and power of the TUC.'

The Times 24.1.69.

Davoren Defence Fund

ON January 12 Comrade E. M. Davoren, Secretary of the London Region Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation, was arrested in the demonstration outside South Africa House. Below we print part of a message which he sent to the London Conference of the RSSF when it met on January 17.

You will no doubt be aware of my arrest, assault, detention in hospital and imprisonment in Brixton Prison as a result of participating in last Sunday's demonstration against the fascist dictatorships of Smith and Vorster in Rhodesia and South Africa, respectively. Yesterday afternoon I was released from Brixton Prison on £1,000 bail. Furthermore, a condition of my release is that I undertake not to organise or take part in any demonstration anywhere and to report twice a week at a police station either at home or near my college.

I understand that during the past few days many comrades have been active in the defence of myself and other comrades, with leaflets being produced and funds being collected in preparation for very costly court cases. Of course, in these cases political principles concern all revolutionaries. Thus, funds must be gathered from all quarters.

Last evening my lawyer, Benedict Birnberg, made an official complaint to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis regarding the assault made upon me by several police officers, uniformed and plain-clothed. The question of prosecution of the officers is under active consideration.

Comrade Davoren has now been granted summonses against three members of the Special branch

and against two uniformed police officers for 'assault causing malicious injury and/or actual bodily harm' and in one case 'threat to kill.'

According to these summonses Davoren was, without warning set upon by a number of policemen in plain clothes and in uniform and punched, kicked and kneed continuously. He was flung on to the steps of a police coach and a police officer kicked him in the face, splitting his forehead. As a result of these assaults Davoren suffered serious injuries resulting in damage to one eye, continuous and severe headaches and dizziness. He spent two nights in Westminster Hospital under guard and was later transferred to a cell in the hospital wing of Brixton Prison.

At Bow Street on January 27 when Davoren again came before the Court he was once more remanded until February 25. His application for bail was renewed with the same conditions as before. Comrade Davoren refused to accept these conditions and was therefore remanded in custody until his next appearance in court.

The defence of Comrade Davoren against the charges brought by the police will cost a great deal of money. These cases are of the utmost importance in the revolutionary struggle and the fund which has been started to fight them deserves the full support of all those engaged in this struggle.

Please send as much as you can afford to the Treasurer, Davoren Defence Fund, Regent Street Polytechnic, London, W.1.

STOP PRESS: On January 30 the condition that Comrade Davoren must not take part in or organise any demonstration while on bail — a condition which Comrade Davoren had refused to accept — was lifted by Mr Justice Roskill after a private hearing. The hearing followed an application by Miss Rose Heilbron, QC, on behalf of Comrade Davoren, challenging whether a judge or magistrate had power to impose a condition that someone must not do something which they were lawfully entitled to do.