

International

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

**Mandel on
revolution
in Europe**

THE WAR GOES ON



Workers' Control • Malcolm X 1/6

letters

FROM NAN MACLEAN MILTON

I was delighted to read your tribute to "John Maclean - Revolutionary" in your December edition, and welcome your support for the John Maclean Society.

Had the society done nothing else but stimulate articles such as this, its existence would be justified. Its main purpose, however, is the publication of Maclean's most important writings and speeches, and I welcome your help in this connection. Maclean's speech from the dock in 1918 was probably his most important speech and its republication today is of great value. Lack of funds limits the society's efforts meantime, and this kind of support is most encouraging.

Gathered together in the National Library of Scotland at Edinburgh in a John Maclean Section are all the surviving letters, articles and pamphlets written by Maclean, together with poems, articles, etc., written about him. I hope your Scottish readers will take advantage of this facility, and will also become members of the John Maclean Society. My own greatest hope is that the society will unite all Scottish marxists.

FROM ALAN ROCNEY

There are several good reasons why as many comrades as possible should try to attend this year's workers control conference in Sheffield.

(1) There are likely to be about 1,000 useful people attending, e.g., trade unionists (likely to be at least 50% of attendance), students, members of various political tendencies from Young Liberals to the Communist Party (which now gives the workers control campaign luke-warm support).

(2) There are possibilities for some political advances to be made on various fronts. For instance, the present campaign is associated with Guild Socialist traditions as much as any other. The historical root which several leading members of the Institute of Workers Control have tried to revive, somewhat uncritically, is that which existed on the left in Britain about 50 years ago. Although they are not excluded, the writings of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and Gramsci are allowed a somewhat vague, secondary place in the historical tradition. We can try to provide historical clarity here. In particular, discussions of the perspective for workers councils, dual power, etc., should be openly taken up. Fears that this will frighten off workers are, by and large, unfounded.

It will be relevant for us to bring in aspects of the workers' struggles of France in 1968, and of the movement for workers councils emerging in Poland and Czechoslovakia. There often appears to be a presumption that workers control of industry may be achieved by writing plans and without the seizure of factories.

The "participation versus control" argument is

fuzzy. For example, Jack Jones has been politically embraced by many in the workers control movement despite the fact that he only advocates "participation". The same kind of people who embrace Jack Jones tend to over-emphasise the value of the struggle inside the Labour Party for industrial democracy. There is an over-rating of "open the books" demands (many firms will open the books to prove their arguments for maintaining profit margins).

(3) More practically, at Sheffield comrades should think out, in advance, the kind of political contributions they can each try to make from the platform in the plenary sessions.

(4) We can each try to organize ourselves into the main seminar groups (details of these should be sent out soon). Comrades will need to brief themselves on the workers control literature on particular industries, e.g., steel, coal, etc.

(5) There is real scope for making useful personal contact with shop stewards. Names and addresses should be compiled. There should be a concerted effort to sell appropriate literature.

Have readers of INTERNATIONAL thought of submitting papers to the conference?

Write now for details to:

Institute for Workers Control,
91, Goldsmith St.,
Nottingham.

(it costs 10/- to register for the conference)

VOLUME TWO, NUMBER TWO

FEBRUARY 1969

All communications to: 8, Toynbee St., London W1
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Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial opinion

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

A special introductory issue of:
STUDENT INTERNATIONAL - a bulletin of student power, is now out. It contains news of the world struggle of students, including a special article on L.S.E.

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A BARBAR(A)IC ATTACK ON UNIONS

There is no need to explain to readers of this journal that the proposals by the government to "reform" the trade unions and trade union legislation are wrong. Just how bad these proposals are demonstrated by the plan to "attach" the wages of militants should they break these projected laws. However, when our anger has died down, what should concern us is the working out of a strategy to fight this attack. But to proceed certain facts have to be faced up to.

Firstly, the enormity of the crime against the Labour Party and trade unions must be grasped. There is a danger of becoming punch-drunk because of the continued evolution of the Government to the right and the losing of one's historical perspective. What Barbara Castle has brought forward is a set of proposals to bring British law into line with the worst features of American trade union legislation, as typified by the Taft-Hartley laws.

Secondly, we must consider the social significance of this action. The Labour Party was created by the unions to give them a political arm of defence against laws like these. It is inevitable that unless this legislation is fought and beaten tensions will be generated which will threaten the links between the unions and the Labour Party.

Thirdly, this attack by the Labour Government on the unions is part of a pattern of events tending to push the whole fabric of British politics to the right. It is accompanied by the vicious attack on student militants by Short, by numerous public opinion polls designed to prove that "the man in the street" wants even harsher laws, by Heath's official espousal of Powellism and by

attempts to whip up hysteria over such things as the hangings in Iraq. All of this is the reflection in field of politics of the profoundly anti-democratic tendencies of modern monopoly capitalism. Unless this drive is met by a massive response all kinds of reactionary forces will be let loose and the possibility of a long period of reaction in British politics will be much greater.

This latest attack makes it all the more urgent that forms of action and organisation are found which make for a meaningful and offensive response. Wide sections of the left are groping towards this end.

Two conferences will provide a means to fight for the concept of united action based upon an offensive strategy: the workers control conference in Sheffield, March 30/31, and the National Convention of the Left, in mid-April.

The National Convention of the Left (write to MDNG, 11, Fitzroy Square, London W.1, for details) has set itself the task of unifying and helping to co-ordinate the left. It seems to be applying lessons learnt in the Vietnam campaign (non-exclusiveness, etc.).

We call upon all groups on the left to support these two conferences, those who stay out or have a sectarian attitude towards them will run the risk of the same fate as those who boycotted October 27th. Whilst working for these two conferences we will endeavour to inject into them the idea of fighting for transitional demands as part of a wider anti-capitalist strategy based on immediate action against the Government's anti-trade union policies.

ULSTER: BRITAIN'S DEEP SOUTH

The problem of Ulster has been badly neglected by the left in Britain. When this neglect wilted in light of the struggle in Derry it was replaced by utter confusion as to what line to adopt (among the gems being the statement that the demand "one man, one vote" was to be opposed as petit bourgeois!) Any understanding of the question must start from the fact that the present set up is an embarrassment to British imperialism but, on the other hand, all its endeavours to solve the problem tend to make it worse.

A full analysis of this set up is needed but it is sufficient to say that the problem of Ulster will be with us for a long time and that there are the elements of a permanent crisis. The people of Derry and other centres have completely lost confidence in the authorities and sections of the youth and working class, inspired by France and militant demonstrations in Britain, are determined to struggle until they win elementary rights - such as have been considered as normal in the rest of the United Kingdom for decades.

The basic principles of a socialist attitude towards the problem are straightforward: we are absolutely committed to support the right of self-determination of the Irish people; we are likewise absolutely committed to support all the

democratic demands of the Irish people; we have the duty to campaign for solidarity with the Irish workers engaged in struggle. It is on this basis we should campaign in Britain. More concretely we have to demand an end to financial support to the semi-police state of Ulster and make other related demands.

We need to explain that the border is a barrier to the social progress of the whole Irish people and that the set up in Northern Ireland enables the Tories to split the working class. For these reasons, too, we stand for a united Ireland.

Of course, we also stand for the creation of a workers' Ireland and will support steps to create a revolutionary socialist party in that country. Irish revolutionaries should struggle inside the civil rights movement for the socialist road. But our support for the democratic demands of the Irish people cannot be conditional on this being achieved.

In fact, the best way we can help the achievement of a socialist Ireland is by campaigning for the removal of the biggest obstacle to the united action of the Irish working class: the imperialist-imposed border.

THE LABOUR PARTY AFTER FOUR YEARS *of* WILSONISM

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

During 1968 the Wilson government has continued quite unashamedly on its course of acting as the saviour of British capitalism. Its measures during the past year, from the savage post-devaluation cuts to the latest niggardly economies on school meals and the failure to control in any way rises in rents, prices etc., have continued to alienate more and more sections of its traditional support. In the best traditions of neo-capitalism the Incomes Policy, enforced with renewed vigour by the erstwhile 'left winger', Barbara Castle, has been the centre-piece of its policy. Its devotion to the 'strength of the £' i.e. to the interests of the City, has and will continue to have the effect of leading it into continual attacks on living standards in which the lowest paid sectors will suffer most hardship. In the field of foreign policy a complete sellout on Rhodesia now seems imminent, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia has served as an excuse to strengthen the commitment to N.A.T.O. Support for U.S. imperialism in Vietnam has been unflinching.

Electorally the Party can take no encouragement from the year's events. The swing shown in Bassetlaw would give the Tories a majority of 200 plus. In the traditional strongholds of Wales and Scotland the nationalist upswing which has had a particular appeal among young people continues. The latter is in some ways the most threatening sign for Wilson. Although it is clear that the nationalist upsurge was prompted by the complete disillusionment in these traditional Labour strongholds at the failure of the government to live up to its promises, it is apparent that nationalism, once aroused, may prove to be a more durable phenomenon, and these areas, already slower than elsewhere to register the effects of a national 'swing' may not return to the Labour fold. Such a development would spell real disaster from which it would be very difficult for the Labour Party to re-emerge as a viable alternative to the Tories. It is clearly becoming more and more difficult for Wilson to pull something out of the hat which will regain him popularity in time for the next election.

However the experience of the Humphrey campaign in the U.S.A. should caution us against making any absolutely firm predictions on this score.

The erosion of public support for the Labour Party has been reflected in increasing decay and disillusionment within its ranks. It is very difficult to chronicle the precise fortunes of the Party in terms of membership and degree of activity, but even the figures published by Transport House show a decline in individual membership this year. These figures are of course gross overestimates because most constituencies affiliate on the minimum of 1,000 members and it

is safe to assume that a large number do not possess anything like that number. No figures for active membership exist, but an optimistic figure of 100 per Constituency would give a total of 63,000 - fewer people than participated in the October Vietnam Mobilisation.

A general haemorrhage of membership has occurred from all sections of the party. A large number of those who remain are either die-hard loyalists or blatant careerists. It is certain that the age structure has hardened in favour of the middle aged and elderly and that the Labour Party Young Socialists has declined appreciably. In the latter field the 1968 Conference was the smallest ever. The decision of the International Socialism Group to pull out of the L.P.Y.S. (which involved particularly the extremely irresponsible resignation of the only member of the National Committee actually elected by the branches in his area) has still further weakened the movement. It is likely that this year's L.P.Y.S. conference will be smaller than ever.

The level of activity in the Labour Party in the past year has become extremely low. There have been few instances of Parties participating in any notable campaigns either locally or nationally. Only one Labour Party banner was to be seen on the October Mobilisation for instance. At the Conference this year, in spite of the crushing defeats suffered by the platform, there was no sign of an organised fight from the left. A quick glance at the resolutions demonstrates graphically the extremely low political level in the Party. It is worth contrasting the situation now with that in the early sixties. At that stage a large number of those who considered themselves Marxists and revolutionaries and who were not members of the Communist Party participated in the debate within the Labour Party. Today the opposite is the case. Consequently the level of debate at local and National Conference level has plummeted. At the moment dismay and disillusionment at the government's performance are more common than criticism from a coherent standpoint.

The reaction of the Labour Party leadership to this year's Conference decisions has been more contemptuous than ever. Wilson flew to meet Smith on 'HMS Fearless' with the clear intention of selling out the 4 million black people of Zimbabwe only three days after Conference had passed a resolution expressing its support for these people. Barbara Castle blandly stated that the defeat of the Incomes Policy would make absolutely no difference to her intention of continuing to implement it. It is clear that such is the contempt of the leadership for the rank and file of the party that they do not even feel it necessary any longer to try and make gestures to indicate they might carry out some aspect of the former's wishes.

The most significant attempt to date to constitute a coherent left-wing standpoint in opposition to these developments has been made by the Tribune's introduction of the Socialist Charter. This differs from previous 'one-off' campaigns of that group such as the 'Never Again' manifesto, which were directed towards the Parliamentary Labour Party. The Charter at least seeks to reforge the links which existed between the Parliamentary 'lefts' and the party at large. It also ostensibly provides a programme for a continuing campaign. There are certain serious deficiencies. The demands of the Charter are posed in the most vague and unspecific terms. No call is made for instance for the repeal of the Prices and Incomes legislation, the racist Commonwealth Immigrants Acts etc. Although affiliations are being sought, the movement has been given no democratic structure which allows for discussion of the aims or for the creation of real co-ordinated activity around it.

The real significance of the Charter is that it shows that in face of the big growth of opposition to the government which has manifested itself right outside the traditional political channels these centrists have found it necessary to re-launch some sort of programmatic campaign to re-establish their credentials as leaders of the left.

We can take absolutely no comfort from the general tendency for the Labour Party apparently to atrophy and sink into a gradual decline. Many sectarian groupings have seen this as a positive sign that the working class has turned away from its allegiance to social democracy. In reality if this were indeed the case we would have seen the most thorough-going fight within the Labour Movement in which the Left would have sought to prevent Wilson from taking over entirely the Party machine. If Wilson leads the Party into electoral disaster which accelerates the present process of decay without provoking a real fight from the left to reinvigorate the Labour Movement, the working class will have suffered a major defeat which could lead to the dominance of reaction for a whole period.

MARXISTS AND THE LABOUR PARTY

In 1963/4 many Marxists (including supporters of THE WEEK, our predecessor) thought that the most likely development was that quite rapidly after the election of a Labour government, and its implementation of incomes policy and other anti-working class measures, the general disillusionment which this would lead to would be reflected in a split of major proportions within the Party, which might even involve Cabinet Ministers and which would certainly force the Trades Unions to take sides on the issue. The whole purpose of our Labour Party work at this period was to attempt to harden out the potential left wing and to ensure that we would be able to play a major role in any new formation that emerged. It was hoped that THE WEEK would serve as an organising centre for the left. A very large amount of our time was spent on work of a routine nature in order to establish our credentials as loyal members of the Party.

Because of the profound desire existing in the

Party at this time to see the election of a strong Labour government and the mistaken illusions in its potential (a view which we did not share but which thoroughly permeated the milieu in which we operated) we were not able to differentiate ourselves at all clearly from the centrists. It was only when we began campaigning consistently on the Vietnam issue in 1965 that we became a seriously recognisable tendency. From that time onward our relations with our centrist allies became progressively more strained.

At the 1965 Labour Party Conference our comrades were prominent in speaking on the Vietnam issue, and immediately subsequent to this the witch hunt was initiated. Simultaneously we were forced into taking a more and more hostile attitude to the Government's actions and it became increasingly clear that the centrists would not join us in this. In fact there was a total lack of any principled opposition to the Government's rapid rightward drift amongst the ranks of the Parliamentary left. The 'left' Trade Union leadership proved similarly incapable of political opposition.

The main feature of this period was the failure of our hopes that the left would prove capable of putting up at least some fight against the Wilson leadership and therefore the invalidation of our prognosis that there would be a split of significance in the Party. Instead we saw a gradual erosion taking place whose continuation in 1968 we describe above. The following factors go some way towards explaining why we had been capable of this mistaken assessment:

- (i) We failed to appreciate that at a time of such crisis for capitalism and consequent *cul de sac* for reformism only those who had been able to make an ideological break with capitalism would be able to chart a way forward.
- (ii) We overestimated the sensitivity of the Constituency Labour Parties to Government betrayals and underestimated the strength of loyalty to the leadership.
- (iii) We did not take into account the possibility of such a tremendous radicalisation outside of the traditional channels as occurred around Vietnam, the student question, nationalism etc.

THE FUTURE

We can re-affirm that at present there is no perspective for the development of a mass revolutionary party outside of the traditional working class movement. Of all such social democratic political formations the British Labour Party is the one which has the most closely knit ties with the organised working class. At both local and national level the Trades Unions play a major role in the Party. This means that any political movement amongst Trade Unionists rapidly finds reflection in debate in the Labour Party. The views of the Communist Party's industrial militants for instance gain expression here. It is not excluded of course that the Wilson Government's behaviour may become so intolerable to the mass of trade unionists that their disgust will be expressed through the disaffiliation of their Unions. For the time being however there

is absolutely no indication of this possibility being realised.

As long as such links exist there is every chance of the Labour Party making an apparently miraculous comeback even from an absolutely disastrous electoral defeat. In 1931 the Party was apparently destroyed, returning only 46 M.P.s. However a leftward shift in the leadership and the renewal of the close alliance between the parliamentarians and the Trade Union bureaucracy brought about such a reversal of fortunes that in 1935 154 seats were won and the Party once again became a serious challenger for governmental power. All this is said to re-emphasise the argument that we cannot discount the residual strength possessed by the Labour Party - a strength which derives in large part from illusions perpetuated by its continuing organic links with the Trade Union movement.

The single issue campaigns developing around support for the Vietnamese Revolution, Student Power etc. are the most important developments of the sixties in revolutionary politics. A feature of such campaigns is that they have grown up completely outside of the traditional structures and modes of thinking of Stalinism and Social Democracy. The young people involved are frequently completely contemptuous of the Labour Party and of anyone involved in it. This is a fundamentally healthy attitude on their part which indicates

a thorough going revolutionary attitude. In Germany and France this movement has produced real revolutionary youth organisations in the SDS and JCR. Indeed at this stage any revolutionary Marxists who bury themselves in the Labour Party can expect to find themselves the object of contempt amongst revolutionary minded young people. However it is precisely in the events in France that our long term orientation toward the traditional workers' movements finds vindication. It was the virtue of the various revolutionary groupings that they were able to initiate the revolution in May, but only the workers' movement could complete the process. The stranglehold of Stalinism and Social Democracy at this level ensured a stillbirth.

Our long term perspective for the emergence of a mass revolutionary party remains a split in the ranks of social democracy involving, necessarily in Britain, a really significant section of the Trades Union movement. But such developments occur only in objectively favourable circumstances. At a period when there is no political leadership coming from the ranks of the Trade Union movement and even though the bankruptcy of the left reformists has been so clearly exposed there is no likelihood of such a development immediately.

Our task remains to prepare for its eventuality and our Labour Party work must be based on this task.

Mexican students appeal for world student strike

We students, workers, teachers and fathers unjustly imprisoned in the Mexico City Preventative prison urgently appeal to students throughout the world to demonstrate their solidarity with our movement.

On July 23rd the Mexican students began a valiant struggle in defence of democratic freedoms. These students have been the object of one of the world's bloodiest repressions.

The authorities in this country have not hesitated to use bazookas to shoot down the doors of schools or to send more than 10,000 soldiers backed up by tanks and heavy artillery against the university and other educational centres. They did not hesitate to open fire on a peaceful gathering, killing more than 500 people and wounding an undetermined number.

Monster trials have been initiated against the students arrested. These students have been savagely tortured. Their families and friends have been threatened. In Mexico City alone the number of students imprisoned now exceeds 2,000 and they are charged with crimes carrying penalties from 15 to 100 years in prison.

Exercising the rights which the constitution of this country grants them, the Mexican students have carried out a series of mass demonstrations.

These demonstrations expressed the Mexican people's desire to win back their freedom, which has been even more trampled under foot, especially in terms of the last presidents.

So long as there was no intervention by the repressive forces or shock groups organised by the government, these demonstrations were orderly and peaceful. Hundreds of thousands of citizens took part in them.

On July 26th the government began a whole series of provocations aimed at justifying its repression. Schools were machine-gunned. There was an attempt to organise the workers against the students. Through an intense campaign of slander in all media of communication, the government tried to turn national and international public opinion against the students. But once these attempts and the customary repressive tactics (which for some time in Mexico have included use of the army) had failed, they resorted to mass murder.

After the cowardly massacre of October 2 in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas of Ciudad Tlatelolco, the government pretended that it sought a solution to the conflict through negotiations. It imposed a whole series of conditions on the students, ranging from the truce during the Olympic games to the return to classes which began this week.

once again demonstrating their desire for a peaceful solution to the conflict, the students accepted the government's demands and fulfilled their agreements to the letter. However, all this turned out to be just another manoeuvre by the government for the purpose of continuing and intensifying its repression.

December 13, when the students held a new demonstration in support of their imprisoned compañeros, the government again resorted to repression, imprisoning several thousand students.

Under these circumstances, we students, workers, teachers, and fathers in the Mexico City preventive prison decided to launch a hunger strike which we will not break until we have won restoration of the constitutional order violated by the government and in particular the following points:

LETTER FROM YCL

FROM BOB ARNOTT (YCL NATIONAL SCHOOLS ORGANISER)

I have had a copy of your January edition passed to me and I have happened to read the article "Secondary Schools Students Organise" by Charles Fenech. In this article I happened to spy a certain piece which is to say the least unfounded and totally incorrect.

I quote: "....the YCL failure in the high schools will mean that the national SSSU will be a non-aligned organisation...."

On this obviously I have to make two observations. Firstly, I dispute the fact that the YCL has had no impact on the secondary schools and to back me up I suggest you read the DAILY TELEGRAPH, YORKSHIRE EVENING POST, THE SUN, TIMES EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT, MORNING STAR, HARROW OBSERVER, and many others. I suggest you write to the Yorkshire Television Ltd. and ask them why a YCLer was on for 10 minutes being interviewed in connection with our schools campaign. I suggest you write to the headmaster of Hensworth High School, I suggest you write to the headmaster of a grammar school in Bolton where there is a strike on NOW, led, of course, by the YCL. Then you may get an idea whether the YCL has had any impact in the secondary schools. In fact in the past two weeks we have distributed over 100,000 leaflets in the schools, sold 1,000 copies of our magazine FORMAT and on this material have made over 100 members for the YCL.

Secondly, you seem to assert that the so-called YCL failure will mean that the union (no longer called the SSSU) will be non-aligned. Might I suggest that you get Cold War cum McCarthy ideas of communist infiltration right out of your heads. We have always and still call for an INDEPENDENT union and we believe that this union, a broad movement, will be of a type where it can with its demands appeal to ALL (not necessarily socialists - I don't know where you got the idea in line 5 of the article from).

yours fraternally

EDITORIAL COMMENT: comrade Arnott has got quite hot under the collar over a passing reference to the YCL and its failure, in Charles Fenech's

1. Unconditional release of all those imprisoned as a consequence of the student and people's movement throughout the country.

2. Cessation of police and military repression.

3. Respect for the rights of individuals and citizens.

We call on all students struggling throughout the world for a more just society to join in the struggle of the Mexican students, the bravest of whom have not hesitated to sacrifice their blood and their liberty for the victory of the cause of all the world's youth.

FOR A WORLD STUDENT STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF MEXICAN STUDENTS !

FREEDOM OR DEATH !

opinion, based upon the reports from supporters of the SSSU, to decisively influence high schools where the union was formed.

Firstly, we strongly repudiate comrade Arnott's remarks about "McCarthy ideas". It requires a great deal of imagination to place that interpretation on Charles Fenech's statement. An elementary acquaintanceship with our journal and its supporters - such as would be gained by just reading the rest of the journal - would show that we stand against witch-hunting and have, in fact, been the victims of it ourselves. Surely comrade Arnott is aware that we have been victimised in the Labour Party and other organisations, and that supporters of INTERNATIONAL were hounded by the press during the build up to the October 27th demonstration. On this matter our position is quite clear: we stand in solidarity with anyone on the left who is under attack for their ideas and activities. We will welcome any material from the YCL which will enable us to publicise cases where its members and supporters are being victimised. Our supporters will endeavour to organise protests against any such victimisation.

The figures comrade Arnott quotes are impressive but "impact" depends upon a correct political line. The concept of an "independent" union appealing to "all", seems to us to hold some dangers. No doubt, comrade Arnott would draw an analogy with a trade union which seeks to organise workers on the basis of interests which are common to all workers in a given industry or situation. However, comrade Arnott will be aware of the battle which has to be fought against arguments in the trade unions for "independent" unions which appeal to "all". We would like to be informed as to why an adult trade union has one criterion and a union for students should have another?

The working out of a correct strategy for the growing movement in the secondary schools and grammar schools is both very difficult and very important. We would welcome a discussion in our columns on this topic. If comrade Arnott's angry letter (unnecessarily so in view of the facts we have pointed out) sparks off such a debate it will have been of some value.

REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE

After twenty years of ebb, the socialist revolution is again on the rise in Western Europe. This is the main lesson of 1968 for our continent. Almost exactly two decades after the Western workers' last great revolutionary action — the Italian general strike of July 14, 1948 — the French workers and students have opened the way for a revival of revolutionary action throughout the continent.

Of course before this there were the spectacular mobilizations of the Belgian workers in December 1960 - January 1961 and of the Greek workers in June-July 1965. But these were in small countries and the explosions soon subsided into a retreat of the mass movement.

France, however, is one of the key countries on the continent. And many signs indicate that there is not the slightest danger that the French movement will quickly fade. Furthermore — and this is the essential thing — the situation in several other countries in West Europe is rapidly approaching a point similar to that of the January - April 1968 period in France (a "pre-May" climate). This is what enables us to look forward to a new revolutionary upsurge sweeping Europe.

What is the source of this new upsurge? What are the contradictions giving rise to it? What are the precipitating factors?

The General Slowdown of Imperialist Economic Growth.

Among the long-run contradictions stimulating the radicalization, a key role has unquestionably been played by the slowdown in imperialist economic growth which began to appear in 1966. This slowdown has taken different forms — recession in West Germany, Great Britain, and several smaller countries in the imperialist world, a slowdown followed by quasi stagnation of production in the United States; and inadequate expansion in France (a quarter of French productive capacity was unutilized on the eve of May 1968). Only Italy and Japan have escaped this general tendency owing to the fact that they went through a deeper recession a few years earlier.

By reducing the margin of manoeuvre available to the bourgeoisie in each imperialist country, by sharpening inter-imperialist competition and aggravating the crisis of the international monetary system, this slowdown stimulated a general offensive of the bosses against the positions won by the workers movement. The Gaullist "ordinances" cutting social security benefits; the "incomes policy" which Wilson imposed on the British unions; and the "harmonized economy" which the "grand coalition" in Bonn is trying to force on the West German unions are the most striking manifestations of this general tendency.

The most important consequences of the bosses'

offensive have been a reappearance or increase of unemployment and a slowdown or halt in the rise of real wages (in some cases even temporary declines in real wages). This created a climate of heightened social tension which has eroded the gradualist, electoralist, and reformist illusions which the masses had accumulated in the preceding phase.

The case of Spain is particularly characteristic. During the years of accelerated expansion, wages rose, unemployment declined, and the "liberalization" of the regime could promote illusions. Since the West German recession, Spanish income from tourism has stagnated for the first time in more than a decade and the emigrant workers are returning. Illusions about a "gradual liberation" have abruptly vanished. The regime has tightened its repression. The workers' struggles have rapidly taken on a political character.

The Radicalization of the Worker and Student Youth

Radicalization of the youth is a universal phenomenon throughout the imperialist world and the student radicalization is only one aspect of it. The general cause of this phenomenon is to be found in the fact that the growth of the productive forces during the last fifteen years also stimulated a proportionate if not greater growth of new needs among the youth.

Accelerated technological innovation has created a real "generation gap" in the realm of needs. The older generations measure their present standard of living against what they had in 1937 or 1947 and are partially satisfied. The new generations measure their standard of living — which does not include just material consumption goods — against the possibilities of science and technology today. The gap is a vast one. That is the essential source of the "challenge" from the youth — neocapitalism's incapacity to satisfy their new needs.

In different strata this general cause is reinforced by specific causes — for the students the "university explosion" and the patent failure of the bourgeois university; for the young workers, increased unemployment and exploitation of youth; for the high-school students, the threat of finding themselves shut out of the universities and the sort of jobs they aspire to, etc., etc.

There is a clear interaction between the slowdown in economic growth and the general youth radicalization. At the very moment the bourgeoisie found it necessary to push through the Fouchet law*, the additional financial means needed to extend concessions to the students were lacking. Because the rate of productivity continues to grow faster than the development of production, youth unemployment is tending to rise.

The Development of a New Youth Vanguard Independent of Reformism and Stalinism

GE in EUROPE

E. MANDEL

We again find ourselves at the intersection of two tendencies. The general youth radicalization has progressively reduced the impact of the traditional bureaucratized organizations on young people. Identification with the only revolutionary struggles of the last decade — Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam — has favoured the development of organizations among the youth vanguard tempered in confrontation with reformism and Khrushchevite neoreformism and in clashes with the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus and police. And these organizations are firmly rooted in one segment of society — the students.

That is the crucial new fact. Numerically the French, Italian, West German, and British "splinter groups" were not qualitatively stronger at the beginning of 1968 than at the beginning of 1960. But in the past the revolutionary groups functioned without a social base. They acquired a basis of support as a result of the student radicalization insofar as they worked correctly to establish roots in this stratum. It was this that enabled them to play the role of detonator.

The workers will not react to a brawl between 500 young revolutionists and the police. But 15,000 students building barricades and facing the attacks of the CRS (Compagnies Republicaines de Securite) throughout the night touched off an avalanche in working-class opinion.

Impact of the World Revolutionary Upsurge — the Tet Offensive and the Revival of Mass Struggles in the Bureaucratized Workers' States.

These struggles throughout the world exerted a subjective influence on the formation of a new revolutionary youth vanguard in Western Europe, thereby helping to prepare the way for a revival of revolutionary struggles in the West.

The example of the Tet offensive of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front was particularly eloquent. There was a direct link connecting the enthusiastic response to this offensive in West Germany and France, the unleashing of the first mass battles of the West German far left (the Vietnam Congress on February 17-18, 1968, in Berlin; the struggles against the Springer monopoly over Easter), and the precursory stages to May 1968 in France (the Nanterre revolt was touched off by the arrest of militants demonstrating against the war in Vietnam; the example of the West German students played a definite role).

The influence of the rise of the political revolution in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic should not be underestimated either. The happenings in Czechoslovakia, while of short duration, offered a glimpse of what a socialist democracy, a democracy of workers' councils, could be in the industrialized countries. That greatly helped to revive hope in an authentic socialist revolution

* The educational reform voted by the Gaullist parliament after the May-June upsurge.

just as the occupation of Czechoslovakia by troops under orders from the Kremlin helped to discredit Stalinism and weakened its control over sections of the working masses in West Europe.

Possibility that the Radical Spirit of the Youth Will be "Transmitted" to the Adult Workers Through the Intermediary of the Young Workers

This is the vital link in the chain. Without the entry of the broader working masses into the struggle, the battles or uprisings of the youth are condemned to failure. But through the intermediary of the young workers, the battles of the youth can bring a sharp turnabout in the mood of the working masses.

The new fighting style of the vanguard students and the revolutionary youth organizations has impressed and attracted the young workers. This was seen during Easter 1968 when the West German SDS (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund) engaged in a confrontation with the police. While the older workers rejected "violence no matter who resorted to it", the younger workers instinctively sympathized with the students. May 1968 in France accentuated the same tendency. And we have recently seen striking illustrations of it in two countries, Great Britain and Italy.

In Great Britain, despite the exclusively student and intellectual nature of the movement which launched it, the October 27, 1968, demonstration was swelled by tens of thousands of young workers. They came out not so much to shout their support for the National Liberation Front as to demonstrate their hostility to the establishment, Wilson's policy, and their desire to take on the cops.

In Italy during the December 5 general strike of a million workers in the Rome region, the sympathy of the young workers for the students was so patent that the trade-union bureaucrats had to let student speakers address the strike rally. And these same bureaucrats did their utmost to sabotage the rally, fearing a meeting between thousands of workers and thousands of students.

It should be noted that in Turin the fraternization of young FIAT workers and "challenging" students in previous months helped to change the social climate radically, bringing back a "hard" style of mass strike picketing which had not been seen in this working-class city since the postwar struggles.

A radicalization of the vanguard strata of the working class can, moreover, be produced by a phenomenon intrinsic in the productive process today. The capitalist "rationalization", the speedup, the advances in automation, neocapitalist economic "programming", and the concentration and accelerated fusion of enterprises all tend to shift the centre of gravity in the class struggle from disputes over the division of newly created value between capital and labour toward disputes

over the control and organization of work and of the productive process itself. This is why the spread of the campaign for workers' control among the shop stewards in Great Britain assumes a crucial importance, as does the renewed struggle toward this goal in Belgium, Italy, Sweden, and even West Germany.

The Crisis of the European Bourgeoisie

To complete the picture it must be pointed out that this sharp radicalization of the youth and sections of the West European working class goes hand in hand with a sharpened crisis of the traditional bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships in several key countries.

The most typical case is certainly that of Great Britain. The Labour party and the Conservative party have been rocked by a crisis of graver nature than the one they went through in the thirties, while for the first time in a century an important extraparliamentary current has spread to the left of the workers' movement.

The same tendency toward a breakup of the traditional bourgeois leaderships is apparent in Spain, Belgium, and even Denmark. And Italy is no exception to this rule, as the difficulties encountered in attempts to refurbish the centre-left coalition and the factional tensions ripping apart the three big parties — the Christian Democracy, the CP, and the SP — attest. The crisis in the Common Market also contributes to this tendency.

Two factors are lacking for a transformation of this revolutionary upsurge into a revolutionary victory. The level of consciousness and the ideological preparation of an important section of the workers, even including the most combative is still inadequate and there is no revolutionary leadership with sufficient authority among the working masses to be accepted as an alternative leadership by a broad vanguard in the struggle. May-June 1968 in France, December 1968 in Italy, and the most recent months in Spain have sadly underscored this negative side of the situation. Excellent opportunities are still being lost for lack of an adequate leadership.

The construction of revolutionary parties well rooted in the youth and the working class — using the successes won among the youth as a springboard to win a base in the working class — is the only way to fill this gap. Politically (on the level of propaganda as well as agitation and action) such a party would educate the masses in the spirit of continually questioning the authority of the bosses and the structures of capitalist economy and the bourgeois state. Organizationally, the construction of such a party would bring together new leaders of the working masses capable of extending actions like those of May-June 1968 in France into a general confrontation with capitalism and the emergence of dual power. This task has been on the agenda for a long time, but now for the first time we can see a start toward carrying it out.

December 15, 1968

London buses: the fight for women's rights

Sabina Mak

The New Year promises to see the campaign for equal rights for women enter a new phase — at least, that is, if the momentum it has already built up over the past months continues. From a predominantly middle-class 'progressive' concept, it has already spread onto the shop and garage floor where conductresses and seamstresses have shown a militancy often lacking in their male counterparts. We need only mention the stoppage at Ford's last year which needed the interference of Barbara Castle — none less! — to get the production lines moving again, the walk-out at Renold's Manchester last month — and the latest development in the struggle, the protest held by a group of conductresses outside and inside London busmen's Delegate Conference a few weeks back, demanding the right to drive.

Despite official backing from the TUC for the campaign — remember last Congress' decision? — women have met and will continue to meet a wall of prejudice, and not only on the employers' side either. It is often remarkable how 'dedicated' trade unionists turn tail and flee when the question of equal rights is broached. It was, after all, the decision by London busmen's delegates not to allow conductresses to transfer to driving when OMO* is introduced throughout the fleet, that provoked the protest that hit the headlines.

Essentially, this 'conservatism' is only another aspect of bourgeois consciousness instilled over years into the workers' movement and, as such, must be opposed. We are glad to hear that despite their initial set-back, conductresses in London are to continue their campaign to make Conference reverse its decision — thus drawing into struggle ever-wider sections of conductresses and progressive trade unionists. In so doing, they will be not only raising the consciousness among fellow conductresses, they will be adding a much needed dose of militancy into the T & GMU at rank and file level.

However much such campaigns rub up conservative trade unionists the wrong way, the more the labour movement tolerates divisions in its ranks along racial or sexual lines, the more fragmented the movement will be and the more it will retain its conservative nature. This was never more accurately proved than during the recent Engineering dispute when Barbara Castle — that great ex-veteran of the equal rights for women campaign! — procured a settlement partly by dividing men from women — and throwing the latter to the wolves. There can now be little doubt that the

* One Man Operation

outcome of the dispute would have been considerably different - for the whole labour movement - if such a division had not been possible. It can indeed be said that the increasing militancy among women workers will significantly help to radicalise the labour movement and create a greater sense of unity among the rank-and-file.

Industry is not the only area, of course, where women are being brought into the struggle - we could mention the growing campaign on council estates against higher rents which is mobilising thousands of housewives - but it is particularly significant for two reasons. First it injects into the unions a much-needed and powerful radicalising influence which will spread to male workers and, secondly, it helps to make a larger number of traditionally oppressed women aware of their social role inside capitalism. The slogan of equal rights - whether it is expressed by the demand for an extra 25/6 a week as at Renold's or by the demand to be allowed to drive a bus - poses essentially the question of 'democracy'. That is, of course, why it is a slogan broad enough to mobilise large sections of women workers. But it is a 'democracy' which cannot be adequately met within capitalist society - particularly one in crisis - when that capitalism depends to an increasing degree on inequality: e.g. cheap

female labour in factories and offices.

During the coming period we can probably look forward to an increasing attempt on the part of the state to exploit all forms of division in our ranks - exactly as Barbara Castle used the sexual division during the Engineering dispute and Enoch Powell is increasingly using the racial one. It is quite essential for us as socialists to counterpose the question of equal rights as a bridge to higher anti-capitalist consciousness among women. It is up to socialists to intervene wherever possible in these struggles and help guide the campaign from the specific to the general by showing how this inequality depends upon the whole role assigned to women in a capitalist society. This seems to have already had some success in London where conductresses are now beginning to see their campaign as part of a social struggle which shares many points in common with that of coloured immigrants or any oppressed minority.

If we, as socialists, can go one step further and bring home the fact that the victory of the struggle for equal rights for women is not feasible within the confines of the present system, then we will have gone a long way towards promoting a socialist consciousness. In the coming year, we will have ample opportunity.

Malcolm X five years later

A. Black

Though dead, Malcolm X is well-known and remembered the world over. But his fame did not just come after his death; he was also well-known whilst he was alive. His enemies, as much as his friends, made sure that people knew of him, of his life as a hustler, and of his advocacy of militancy as an important tactical weapon in the afro-American struggle for human rights, dignity and liberation. They repeatedly stressed that very early in life he became a criminal - his enemies because they wished to discredit him, his friends because they felt that to stress the fact that a criminal had become a leader of the Black Americans would greatly enhance his eventual political significance, not only in the Afro-American community but throughout the world.

This representation of his life borders on a political rage to riches story - a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence. The enemy's arguments need no consideration. We all know that the white power structure will find any means with which to discredit leaders or potential revolutionary leaders in the eyes of their followers. The friends however should be criticised, not simply for stressing the past in order to enhance the future, but because this attitude leaves one with the impression that a development such as that achieved by Malcolm X cannot be achieved by anyone else. This is as much as to say that criminals are politically a bad stepping ground for the



recruitment of revolutionaries. Just as no-one overstates the fact that middle-class people such as Lenin, Mao and Castro became revolutionaries, so there is no reason why we should put so much emphasis on the background of Malcolm X. Instead, we should be more concerned with his importance and contribution to the struggle of the masses of oppressed peoples in America and the world over.

A revolutionary who can speak to the people in their own language is someone to be admired, someone who will be admired. But when such a revolutionary can also argue with and confound the best of his enemies, then he becomes a great leader indeed. Malcolm X was such a revolutionary - he spoke to the Black Americans in their own

idiom; he explained a struggle which was their own struggle in the context of a culture which was their own culture.

He gave them no sociological talk of a "Black bourgeoisie", he called them "house niggers", in this way pointing out that, just as the house slaves did anything for their masters, so the modern Uncle Toms would sell the masses of Black people down the river if the white racist power structure in America ordered them to do so. Again, when speaking of Louis Lomax's use of the word "reciprocal", Malcolm said, "I don't usually deal with those big words because I don't usually deal with big people". But this is the same Malcolm who says in a discussion with his biographer, "When you study the science of philology, you learn the laws governing how a consonant can lose its shape but keep its identity from language to language". Malcolm was a leader who knew that the people will only believe and follow you if they understand what you are saying to them, that is, if you speak in their language.

Just as there is an argument against putting too much emphasis on his criminal background, so it is important that his role in the Nation of Islam or Black Muslim movement should be viewed as a transitional phase. That he came to the forefront of the Black militant movement via the Nation is merely, it can be argued, due to the social reform activities of that organisation. It was one of the only groups, or the only one, which was prepared to accept criminals into its structure. But this social reformist nature was at the same time the reason for Malcolm's transcending it. It was sectarian and exclusive and middle class in its aspirations. It was in fact an elective nationalist sect which excluded all whites. Even though at the same time it excluded all black non-believers it inevitably influenced them by its principles and its ability to stand up against the racism of the society. Even though many Black Americans were being made more conscious of their blackness, and of Muslim solidarity and group norms and values, the Muslims' refusal to participate in the struggle of the whole Black community was alienating Malcolm who was the minister who came into contact with the struggle of the civil rights movement more than any other of the Muslim leaders. He had a desire to see the Muslim community involved in this movement. It was inevitable, therefore, that the break between him and the Nation was to come sooner or later.

When the break did come Malcolm easily joined the Black community because by then the Black people had started thinking of themselves as black and had started accepting anti-integrationist views. Eventually, he would have built as large a movement as he had done for the Muslims. There can only be speculation as to why he was killed. The reality, however, is that he died at the hands of three assassins on the 21st of February, 1965.

As, once again, we find ourselves approaching another anniversary of his death, our sorrow tends to be tempered by our knowledge of him and his ideas. He is gone but his ideas are now taking concrete shape, and it is this which alleviates our sorrow because it revitalises him in our eyes. The civil rights campaign, along with its mani-

pulators, the white liberals, is becoming out of date. The Uncle Tom negro is being shoved aside by young Black militants who shout to them and their masters: "move over, or we're going to move on over you"; and they mean it too.

In conclusion, it can be said that Malcolm X symbolises the Black Man, not only in North America but all over the world. He said for us those things which we all felt but which four hundred years of dehumanisation and mystification had led us to think were thoughts we should not even think much less articulate. Some of us strayed into the cul-de-sac of civil rights, some into social chauvinism of European socialism and some into the mental asylums, simply because we refused to think the way we felt and then let the knowledge which such thinking engenders temper our social action. Malcolm argued in favour of a united front of the Afro-American people in their struggle for their rights as human beings, for the control of the economic, social and political functioning of those communities. And this was a call for Black Power, even if the phrase was not used. He was aware of political realities which most of the European and other revisionist controlled communist parties have not yet been able to comprehend, namely, that if Black people wait for the coming of socialism to obtain their freedom then once again they will find that they have lost out in the end. This is because racism though spawned by imperialism and capitalism will - if it is not attacked as the entity which it becomes - once again rear its ugly head in whatever type of post-revolutionary society that materialises.

As a revolutionary thinker of the Black masses Malcolm ranks very high indeed. He knew the people in the language of the people. And if nothing else we in the Black Power movement should accept this legacy which Malcolm X has bequeathed to us.

READERS MEETING

On the 16th of January, Dr. Malcolm Caldwell spoke to the Nottingham INTERNATIONAL readers' meeting on "Catastrophe in Indonesia". He was speaking on the background to the recent massacre of the Indonesian Communist Party. Dr. Caldwell sketched in briefly the history of Indonesia: a history that explains its fractured society, with its horizontal as well as vertical social divisions.

The role of the P.K.I. (Indonesian Communist Party) was dealt with at length. It had gone to extraordinary lengths to promote peaceful co-existence; even to the extent of proclaiming belief in one god to appease the rightist Muslims. This quietism was carried to its logical conclusion when Aidit called upon his followers to bury their arms when the massacre began. His "peaceful" road led to half a million murdered communists. Dr. Caldwell ended the meeting by entering into a very lively question and answer session.

Editorial note: there are INTERNATIONAL readers' group meetings in several towns, e.g., Glasgow, Birmingham, London, Nottingham, etc., write in if you would like to be invited.

ALL OUT FOR MARCH 16

END BRITISH COMPLICITY
IN VIETNAM WAR
**MEET THE
VIETNAMESE**
Sunday
March 16 **IN LONDON**
VICTORY TO THE N.L.F.!

Enquiries/Donations to March Mobilisation Committee,
120 Commercial Road, London E.1, 01 480-6789

The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign plays an important role in the defence of the Vietnamese revolution and has an impact throughout the country out of all proportion to its actual membership and material assets. Just over three months ago (October 27th) we organised, along with other anti-war forces, one of the biggest and most militant demonstrations in British history. What has made this possible?

First: VSC by its complete opposition to American imperialism and by its solidarity with a living revolution expresses the hopes and aspirations of large sections of the British population - particularly young workers and students.

Second: we consciously brought this feeling of solidarity with the National Liberation Front and opposition to the USA (and their yes-men like the Wilson leadership) on to the streets in **MILITANT DEMONSTRATIONS**. In other words we oppose the war not only by words but also by deeds.

Third: VSC has remained a "single issue" campaign. It has steered clear of all attempts to get it directly involved on a national level in, say, the tenants' movements, in the opposition movement to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, in the fight against the incomes policy, etc.

It is for these reasons that the traditional "peace" organisations like CND, which have little identity with the NLF and pursue parliamentary and "legal" forms of protest, have been pushed to one side.

The success of VSC, if we want to talk in these terms, is due to the above. To change this policy will mean we will quickly become ineffective and fade out of the picture. Other forces like the Maoist British Vietnam Solidarity Front will play a more prominent role in Vietnam work and attract militants who are presently with us.

The reactionary role of the United States in Vietnam is clear for all to see, but the question of British complicity in the war has, up till now, been blurred over. In fact the **IMPORTANCE** of British political and material assistance to the Pentagon is not well understood by even many of the activists in the Vietnam protest movement itself. It is our responsibility to put on a special campaign in order to highlight the whole question of British complicity. No one will do

it for us.

The Americans are now negotiating with the NLF and Democratic Republic of Vietnam, yet the Wilson Government proceeds as if Hanoi and the National Liberation Front do not exist. As far as the present Government is concerned, the Hitler-loving Thieu regime of Saigon can receive diplomatic recognition from Whitehall (including embassy facilities) but NLF and DRV representatives cannot put a foot on British soil!

The March 16th campaign aims to reverse this policy and to give the Vietnamese a big welcome at London airport to be followed later on in the day by a mass rally in central London for them to speak their minds.

The Vietnamese have already indicated their interest in this project. Student NLF-partisans have guaranteed to participate. Can we **NOT** give them our support?

While the negotiations drag on in Paris the Pentagon continues to bomb and kill in Vietnam**. The bombing pause in the north has not brought peace, but only intensified the fighting in the south and the continued violation of Vietnam's right to self-determination. It is precisely **NOW** that we should **INTENSIFY** our opposition to the war. The Vietnamese have asked for international actions of solidarity in March. Are we going to respond in a positive manner? Are we going to say No? Or are we going to procrastinate and not make up our minds?

The American Student Mobilisation Committee to End the War in Vietnam has taken up the call and is planning a "round of demonstrations (over the Easter holidays) that will show the aggressors that we will not be quieted by fancy talks in Paris."

We in Britain - if we really support the Vietnamese revolution - must respond energetically and meet the wishes of the Vietnamese. The national council, at its last meeting gave its full support to the March 16th action and urges the national conference to do likewise.

An ad hoc committee has been formed (the March Vietnam Mobilisation Committee) to make the act-

ion as big and as broad as possible. We have been asked by the MVMC to participate in this body and thereby ensure the maximum solidarity possible.

Far from weakening VSC, to participate in ad hoc formations like the October 27th committee and MVMC means VSC makes new contacts and broadens its base. It is up to us to capitalise on the experience and build VSC locally and nationally through these formations.

We have everything to gain by reaffirming the recommendation of the national council and participating in the MVMC to the fullest extent

possible.

* The shortened text of a resolution submitted to the 1969 Vietnam Solidarity Campaign annual conference in the names of Alan Harris, Pat Jordan and Ernie Tate. It was carried by a good majority despite the opposition of some members of the International Socialism group and some unattached VSC members (mainly from Camden).

** On January 31st, DRV authorities announced that American forces had broken the bombing ban by strafing and shelling villages in the Nghe An and Ha Tinh provinces a few days earlier.

ROSA LUXEMBURG

TESSA VAN GELDEREN

Rosa Luxemburg was murdered fifty years ago. Yet her name does not live on simply as a martyr, because she was killed by counter-revolutionary forces. It is not only with hindsight that we see her clear analysis of events both past and present, and extending into the future. In her own lifetime she was acknowledged as a person who had proved herself both in theory and action. The fact that her ideas were seriously discussed and - whatever political differences there may have been between her and Lenin - she herself was greatly respected throughout the revolutionary movement of Europe, is indication enough of the importance of her work.

In the last few years, the world has seen the rise of the militant youth, in particular the radicalisation of the students. Yet as long ago as 1886, when only 16 years of age, Rosa Luxemburg was denied a gold medal that was rightly hers for being top of the class because of "an oppositional attitude towards the authorities". Like some places today, the high schools in Warsaw, at that time, were hotbeds of political activity in which Rosa played a leading role. Three years later, when still in her teens, she was fleeing to Switzerland to avoid arrest, such were her activities in revolutionary circles at that time.

Much has been made of the political differences between Lenin and Luxemburg, particularly on the question of the organisation of Russian Social Democracy. The differences between the two have, in some instances been exaggerated to such a degree that Luxemburg is seen as putting the need for spontaneity before all else, and that Lenin was advocating a purely centralist party and not the democratic centralist party that we know today. Yet Rosa Luxemburg was in agreement with Lenin that the revolutionary party must be the advanced guard of the class, that it must be centrally organised and that the majority will must be carried out always in the strictest discipline

the question of the exact role of the Central Committee. Luxemburg regarded the existence of an all-powerful Central Committee as a danger to the development of the struggle itself. "The ultra-centralism demanded by Lenin develops, it seems to us, not from positive, creative ideas, but from a sterile bureaucratic attitude. Its chief aim is to control the activity of the party rather than to fructify it, to limit rather than develop it, to dragoon the movement rather than to educate it." She attached great importance to the creative role of the masses and believed that it could be developed in the party only if there were wide freedom of criticism.

We know now that Lenin was not an ultra centralist as Luxemburg thought he was. As a matter of historical fact Lenin showed himself to be a master of tactical elasticity - a thing some people might not have suspected from his writings.

Lenin, in answering Luxemburg's criticisms showed that he was not in favour of absolute centralism but of the elementary discipline that was necessary in any organisation geared to overthrow capitalism. And in Russia there was a particular need for a strong Central Committee, due to the loose and rather anarchical organisation that existed at the time. Lenin could see serious dangers approaching and he wished to counter them by giving the Party a firm and disciplined organisational form.

The pamphlet Luxemburg wrote in 1902 "Organisational Questions of Russian Social Democracy" which criticised Lenin on these points is better known in its English translation as "Leninism or Marxism?" making a distinction that I do not think Luxemburg intended. And her oft-quoted conclusion is still very relevant today: "Mistakes made by a really revolutionary working-class movement are infinitely, in historical perspective, more fruitful and valuable than the infallibility of the most excellent Central Committee". Yet at the same time Rosa Luxemburg stood for a centralised world party. In the thesis drafted in the period when the launching of a Third International was being worked out - and the main drafter was Rosa Luxemburg - it was stated that

Where Lenin and Luxemburg parted company was on

the centre of gravity of the organisation of the proletariat as a class is the International; and the obligation to carry out the decisions of the International takes precedence over all else.

When it comes to the question of the Russian Revolution, there is also a misunderstanding on what Luxemburg wrote. In the first place Luxemburg was in prison for over three years during the First World War and in her isolated position found it difficult to ascertain exactly what was happening outside. Little information reached her in prison and what there was, was all too often the distorted version of the bourgeois press. Purely on a theoretical basis it is very difficult to understand the real significance of rapidly changing circumstances.

The mistakes Rosa Luxemburg made because of her isolation have been greatly misrepresented. It has been said that she condemned the whole Bolshevik policy, including the November 1917 Revolution; and that she rejected the idea of the proletarian dictatorship and thereby justified the policy of the Mensheviks. Yet, despite her over-estimation of the Mensheviks and what they could achieve, she was not misled when they and the Social Revolutionaries entered the Provisional Government: "The coalition Government is a half-measure; it burdens socialism with full responsibility...it is a compromise which like all political compromises is doomed to fiasco. The dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable."

Although not complacent about the Russian Revolution, at no time did Rosa Luxemburg campaign against the Bolsheviks - as has sometimes been suggested. Despite criticisms of the Bolshe-

hevik policy on the agrarian question, on the question of national self-determination, and on the question of democracy and terrorism, at the same time she stated: "Lenin and Trotsky and their comrades displayed the utmost courage, energy, revolutionary foresight and revolutionary logic any party could have possibly displayed. The honour of the revolution, betrayed by social democracy in the west, was saved by the Bolsheviks. The November insurrection not only saved the Russian revolution, it also saved the honour of international socialism." (Hardly an indictment against the Bolsheviks.)

In her writings, her speeches, her actions, there the true Luxemburg be found. Her sympathy and emotion for the oppressed expressed itself in everything she said and wrote. As socialists we sometimes forget, in the struggle that lies before us, what we are trying to achieve. The following words of Luxemburg serve as a reminder of what is the essence of socialism: "Determined revolutionary activity coupled with a deep feeling of humanity, that alone is the real essence of socialism. A world must be overturned, but every tear that flows and might have been staunch is an accusation; and a man hurrying to a great deed who knocks down a child out of unfeeling carelessness commits a crime."

But in the misery of the individual, Rosa Luxemburg never forgot the greater misery of the world. Throughout her life, in an attempt to rid the world of that misery, she gave her whole being to the cause of socialism. In the words of Clara Zetkin: "She was the sharp sword, the living flame of revolution."

Book Review - Quebec and Canadian Socialists

Bob Purdie

INTERNATIONAL readers enraptured by the recent visit of the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Pseudo-cops-Trudeau, will be stimulated by this brisk little pamphlet.*

Based on a resolution adopted at the 1968 convention of the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere (LSA/LSO), the Canadian trotskysts, expounds a marxist analysis and develops a socialist perspective on the phenomenon of Quebec separatism.

The pamphlet points out the economic depression of the French speaking sections of the Canadian population (per-capita income two-thirds of the Canadian average), with unemployment higher and educational facilities inferior compared to the rest of Canada.

But it is one specific feature which marks out the problems of the Quebecois: that is LANGUAGE; all of the problems of employment, education, etc., are sharpened by the fact that the society imposing these problems is an English-speaking one.

Analysing the various nationalist parties in Quebec and the class and sectional interests they stand for, the pamphlet points out their impotence and then goes on to isolate as the only force which can take Quebec forward: the Quebecois working class, which is strong, militant and organised.

On the question of separatism itself, the pamphlet restates the socialist principle that Quebec should have the right to self-determination, but points out that the demand for separation is almost solely restricted to the petit-bourgeoisie and that its implementation would not advance the interests of the workers in any way.

The real perspective for French Canadian workers is that of building a Labour Party, which, basing itself on their militancy and strength, could go forward to fight for their demands: for a better standard of life and for the right to their own language and culture. However, the pamphlet proffers no illusions that policies similar to the present reformist ones of the New Democratic Party, in English speaking Canada, could achieve anything. The only path for a Labour Party would be the revolutionary one of breaking the tentacles of the English-speaking monopolies, which are at present strangling the life, cultural and economic, of French Canada.

An excellent little pamphlet which, in its economy of language, clear presentation of ideas, and bold design puts much of the British left's literature to shame. Vive le LSA/LSO!

* VIVE LE QUEBEC LIBRE, Vanguard Publications, Toronto, Canada, available from Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1., 2/- p.p.

SOCIALIST WOMEN'S COMMITTEE JOURNAL TO BE LAUNCHED

The immediate past period has brought forward a number of demonstrations on issues involving women; the Ford strike over Equal Pay, the nurses at the House of Commons, the AEF negotiations, the 800 women in Manchester & Coventry over equal bonuses, the Irish sewing machinists demonstration for civil rights.

In October the National Joint Action Campaign for Women's Equal Rights (NJACWER) was established. Branches are being started all over the country. This organisation is planning a mass national demonstration for spring and is having building activities towards it. All this and more contribute to a growing development of militancy of this one third of the working class.

We feel that it is necessary to take advantage of the increased interest and activity around women's demands in industry and in the home, to establish a journal on this question. This journal will, we hope, bring socialist demands to this movement. We want to encourage women to use their power to further themselves and the cause of the working class as a whole. The journal will be radical, agitational, militant.

WHAT WE NEED

MONEY! We are going to produce this bulletin on an irregular basis when the situation warrants it, approximately every 2 months. It will be duplicated with a printed cover and will sell for sixpence. Financial backing will ensure you get your copy and that it will come out more frequently.

WRITERS! We want people who can write about things they know and/or who will send us useful articles for reprinting or even little articles that illustrate ideas, i.e. during the debate on the Save the Argyles petition, a Labour MP asked "How many women, children, and foreign tourists have signed it?" -

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Nottingham.

Letter - demo on equal rights

The national council of NJACWER has set a date for a mass demonstration on Equal Rights - May 18 in Trafalgar Square. There is some element of doubt about this because of the ruling that Trafalgar Square cannot be booked more than three months in advance. However we can go ahead on the basis of a week's variation. NJACWER has also called for local demonstrations in the preceding week including a poster parade down Oxford Street on Saturday. Buttons are being prepared.

Invited speakers include Jack Jones, Hugh Scanlon, Audrey Wise, Rose Boland, Christopher Norwood, M.P., Baroness Summerskill and others. This can be one of the most important manifestations of working class mood for years; I hope that readers will involve themselves. In order to find the local organiser in your area, contact Mr. F. Blake, Rainham Road, Rainham, Essex. RMB 7RL.

A five point working charter has been adopted.

1. To demand the removal of sex discrimination against women in employment, education, social and public life.
2. To demand the inclusion of equal pay for work of equal value in all agreements between employers and Trade Unions.
3. To demand the members of Parliament to enforce legal rights for women through Parliament in 1969.
4. To demand that the T.U.C. leads and co-ordinates a national action campaign for equal pay and opportunities in industry in accordance with their decision at the 1968 conference.
5. To demand immediate Government ratification of the I.L.O. Convention 100.

Yours truly
Antonia Gorton,
Nottingham.

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