

The Red Mole

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VIETNAM:

**UNITED ACTION BY
CHINA AND THE
SOVIET UNION
COUPLED WITH
WORLD WIDE
SOLIDARITY CAN
DEFEAT NIXON'S
BLOCKADE**



IMG/Spartacus League:

**PUBLIC RALLY IN
SOLIDARITY WITH VIETNAM**

Sat 27th May Conway Hall 7.30 pm

Red Mole

THE VIETNAMESE OFFENSIVE, NIXON'S BLOCKADE AND OUR TASKS

The extent to which the mass media both here and in the United States is controlled by the bourgeoisie can be judged by the fact that the recent offensive launched by the liberation forces in Southern Vietnam has been carefully characterised as an "invasion" by North Vietnam. The intended purpose of this piece of manipulation is to obscure the cause of the conflict (i.e. the division of Vietnam by imperialism) and to make people forget that it is the United States which is the aggressor. It is U.S. troops which invaded Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. It is the U.S. planes which drop bombs on Indo-China and it is the U.S. Navy which shells North Vietnamese ports today.

For Nixon therefore to argue that it is the North Vietnamese "invasion" which has forced him to escalate the war is to show complete contempt for the American people who have made it clear on many occasions that they want all U.S. troops and bombers pulled out of Indo-China. The real reasons for the escalation were given by Nixon himself in the speech announcing the blockading of North Vietnamese ports:

"... North Vietnam has met each of these offers with insolence and insult. They have flatly and arrogantly refused to negotiate an end to the war and bring peace. Their answer to every peace offer we have made has been to escalate the war. In the two weeks alone since I offered to resume negotiations, Hanoi has launched three new offensives."

In other words the North Vietnamese and the NLF refused to accept any settlement which did not guarantee a complete withdrawal of U.S. forces. Given the result of the Geneva Conference in 1954 this attitude is hardly surprising. Another reason was that South Vietnam had to be saved from Communism and "An American defeat in Vietnam would encourage this kind of aggression all over the world."

In plain language this means: a Vietnamese victory in the South would be a big boost to the socialist revolution in other parts of the

world. This is correct, but hardly a new factor in the situation. Nixon's decision to escalate the war reflects an extremely serious division inside the American ruling class, it appears as though the section which believed that a withdrawal would be less counter-productive than a continued military struggle has, temporarily, lost the fight. Nixon has staked his entire future on the blockade of Vietnam being successful. We are not concerned with the future of Nixon or any other bourgeois politician, but rather with the blows which could be inflicted on U.S. imperialism and its allies. A continued offensive in the South coupled with international action to defeat the blockade would represent the most serious direct defeat that U.S. imperialism has suffered in its entire history. In this fact lies the importance of the struggle which the Vietnamese comrades are waging today. It is a struggle whose success would be of immense help to the struggles of the working class in both Europe and America, not to mention Asia, Africa, and Latin America. That is why we have consistently maintained that Indo-China represents the highest point of the international class struggle against the bourgeoisie. It is obvious that the Vietnamese will need help if they are to succeed in breaking the blockade.

WHAT MOSCOW AND PEKING COULD DO TO HELP DEFEAT U.S. IMPERIALISM

For the last seven years the Vietnamese have been appealing to their two major allies to set up a common front against imperialism. In his *Testament* Ho Chi Minh issued a similar appeal, but with no effect. By their sectarianism the Chinese have consistently rejected such appeals and, indeed, only a few months ago were branding "Soviet social-imperialism" as the main threat to peace in Asia. This bizarre attitude let the Soviet bureaucracy off the hook and enabled them to put pressure on the Vietnamese to come to terms with imperialism (regardless of what the latter entailed). To their credit the Vietnamese resisted all pressures and continued the struggle which has only recently culmi-

nated in the virtual collapse of the Thieu puppet regime and compelled Nixon to escalate the war in a last desperate bid to prevent total defeat.

Given the present situation it is clear that united actions by Peking and Moscow could make the blockade redundant. Even if we accept the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy is too timid to allow its air force or navy to be used directly to help the Vietnamese, the least that can be expected is that they will mount a massive airlift to keep the North Vietnamese supplied with the latest military equipment (some of which—the rocket bazookas—have been used with good effect in the latest offensive). The easiest route would be via China (this includes rail transport as well) and hence the collaboration of the Chinese would be essential, particularly if rail tracks in Vietnam were subjected to heavy bombings. This is, of course, the most limited of actions and it remains to be seen what Peking and Moscow will do. After all it was not so long ago that the same TV screens which showed Nixon announcing the blockade showed him in Peking with Mao Tse Tung and Chou en Lai exchanging banalities about world peace. It also remains to be seen whether his visit to Moscow will still take place as scheduled or whether the bureaucrats will realise that to do so would be to lend substance to the rumour that the Soviet Union was forewarned by Kissinger of the blockade. But even if Moscow and Peking decide to act it will not be enough. What is also needed is massive solidarity actions in Western Europe and more importantly in the United States itself. The latter could, of course, have a decisive impact.

IN BRITAIN

We will not go into detail as to why the solidarity movement in this country collapsed soon after the gigantic protest of October 1968. Whereas in the rest of Western Europe tens of thousands of militants came out on the streets last month in solidarity with Indo-China, in Britain action was restricted to a puny meeting organised by the IMG in Lon-

don and a slightly larger demonstration in Glasgow. The reason for this is the fact that while in most European countries (including Spain) the groups of the extreme left are dominated by revolutionary internationalists, in Britain there is a tremendous insularity and chauvinism even in the ranks of the revolutionary movement. This was rationalised by some groups arguing that marches, demonstrations on anti-imperialist issues were pointless and the only way the Vietnamese could be helped was by working towards a revolution in Britain: i.e. doing nothing. This coupled with a general belief that Nixon was ending the war because of the pressures at home made Vietnam seem irrelevant to many revolutionaries.

Today the Vietnamese offensive and Nixon's response has brought it home to everyone that the war still continues and that solidarity actions have to be organised. We would therefore urge all organisations to join in the actions which are being prepared and to help reconstruct a solidarity movement in this country. All possible aid has to be given to the Vietnamese militants to help them achieve either a military victory or a negotiated settlement. We stress the latter because contrary to widespread feeling amongst sections of the revolutionary left, peace talks and negotiations don't automatically lead to "sell-outs". If the U.S. can be got out via the negotiating table and even if this means the NLF accepting for tactical reasons a fake coalition government after Thieu's army has been smashed, it would be a better solution than a continuation of the military escalation which exacts a heavy toll in terms of lives of Vietnamese workers and peasants. The strategic aim is to get the Americans out of Indo-China and to destroy the puppet army they have trained. Any tactic which achieves this rapidly justifies itself.

British revolutionaries must begin to understand that it is the non-existence of a mass revolutionary International which has prevented meaningful action of solidarity (the French and Italian C.P.'s have refused to organise strikes for Vietnam or to engage in any but the most token of actions). The militants of the Fourth International have all over the world organised actions in recent months to stress the importance of the Vietnamese struggle—Paris and New York are but two powerful examples. The IMG as well as holding its own rally on May 27th, will be supporting the demonstration called by the BCPV for June 4th and urges other organisations to do the same, but the situation has to be watched closely as more immediate action may soon become necessary.

10th May 1972.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE N.I.R.C. IS A STRUGGLE AGAINST THE STATE

We are witnessing a very educative spectacle at the moment. The TUC leaders are being crushed between the militancy of their members, and the determination of the ruling class to weaken the trade union movement as a whole through persistent use of the Industrial Relations Court. Thus we see Jack Jones's decision to accept the Court's ruling on the one hand, by shelling out the £55,000 and trying to persuade the Liverpool dockers to call off their blacking.

But on the other we see him putting down ultimatums to the TUC to pay a share of the fine on pain of not receiving any dues from the T&GWU. Thus we see the Railway leaders after accepting the cooling-off period forced back to negotiate firstly for a back-dating of the claim, secondly for a genuine 12½% increase (because the previous offer amounted to under 10% actual increase as it involved a consolidation into the basic pay of what had previously been bonus and piece rates). Nothing could better illustrate the dual nature of the bureaucracy than this constant vacillation.

In the present situation, such slogans as 'Throw the Tories Out!' may well express the anger of the working class. But they do not indicate any line of struggle for it or point out the main obstacles in the way. To vent one's rage simply on the Tories and the 'Tories' Act' only leaves the road open for the Trade Union leaders to cover up their inadequacy by posing for the way forward the election of a Labour Government— which would, they say, repeal the Act and even institute 'Socialist Policies'.

Now when we say that it is the crisis of British

Capitalism which forces the government to operate in the way it has we do not mean it as an empty phrase. A government may come to office with all sorts of intentions. But so long as it conducts itself within the framework of bourgeois democracy then it will be forced to adopt courses of action which permit the capitalists to maintain their exploitation of the working class.

Of course it was the Tories who brought in the Act, but it is the crisis of British capitalism which requires it. Moreover it is the State, the bourgeois state which operates the Act. The Court is a state institution and the state is just not a neutral body whose courts dispense something called pure justice. No, the state is controlled by the ruling class—the bourgeoisie. It comes down hard on the T&GWU and the Railways unions because the ruling class needs this policy. But the Labour Party has always operated within the confines of bourgeois democracy; it has never challenged any of the institutions (Parliament, the Law etc.) which embody that ideology. And it is for this reason that the Party is incapable of fighting in the interests of the working class, for proletarian democracy.

For that is what it is all about! The 'Democracy' of the bourgeoisie is the freedom it gives to all other classes to intervene in politics only on its own terms. The limitations to these terms are the laws of its state. Is it 'democracy' when the whole legal structure is designed to protect the private property and vital interests of a few against the vast majority? Of course, everyone is 'free' to use the courts.

But does any worker fighting for his interests as a worker against an employer dream that the Industrial Relations Court would settle in his favour? Of course not!

The court is an attempt to dictate to the workers how to conduct their struggle against the employers. But it itself is the employers' court and only they will leap to exercise the 'right' and 'freedom' to use it.

We must counterpose to this law another law—the law which protects and defends the interests of the mass of workers against those who exploit them. This law is not to be found in the leather tomes of the Inns of Court. It will be legislated by the workers themselves while fighting to defend and enlarge their interests. The Liverpool dockers, before they were forced to stop the blacking, began this legislation by continuing their action in direct defiance of the 'law of the land'. Only by extending and deepening their fight can the working class take up the challenge to its own organisations and living standards and begin to tread the road that leads to workers' power. The most treacherous leadership to be fought against will be the trade union leaders though differentiation is and will occur among them too—witness the split vote on whether to recall the TUC. The idea that the Labour Party would fight somehow for the interests of the working class is the most pernicious red-herring which will be dragged across the correct road for the workers to struggle on.

It is with all this in mind that we can see the importance of the June 10 Conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade

Unions. The LCDTU has already shown its ability to bring out hundreds of thousands of trade unionists against the Industrial Relations Bill. Only it has the organising capacity to lead a real struggle against the Act. If it does the implications for the Communist Party are clear. It would mean a break with the long-standing commitment to work with the 'left' trade union leaders and to work for an alliance with the Labour Party 'lefts'. Instead it would find itself organising a rank and file movement against such leaders. If the Communist Party is prepared to lead a struggle with anti-capitalist aims and methods then the LCDTU may become an organisation of hundreds of thousands of workers. If it fails to make this choice, if it too contents itself on June 10 with platitudes against the Tories and a sham fight then the LCDTU becomes a diversion and a trap for militants.

It is important that revolutionary trade union militants see the June 10 conference as a focus for their activities and ensure their representation there. It is equally important that the LCDTU really projects itself as an ongoing, permanent organisation and encourages the formation of branches up and down the country. But lastly, it is essential if June 10 is to mean anything at all, that the LCDTU breaks with its manipulative practices and ensures that the conference becomes a real forum in which a line of struggle for the working class can begin to be hammered out in free and open debate. Those who, today, are afraid of revolutionary ideas will not be leading the working class in the turbulent struggles to come. They will be by-passed.

BUILDING WORKERS' CHARTER CONFERENCE

The recent Third Annual Conference of the Charter reflected the developments within the building unions outlined in *The Red Mole 40*, i.e. the growth of militancy at rank and file and official levels. The number of delegates, 865 (from UCATT and TGWU plus several from ETU and CEU), did not fall far short of the organisers' call for a thousand. Charter groups have been formed in many new areas—N. Wales, Preston, Essex—and the circulation of the paper now stands at 10,000. In a number of areas, particularly Birmingham, the campaign against "lump" labour grows steadily.

All these gains are based upon the notion that militancy pays. Militancy is the catchword of the Charter's success, and it is this militancy which can unite "left" national and regional officials and the rank and file without any open signs of conflict. Both were in complete unity on all resolutions.

WAGE NEGOTIATIONS

On the present wage negotiations, the conference voted: (1) for the principle of 'reference back' to members for decision; (2) to reject any new wages structure based on job evaluation and grading; (3) to 'deplore' any widening of the differential; (4) to reject the employers' minimum earnings level idea; (5) for wage agreements for 12 months duration only.

To support the official claim of £30 for 35 hours, conference's policy was: (1) for the working towards a one-day national stoppage and demonstration; (2) to push through the regional councils for an official policy of strikes on selective sites; (3) an official overtime ban.

This militant programme comes at a crucial point in the national wage negotiations. The old UCATT bureaucracy is fully aware of the Charter's growth and influence, and also of its own weakness. UCATT (along with TGWU and ETU) has rejected the employers' latest offer of approximately 10 per cent (£2.40 for craftsmen and £2 for labourers—the employers have dropped the idea of a minimum earnings level)—an unprecedented step for any building union. Such a stand confirms the trends pointed out in *The Red Mole 40*. The UCATT bureaucracy must now adopt some show of militancy to accommodate its membership. But the bureaucracy is caught between two stools. Whatever it does, the Charter (and its "left" bureaucrats) will gain. If they accept a management offer, it will certainly be below 12 per cent—a long way off £30 for 35 hours. If they don't settle, then the

only viable alternative is the strategy of Charter. In either event, even if selective strikes, overtime bans and one day stoppages are unsuccessful, Charter's hand is strengthened. The old bureaucratic days are numbered.

T.U.C. AND LABOUR PARTY

The other main concern of the conference centred around the Industrial Relations Act and the T.U.C. Faced with the T.U.C.'s about face over the N.I.R.C. a resolution (following closely the AUEW line) was passed calling on the T.U.C.,

(1) to stand firm over non-co-operation with the N.I.R.C., and

(2) to call a conference to reaffirm its opposition to the I.R.A. The resolution also demanded that the T.U.C. "call a national strike to defeat the Tory Government and bring about a General Election." Speakers from the floor talking on this topic all ended on the same theme—a Labour Government with socialist policies. This was a natural continuation of the militancy that characterises the Charter. Bureaucrats and rank and filers all lined up behind the slogan. As has been pointed out before in *The Red Mole*, such a slogan stems from a Social-Democratic approach to the problems involved. However, it would be wrong to play up this point. To many militants there, this slogan was something to tack on the end of anti-Tory speeches (this does not mean they are "soft" on the Labour Party). Their experiences and present struggles lead them in practice to work in their unions as the immediate defence. Despite all the talk of Labour with socialist policies, the union is the only consistent weapon they know.

NEW MANIFESTO

With this in mind, IMG and non-IMG militants in the building trade drafted a manifesto presenting practical proposals to be added to and to fill out the Charter's twelve demands. These proposals consisted of demands introducing control at site level through a site committee. The manifesto is reproduced in full here.

Any building worker interested in the Manifesto can obtain further details from the following address:

c/o Pat Hickey
69 Ulleswater Road
LANCASTER, Lancs.
Tel. 0524-64118.

MANIFESTO

Today many thousands of workers are using a new weapon in their struggle for more wages, better conditions and the right to work. "Occupations", starting with U.C.S. and Plesseys, have had a big impact on the British labour movement in a short time. By "taking over" work places and factories, workers are showing that they do not accept the right of the bosses in all things. By challenging these "rights" militant workers raise many important issues. If trade unionists can only protect their basic interests by preventing the owners controlling what they own, they are opposing the way society is run as well as the individual management. But it is obviously true that workers could not run one site or factory in competition with private industry. They would be squeezed out of business. Workers organisations must have political power over the whole state before workers could control industry.

What the occupations have shown is the day-to-day importance of workers control for militants. The only way that even the "right to work" is taken out of the hands of the owners is by the struggle on the site or shop-floor for the right of Union control over hiring and firing. These sorts of demands are therefore amongst the most important demands that militants can raise. They do not accept any responsibility for the condition of the industry (it is not the workers who run or profit from it). Rather they say "Because you run our industry badly, we do not accept that we should pay. And therefore we want as many areas as possible that affect the workers taken out of your hands."

Workers in the building trade face big problems. Not least the winning of a living wage. It is always difficult to organise sites and militants face loss of job, black-lists and, with the new act, legalised "lump". It is all the more essential therefore that ways of organising on sites are found so that militants are protected and most effective.

The Charter has done a good job so far. All of the 12 demands are important to win for the building trade worker. However, it is time for us to look into new demands and ways of organising. These demands might be incorporated in Charter's programme.

The site committee. Because of the difficulties of organising in the building trade, the first aim should be to set up a site committee. This would represent most of the trades, and the labourers on the site. Some sites already have these bodies acting as works committees. The committee would give easier access to any non-union labour on the site, right at the beginning. Also the committees are a good way of overcoming the traditional splits between trades, and trades and labourers at a site level.

Demands. As the building industry becomes more "rationalised" (levelling of conditions, wage rates, cutting the labour force), it is important to have all militants pulling in the same direction. (Of course, local conditions will vary greatly.) The following demands could "fill out" the Charter's programme, and raise the issues of control on sites.

- Right of hiring and firing. Where possible the site committee must ensure that the contractor does not pick his men. At the very least "mutuality" must be established on recruitment and job-loss.
- No "flexibility". The only way to protect jobs is to ensure that the boss has no right to shift labour around.
- Control over safety. At the moment this rests with a local authority safety officer. The site committee, representing the people who work in the site conditions, must obviously control this.
- Right to veto bonus arrangements and wage structures. Obviously such a demand could only be achieved on a very few sites. But we must aim for this power to be held by the site committee in the best long term interests of the workers.

Conclusions. Sooner or later the industry will be largely decasualised. We have to begin to protect ourselves now, and learn from the lessons of the dockers and the Devlin Report (20,000 less men in three years). The best way to protect our interests is to build the site committees in the campaign to make the national unions effective at a grass-roots. The campaign to democratise the unions would start with regular site meetings, and the right of immediate recall on any member of the site committee.

DOCKS DISPUTE SPREADS TO LONDON

The blacking of companies which employ non-docks labour to pack containers started in Liverpool, but has now spread nationally. In the London enclosed docks both a firm blacked in Liverpool and a couple of local companies have been turned back. Since the dispute began the NIRC has intervened and the T&G has taken the first tentative steps towards a national stoppage. This could well be a decisive struggle in the coming period. Why have the men taken such a militant line and why has an unofficial leadership become prominent again?

The scope of the problem posed by containerisation is easily grasped when a few examples of its consequences are given. The third largest of the London Dock employers, Southern Stevedores, have announced their intention to close. If this closure takes place the 1,250 men currently employed by them are to be returned to the unattached register. The closure will more than double the number of men who don't work for any permanent employer, but are held on the fall back money of £20 a week until they can be re-allocated to a company for regular employment.

The reason for the closure of the company is, supposedly, the containerisation of the Far East trade and the consequent removal of the Glen lines from the Royal Group to pre-packed container berths at Southampton. But the leader of the tally clerks at South-erns, George Pike, suggests that the explanation is only a half-truth. The company has other less regular work and could have competed for more. This was probably the original intention of the Southern Board who had talked of returning only a few dozen men to the register during the four weeks before. Why the sudden increase? Pike thinks the increase in resistance to the growth of the register is the main cause of the decision to close. The unattached register had grown from about 300 last summer to about 700 in January. By this summer it is calculated that it could be at least 1,500. In addition, the number of men who though employed, were not working, averaged 2,000 last year. The growth of the register has been due to the companies getting rid of this surplus. Instead of continuing to lay off men from every company and generalising the discontent, port employers seem to have decided that the best course is to cut out a single company of the right size. Southern is the right size. Scuttions and the PLA are too large and the others are much too small. This account is made more plausible by the financial structure of the employers. These companies tend to be fronts for common investment amongst the large shipping companies such as P&O or Fred Olsens. There is no competition in Dockland.

Prior to the move to close Southern, several companies had sent or applied to send men back to the unattached. Most of the returns were disputed. Only in the wharfs, where the companies tend to be closing down, did the men go quietly. Last October, 49 tally clerks working in the enclosed Dock fought the return to the unattached. Since then there have been several disputes or negotiations ending with the attempt to stop Smith Coggins from returning 42 men. Throughout this period the men have been growing increasingly militant and have responded to the calls of the unofficial stewards committee for one day strikes. This committee, which is led by members of the old Liaison Committee, has regained much of the prestige the unofficial leadership had in the pre-Devlin period. In this situation the decision by the employers to shut Southern and to commute the most recent of the other redundancies looks like being too late. The stewards' actions appear to have gingered some response from the T&G.

The degree of bitterness felt by the men is understandable. A major re-organisation of the industry has taken place since the late 60s. The outline of the scheme is set out in the Devlin report on the ports. Prior to the re-organisation, the majority of dockers were part of the pool, or reservoir of port workers from which the employers could draw for specific jobs. The dockers were normally paid piece-rate. The dockworkers exchanged productivity concessions and modernisation agreements for the security of a permanent job and guaranteed income. This whole re-organisation was to enable the use of more advanced handling techniques. Some fall in

the number of jobs was expected. The numbers fell from 63,000 nationally in 1966 to 52,000 in 1970. By the time Phase Two of the Devlin agreement was implemented job security should have existed as that was the carrot which had encouraged many dockers to support the proposals. But even after the second phase jobs were not secure despite such supposed guarantees as: "Decasualisation will not lead to the discharge of men from the industry either initially or as a result of increased efficiency. Any necessary reduction in the labour force will be effected by natural wastage or by controlled recruitment." (Devlin Report, para 133, page 50)

The dockers are annoyed about the way the unattached register has been changed. According to Tom Roffey of the T&G, the register was never intended as a substitute for the old pool, but for disciplinary cases.

THE T&G

In pursuit of the claim for longer holidays, fall back pay equal to the average earnings in the dock, and the right to all the work normally done by registered dockers, the T&G have decided to threaten a national strike to start at the beginning of June. This reflects a move by the union to reassert their authority in the face of a threat posed by the unofficial National Shop Stewards Committee. This committee has been leading the blacking campaign. To understand why this organisation has come to the fore it is necessary to look at the role the official structure has played in these disputes.

The National Docks Group (official) have a much deeper commitment to rationalisation than to halting job loss. A manning surplus has been predictable for some time. The Bristow Inquiry which met some two and a half years ago prepared a report clearly outlining the possible scope of the present crisis. Tim O'Leary, the national docks secretary of the T&G, admitted as much when he said that, "a lot of unrest could have been avoided if the industry in general had taken a firmer grip two or three years ago" (*The Port*). It is entirely typical of O'Leary to mention unrest now, but to have done little about the coming surplus during the construction of the first inland container terminals.

During the dispute of the tally clerks last October the leader, George Pike, recently feted in *The Port* as a consistent exponent of the official line, fought the dispute on the basis of no return to the unattached, and for voluntary redundancies. Again the key task of fighting job redundancies had been missed despite the high unemployment. The series of nine suggested demands put out by the National Docks Group last January made no mention of banning job redundancies, though it did include a suggestion for work sharing along with a ban on future productivity deals. It also suggested the unsatisfactory "right/obligation of men to follow identifiable cargo from port to port". This last is capped only by Jack Jones, who said in an article on the redundancies in the docks (*The Port*, 4 May): "Agreement will not always be easy - but it can be done. But it has to be done by agreement, not compulsion. It has to be carried through on the basis of efforts made by men who know the docks, and who know the dockers - not by remote courts. Legal threats can have the effect of making people more determined, not less - in creating a rigid situation, where what is needed is flexibility."

Which, translated rather freely, says "I can do a better job for the bourgeoisie than the courts can, and that is what is needed".

E. Waring

A new pamphlet on the docks is available (price 3p) from East London IMG, c/o 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

MIKE COOLEY

Extracts from his speech to the recent conference of the AUEW/Technical and Supervisory Section

Although we are but a small part of the trade union movement and have in reality a relatively low strike power, our policies far outweigh our numerical and industrial strength. They do so because our policies over the past eight years have been based upon a clear, honest and principled commitment to advance the interests of our members and the class to which they belong.

There is therefore upon all of you this week the great historical responsibility of ensuring that the policies which we forged during the last few years are strengthened and extended at this critical stage in our movement's history. I am confident that throughout this conference the voice of principle will speak out clearly and without equivocation to echo in the corners of reaction, wherever they may lurk or in whatever guise they appear.

AMALGAMATION

Throughout 1971 we have seen the first real concrete steps to consolidate the amalgamation of our union. There now exists the basis for that ideal which engineering workers have long sought, one great union for all those who work in the engineering industry.

I now regard it as both a political and industrial act to work vigorously for the building of this great union. I am not talking about gaining an increase in membership at the expense of principle and policy. I despise those in our trade union movement who are now straining at the leash to become State appendages and go to the NIRC to gain agency shops and bargaining units in order to scavenge a few more members.

TECHNOLOGY

As the union catering for technical workers in the engineering industry our members, more than any other, see day in day out the appalling mis-use of technology.

Our members long to be able to use their great skill and ability to design and produce equipment which would provide the material basis for a fuller, more dignified form of existence. Yet in our profit-mad society such equipment is used to subordinate man to the machine and reduce him to the level of a mere machine-appendage. In order to maximise their profits the employers will seek to exploit this equipment 24 hours a day, demanding systematic overtime or three-shift working. Indeed it now seems you are breaking the law if you refuse. This equipment is used to create a frantic work tempo for some whilst driving others, in particular older men, into the dole queues. It is scandalous that with one million out of work systematic overtime continues and it's high time the trade union movement considered a national overtime ban.

Such equipment now makes possible, indeed it makes necessary, a 35-hour week for all workers, and longer holidays. Yet the unemployment grows, and we have the hypocritical bellicose statements of some so-called trade union leaders, in the cosy sanctity of the TUC at some seaside resort, who deplore unemployment whilst in reality they have spent the last three or four years peddling productivity deals which have given direct rise to this present unemployment.

INTERNATIONAL

At an international level we have seen throughout the year a great development in the national

liberation movement, and the struggle of oppressed people all over the world in asserting their rights to run their countries in their own interests. In Vietnam we have seen the greatest imperialist power in the world, the United States, fought to a complete standstill. During the last few weeks we have seen the liberation forces deal sledge hammer blows to the puppet Saigon government. We have supported the struggle of oppressed people in every place, recognising that any setback that the forces of imperialism experience is also a blow for our freedom in this country.

As we condemn the role of imperialism throughout the world we must also condemn its role in Northern Ireland. I hope that during the coming year all Irish workers, whether they live North or South, be Protestant or Catholic, will recognise that their interests are diametrically opposed to that of British imperialism and its agents in Ireland, and that together they will begin to forge the sort of United Ireland which was conceived by James Connolly when he spoke about a Workers' Republic.

CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

With all of these monumental events taking place about us it is clear to me that this Conference is going to be one of the most critical in our history. Together with the rest of the trade union movement we now stand at a great historical crossroads. The well worn road of economism and reformism, which in the past we travelled, will no longer provide an escape route. The system in which we live is in such dire crisis that it no longer has in it the flexibility of even tolerating a so-called free trade union movement. The Government and State makes its position brutally clear. Either we become registered State agencies, docile tools of the employers and act as industrial policemen in curbing our own members by conforming to the Industrial Relations Act, or we will be breaking the law, will be fined and may even be imprisoned.

A sustained effort is now being made to turn our trade union movement into a form of Falangist type organisation. It is not being alarmist to say that some of the measures now being taken move us dangerously close to the Corporate State. As this happens we have the pathetic bleating of the Labour-ites, such as Reg Prentice, advising us not to break the law. Yet, right from the beginning, the President of our Union, Hugh Scanlon, made it clear that to defeat this Act and to abide by the TUC policy would mean breaking the law. He said at Croydon "recommendation 4 deals with the Bridlington principles and moreover, with our determination to maintain traditional trade union organisation, must mean defiance of the law if this Bill becomes an Act". Well, it is an Act and we should defy the law. We should support Hugh Scanlon and any others who defy it. Now that the first real shots have been fired by the State we witness the appalling spinelessness of most of the TUC so-called leaders. We are told that we must go to the NIRC to defend ourselves but should not initiate cases. As this pattern of betrayal continues we will be told that we should not be in the negative position of defending ourselves in cases selected by the employers. Gradually, it will be suggested that we should send some good cases in order that we can defend our organisation.

The next degeneration will be to say that, since we go to the courts, it is important that we have

representatives sitting on them who will articulate our demands. We will then have arrived at a position of total collaboration with the State in suppressing, through these courts, the aspirations of our own members. We are frequently told how fortunate we are in Britain that we have one united TUC. This is contrasted with the unfortunate situation in France where they have three trade union centres. Yet in France, they can call a General Strike in 24 hours—that is not bad disunity. If having in this country a united trade union movement means that we all work together to dig a grave for free trade unionism, through these courts, then I do not believe that our Union should be a part of this. But the rot could still be stopped if the Congress were recalled and the whole of the trade union movement mobilised to fight for the existing Congress policy of complete non-co-operation with the Act. The rights of the trade union movement were never established in courts but by using our industrial strength, where necessary in defiance of the law.

Let us then be clear about the law in this country. We as trade unions exist in Britain in spite of the law, and not because of it. The law has always operated against the interests of working people and for the protection of private property. It is not all that long ago since their laws allowed them to put kids of 7 and 8 down the mines, even if they'd be coughing up their lungs nine months afterwards. There is nothing moral or just or sacrosanct about the law. Where there are bad laws we have a responsibility to break them.

MINERS

During the coming months it is going to be imperative that the role of the trade union movement stands up, is counted and refuses to be intimidated. Yet when a section did stand up and fight and win, and the miners did just that, the TUC could not get round quick enough to bail the Government out by starting talks on a wages policy and threshold agreements. It was tea and biscuits at Downing Street as usual, instead of consolidating the miners' victory and encouraging other sections to deal shattering blows and present this Government, and those whom it represents, with their Waterloo.

Heath expressed his alarm that the elected parliament was being by-passed, as well he might. For the miners did more in those six weeks to end the Government's incomes' norm than all the claptrap in Parliament and all the protest delegations that went up there during the last two years. Heath says this is not in the public interest. Well what public is he talking about? Workers and their families constitute about 48 of the 56 million people in this country. If that's not the public then I don't know what is.

There is now growing throughout this country a new realisation that direct action is the way to get things done. This new militancy rang through the mines. It now rings through the railways, engineering workshops and even airlines. Its echoes ripple as far as Universities and teachers' staff rooms.

This militancy is to be welcomed and encouraged, but its limitations should be understood. Industrial militancy can at the best only protect our members from the worst excesses of the system and heighten the contradictions within it. Real progress in Britain now depends on the emergence of a political force which will fearlessly project the aspirations of ordi-

nary people. Wider sections of the community are now beginning to recognise the need for such a force. But one of the ways to diffuse and end this development will be to administer that old political anaesthetic social democracy.

LABOUR GOVERNMENT

We are now being told that the movement has gone far enough, and what we need to do is wait until we get the return of a Labour Government, committed to repeal the Industrial Relations Act and save us from the Common Market. We will be told that all we've got to do is to return a Labour Government dedicated to socialism. Dedicated, I might add, for the seventh time. We have had six Labour administrations, and each one of them have proved themselves to be as effective and able an administrator of the system as the Tories have done.

Yet, we are still told that they are our friends and they simply made a mistake. Well if one of my friends kicks me in the teeth once I accept that perhaps he made a mistake. If he kicks me in the teeth twice then I regard him as being dangerously confused. But if he kicks me in the teeth six times, then I take the message. And our members should take the message. Trust not Heath or Wilson, but yourself, and with that confidence in yourself begin to generate that political force in Britain which will cater for your interests and that of your class.

Part of the attack they are now mounting upon us is to make us feel confused, disunited and weak. Well it's not us who are weak. It is their bankrupt system which is weak. All over the world ordinary people are realising the universal truth, that the great only appear great when you are on your knees. They are standing up and have been counted, and so should we. And in the first instance we have an enormous economic power with which to do so.

The mineworkers demonstrated what that power means in real terms. At the end of that dispute the arrogant John Davies was reduced to a pathetic spectacle on television with a little candle in front of him, because the mineworkers had said there would be no electrical power. And if 300,000 miners in a declining industry can do that what could the great engineering and transport unions do. We have enormous economic power, if we would but use it. Those who pose themselves as our permanent masters are in reality nothing without us. All the paper money of Arnold Weinstock, Donald Stokes and Paul Chambers is meaningless, for you cannot eat pound notes, you cannot drive around in them, and you cannot live in them. They only have a meaning when people like you and I go into factories and produce the real wealth that that paper money represents. They are nothing without us, and if they all disappeared tomorrow there would still be designers designing the finest equipment in the world. There would still be skilled workers building it, and other workers operating it. The miners would still dig coal, the bricklayers would still build houses, the teachers would still teach. This is the great economic power that we have got. If that great power is led by a conscious political organisation which points the real way forward for all victims of the system then nothing can prevent us moving forward to create that sort of society in Britain which will cherish all its people equally, and will end the unemployment, squalor and the suffering now borne by us to maximise profits for the few.

ENGINEERS' PAY CLAIM

The fight for the engineers' pay claim in Manchester is hardening up. Since the last report in *The Red Mole* there have been a number of settlements, some good, some not so good. Over twenty factories are still occupied, and in many cases it looks as if there is still a long fight ahead.

There are at least two factories where in recognition of this, the question of locking out management is being seriously discussed. Clearly, coming between the railway union leaders' climb-down and the impending confrontation in the docks, the widespread adoption of such a tactic could have very favourable repercussions in other disputes. So far the local union leadership has tended to discourage locking management out, but the fact that management and scabs are getting more vicious is encouraging still more militant tactics. In two incidents, at Edmestons, Eccles, and Glynweds,

Audenshaw, pickets have been injured by vehicles breaking through picket lines.

Another weakness of the way the dispute is being fought is also being felt: secrecy. In a number of cases, including one place that went back, the men have been deprived by the policy of the district of any information as to what good settlements have been made. All they have heard is rumours of bad ones.

Despite what has been done by such bodies as the Gorton and Openshaw Joint Shop Stewards Liaison Committee, the lack of diffusion of information remains a serious weakness. All in all the situation in Manchester is at a stalemate, with a hardening of positions on both sides. Unless there is a breakthrough at a big combine, it is likely to stay that way for some time.

Manchester IMG



The situation in Manchester has reached stalemate with a hardening of positions on both sides



REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS IN CONFERENCE

The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Student Unions is to hold its third national conference in Birmingham on the 20/21 May at the University of Aston. This conference will be a much needed opportunity to re-evaluate its positions in the light of its eventful six months of existence

For any information about the conference, documents submitted, etc., contact the LCDSU c/o Students Union, Northern Poly, Holloway Road, London, N.1.

What will come across loud and clear with little doubt is the absolute correctness of its position in relation to the nature of the attack on political autonomy. Both that it is a political attack, which is now no longer contested by anyone; and that it was the State as a whole and not simply the backward elements in the Tory Party who had an interest in politically emasculating students and their organised centres of resistance. This springs from the most fundamental needs of capitalism, not some nasty conspiracy. This latter point is becoming daily more clear, even to the Communist Party dominated NUS leadership. As the College authorities in place after place go on the offensive, as they call in the help of the courts, LEAs, etc., their identity of interests with other elements of the State becomes ever more apparent. Every move of the college authorities is one more nail in the coffin of the idea that they are potential allies with whom it is possible to collaborate against the government. The other major question, that of the equation of public accountability and State accountability has yet to be sorted out. But doubtless the LCDSU will reaffirm its views and the reality will become clarified whenever the next Thatcher document appears.

AUTONOMY — ONE ISSUE AMONGST MANY?

Even so, it would be blind not to admit that the spontaneous orientation of the mass of students on this issue has subsided. It would be quite disastrous to draw from this, however, the conclusion that the autonomy issue should no longer be the central focus of the LCDSU. In the first place this would betray a completely impressionistic appraisal of the current situation. The absence of national student action on this issue is emphatically not because the attack was over after the

'shelving' of the Thatcher proposals. On the contrary, the attack in the colleges has actually intensified. What has happened is two-fold. On the one hand, the main organising focus, the NUS became incapable of offering a perspective for struggle in the colleges when the main focus of the attack was transferred from the government and the DES to the college authorities and the courts. What the NUS leadership was blind to was precisely the fundamental unity of interest among all these bodies. On the other hand, and partly as a consequence of this, the various local conflicts have either been defeated or settled into an uneasy compromise. Consequently, there has been no ongoing focus around which the LCDSU could agitate on all the various questions involved. This would have been the lever to force back the attention of the radicalised students to this all important struggle.

NECESSITY FOR A POLITICAL FOCUS

Even if this were not the case, the alternative answer would not be that of the LCDSU being the organisational centraliser of all the disparate struggles which occur over accommodation, James proposals, autonomy, political victimisations, course content and what have you. The history of student struggles in this country indicates that that could not occur because of the fragmentation in higher education.

The point is, that the particular way in which higher education in this country expanded, through the binary system and not through the growth of massive universities, has meant that any particular struggle has not got the social depth which similar struggles elsewhere have had. Both the small size of the average institution and the heterogeneous conditions to be found throughout the binary system has made the generalisation of issues originating in a single college well nigh impossible.

The characteristic scenario has not been the growth of a strong and combative student movement, but that of sporadic, often simultaneous but most often isolated struggles.

The exception to this was the VSC. Here, the issue of Vietnam did unite briefly all the radicalising forces. That they had radicalised on quite disparate issues, did not prevent Vietnam being the issue on which mobilisation was effected. Struggles in opposition to the Vietnam War were the peg on which all the specific oppressions were hung. The lesson of all this is that the issue on which people radicalise can be quite other than that on which they struggle. This general point has universal application, but it is a condition of existence of a student movement in this country. In particular, any strategy for mass intervention in the student field must rest on the ability to locate a political issue which is widespread and important enough to impinge on the consciousness of all students. It is this political focus which the autonomy issue provides. It is principally on the issue of autonomy that the LCDSU should fight to organise the forces in the colleges. This is what it has attempted to do in the past and should continue to do.

UNITED FRONT OR PERIPHERAL SECT?

Having decided on the main issue, is however, only part of the answer. It is the way that the forces are organised for this fight which is also important. What has characterised the LCDSU and has been one of the sources of its strength is the fact that it is a principled alliance. The LCDSU stands to unite all forces which wish to wage a genuine fight for union autonomy. The LCDSU has never insisted, however, that those who wish to struggle on this issue must adopt any of the specific analyses of the situation nor the programme of any of the groups or individuals involved. On the contrary, any group or individual, whatever its analysis or programme, can and, indeed, is urged to unite in the LCDSU. This stems from the following position.

Any demand is only meaningful in the framework of a particular analysis or programme.

As a matter of fact a particular demand will take on different meanings depending upon the context in which it is placed. For instance, one of the major demands that Lenin put forward during the Russian Revolution was for 'Peace'. What marked this off from the pacifist/liberal position, was precisely the fact that the Bolsheviks argued that peace could only be achieved through a social revolution. Similarly, the LCDSU has taken a position for full political autonomy. The IMG believes that this can only be achieved through a fight with the State. Other people may believe that it is the first of all necessary to bring down the Tory government. These differing analyses do not, however, prevent these forces from uniting to fight together on the question of autonomy. Practice will actually decide whose analysis is correct. This is the essence of a united front.

Any other method of going about the struggle would be self-defeating. A United Front can only exist on an objective basis, that is, on the basis of a large radicalised mass. If it were attempted to set up a united front on the basis of the specific analysis or programme of a particular organisation, this would imply two things. It would imply that one particular group was in a position to hegemonise the whole radicalised layer and consequently, that this layer in its entirety could and would join the particular organisation in question. What happens in practice, however, is that precisely because the radicalised elements are unwilling to commit themselves to one particular organisation, only a small number of the potential forces are actually organised for the struggle. In this situation, the united front becomes a peripheral sect.

In sum then, the LCDSU should provide an integrated set of demands for which radicalised students can fight. The LCDSU should not place any preconditions on this fight such as the acceptance of a particular analysis. The IMG believes that the following platform is such as to provide this and offers it for discussion at the coming national conference of the LCDSU.

J. R. Clynes

PROGRAMME

Programme put forward for discussion by LCDSU

1. The LCDSU is a rank and file grouping of socialists within the NUS which sees its task as fighting to transform the NUS into an organisation which can challenge the technocratic re-orientation in higher education and effectively intervene in the class struggle. We believe that the only other alternative for the NUS is to be integrated into the State.

2. Political Autonomy

The very possibility of the independent political actions of students is under attack from the State. This is forced on the bourgeoisie because of their need to remove any organised opposition in the colleges before they can go ahead forthrightly with their plans for higher education. This is not therefore to be understood simply as the actions of a backward looking Tory government but springing from the most fundamental needs of capitalism and is consequently a task for the State as a whole. Consequently the question of the political autonomy of students is the most acute problem facing students now and for the foreseeable future. This question is also one which has the most general reference to students and transcends to a large extent the binary transformation. The LCDSU therefore:

- Opposes all forms of political victimisation of staff and students in the colleges;
- Rejects totally any attempts by the courts to interfere with the political independence of students;
- Will fight for the removal of all restrictions on the political autonomy of student unions or any further attempts to impose such restrictions. No State accountability; no control of constitutions, finances or buildings by college authorities; no collaboration with college authorities or LEA's. None of these positions are negotiable.

3. Technocratic Reforms

The needs of British capitalism have dictated and

will continue to dictate an expansion and rationalisation of higher education and a more close adaptation to the needs of British industry. The transformations in higher education therefore at once bolster the power of capital and weaken the position of students. Because of this:

- The LCDSU is opposed to all attempts to get education on the cheap. It is opposed to any deterioration in staff student ratios, to any increase in the number of terms per year, to any restriction of choice of college to be attended, to any enforcement of particular courses of study.
- The LCDSU demands provision of adequate accommodation and maintenance grants tied to the cost of living and opposes absolutely any attempt to introduce loans.
- The LCDSU is opposed to the financing of any part of higher education by capitalist enterprises, all finance to be provided by the State. It is opposed to the direct tying of college courses and departments to any public or private enterprises within the capitalist system. No to the business college.
- It is opposed to the binary system or any other scheme which creates a hierarchy of qualifications within the higher educational system. For this reason it is opposed to the James proposals which create yet another division in the introduction of a 2-year diploma.

4. Democracy and Participation

(i) The idea that higher education can be progressively democratised rests on the premise that colleges are above the needs of social classes and that the content of education is neutral and universal. Education under capitalism is not provided for the free all round development of the potentialities of the working class. On the contrary, it exists at

once to ensure the reproduction of the exploitative relations of capitalism and to provide skilled manpower in all its forms for capitalist industry.

(ii) Participation is therefore not a way of ensuring a say in these transformations and will not in any way alter the fundamental course of the State. Representation and participation are simply a tactic of the state to ensure collaboration of students with the aims of the bourgeoisie, and we are therefore opposed to this.

(iii) At the same time we reject the strategy of the free university or anti-institution. Students are not the carriers of an alternative mode of production and cannot effect the transformation to socialism. In particular, there cannot be socialism in one college.

(iv) The LCDSU will, however, struggle for the power of veto over any attempt to transform higher education. This is not to be understood primarily, if at all, in institutional forms. It is the description of the sort of struggle needed to effect even temporarily the transformations which colleges undergo. It is an indication of the line of mass struggle directly counterposed to, on the one hand, representation, negotiation and pressure, and on the other, the utopian 'free' institution.

5. Student-Worker Solidarity

(i) The LCDSU recognises the need to mobilise all its forces to defeat the aims of the bourgeoisie in higher education. This battle will not be decided simply inside the colleges themselves; what is possible in the colleges will depend on the overall balance of forces in the class struggle. The LCDSU therefore sees its task as leading mass student actions in solidarity with the workers in struggle. In this way it will give its weight to the alteration of the balance of class forces which is to our advantage.

(ii) Moreover not being the carriers of an alternative mode of production, students are dependent on the action of the working class to smash those relations

of production which oppress them.

(iii) The LCDSU will see its special task as solidifying with the struggles of the teaching technical and domestic staff in the colleges themselves. It will seek unity in action on all issues.

6. Solidarity with all Anti-Imperialist Struggles

The LCDSU adopts a parallel position in relation to the international class struggle. It defends the right of all nations to self determination. In particular, on the most important struggle facing the British working class, that of the war in Ireland, it will fight in the NUS and local unions and organise local and national activities in support of the following points:

- The right of self determination for Ireland;
- Immediate withdrawal of all British troops;
- Immediate end of internment and release of all political prisoners;
- Unconditional but not uncritical support to both wings of the IRA in their struggle against the armed forces of British imperialism.

7. Democracy in the NUS

In order that these policies can be fought for in the most effective way possible and that policies when adopted are implemented, the LCDSU campaigns for the following changes in the NUS structure:

- Yearly election of all executive committee members and the right of immediate recall;
- Executive meetings to be open to all members of the union;
- All negotiated agreements to be ratified by whole membership with simple majority deciding;
- Complete overhaul of constitution and procedure to simplify debating and decision making;
- Election by Constituent Organisations of all delegates and observers to conference.

CHINA'S REVOL



The calm before the storm: Mao Tse Tung with

Attempts by the Chinese leaders to achieve peaceful co-existence with the US have been dealt a devastating blow by the magnificent military offensive launched by the Vietnamese. It is important, however, to relate the latter-day Chinese foreign policy to the internal deformations which were brought to a head during the phase of the "cultural revolution".

To analyze the role played by China in the current phase of international politics and the nature of its ruling group, we must take as our starting point the revolution that finished victoriously in the autumn of 1949. This victory of the Chinese revolution was the most important event since October 1917: it represented a qualitative leap with far reaching consequences for the Chinese people. It dealt at the same time a mighty blow against imperialism and brought about profound alterations in the relation of class forces on a world scale. No amount of criticism of the order built in China after the revolution, or of the politics of the ruling group, can alter this fundamental assessment.

The comparison that follows is not novel but still retains its force: it is sufficient to compare the development of China over the last twenty years with that of India to understand the scope of the problems tackled by the revolution. While China has fully freed itself of imperialist influence, in India the effects of imperialist interests, in particular those of Great Britain and the United States, are felt more clearly than ever before. While in China the basis of the previous ruling classes has been completely destroyed, India is torn apart by an extreme social polarization: the barbarism of caste society still rules the country. Although national tensions have not yet disappeared, China has virtually accomplished the task of national unification. India, on the other hand, totters under the sway of centrifugal forces that are likely to bring about its disintegration. China has no foreign debts while India's indebtedness is huge. While China has done away with its traditional poverty, India finds it impossible to carry out the most urgent economic reforms: the great majority of its population lives under the constant threat of starvation. The divergent development of the two countries is based on the qualitative difference of their social and economic orders. The Chinese experience, in spite of all its contradictions and limitations, testifies to the historical superiority of the socialist relations of production that are built in countries where the working class is in power, over the capitalist relations pertaining to bourgeois class rule.

The ultimately victorious revolutionary war of twenty years duration provoked a justified interest and came to serve as a source of inspiration for other struggles. China became, particularly in Asia, a powerful focus of attraction and a major anti-imperialist power. Even the neighbouring bourgeoisies, for a certain period, practised a policy of friendly relations with China—something that China welcomed and even encouraged, occasionally at great cost to itself. Chinese influence did not weaken even later, when developments in world politics and in the internal affairs of some of these countries provoked certain changes and ruptures in the Chinese positions. On the contrary, the prestige of China grew among the radical peasant, worker and petty-bourgeois masses, particularly after the Sino-Soviet split and the ensuing Chinese critique of the CPSU. The radicalized masses looked to Peking to intervene decisively in solving the crisis within the international working-class movement and to extend political, if necessary even military support to struggles against the native ruling class.

This unity of objective, structural factors and subjective elements underlies the role played by China in the course of fifteen years after the victory of its revolution. These factors and elements have far from disappeared in spite of events and changes in recent history.

However, the building of the new social order in China took place within a context that soon engendered various deformations and degenerations. For a long time now revolutionary Marxists have studied and criticized these phenomena and for this they have often been charged with 'dogmatism' and 'sectarianism'. But after the eruption of the crisis inappropriately termed the 'cultural revolution', and after the polemics that raged in the course of it, it became difficult not to conclude—if only on the basis of evidence and criticism voiced by the supporters of the group around Mao—that a degeneration of the workers' state had taken place in China. Mao himself declared that "from the liberation to the present day, in the course of seventeen years, we have considerably distanced

ourselves from the masses".

In a book shortly to be published in Britain (by New Left Books), I have developed a series of arguments supporting the thesis of bureaucratic degeneration in China. This degeneration has assumed concrete forms in the process of social differentiation which, although not as drastic as in the USSR, has nevertheless affected the whole of Chinese society. Apart from a visible difference in the standard of living between town and countryside, serious inequalities have appeared among the peasantry; the same is true of the working class, which was also the first to suffer from the slowing down of the wage dynamic. More important, big differences in the standard of living have appeared between the workers and the peasants on the one hand and the new privileged stratum on the other. In industry, technicians and managers claim a considerably higher income than the workers and marked social differentiation is to be found even within the state and the party apparatus. Privileges, and not only of income, grow visibly as one ascends the ranks of the party, the military and the state. As voiced in some very sharp accusations levelled in China between 1966 and 1969, the top leaders enjoy a standard of living hardly comparable to that of the masses.

This process has been made possible by the nature of the political apparatus and the mode of its functioning. With the exception of some independence present at the village level and—at certain periods only—in factories and local administration, important economic and political decisions have always been an exclusive monopoly of the party and state leadership, which have been merged to a greater degree in China than in the other workers' states. The Chinese Peoples' Assembly and its Standing Committee have never been the organs of decision-making. All important decisions have always been made by the party apparatus, and as party congresses (or Central Committee Plenums) are rarely called (in the last twenty-six years only three congresses have been held), these decisions are made by the Politburo, that is, by its standing committee. (An alternative is for the Central Committee to appoint special commissions.) Such a mode of functioning could only result in the expulsion of the masses from any real control over the economic and political life of the country and in the consolidation of powerful groups inside the party which often waged secret struggles against each other and which were to become one of the main targets of attack during the cultural revolution.

An objective factor that contributed to the process of degeneration in China was the terrible backwardness of the country, even worse than that of the USSR after the revolution. But an even more decisive factor was the use of remnants of the old political and administrative apparatus in the creation of the new social order. Thus qualitatively new, revolutionary structures that would ensure the participation of workers and peasants in the running of the country were not present anywhere. This was not coincidental but followed, in the last instance, from the nature of the Chinese CP and nature of its leading apparatus originally formed in the liberated territories. In spite of its specificity, and in spite of the differences between it and Stalin at crucial moments of the Chinese revolution, the CCP suffered nevertheless from the destructive effects of Stalinism: after the revolution it was to play a fundamental role in the bureaucratization of the new social order. The Stalinist features of the CCP already present at the time of the civil war, and the degeneration of the Chinese workers' state during the 50s and 60s, should not allow us to forget the important lessons of that armed struggle nor the fact that it was the CCP that led the masses to the overthrow of the old class rule. But it is equally important to realize that the historical success of the revolution should not prevent us from grasping its complex and contradictory process or from analyzing the nature of the Maoist order.

II

The political and social crisis that goes by the name of 'cultural revolution', stretching symbolically between November 1966 (the beginning of the public debate on the now famous stage play) and April 1969 (the opening of the Ninth Party Congress) forms a coherent part of the framework sketched above. In the final

analysis it is a result of conflicts and contradictions that had accumulated in the new social order. This new order, initiated by the revolution, was from the beginning marked with bureaucratic deformations, which hampered and distorted industrial development and the process of collectivization, thus creating tensions within the economic, political and military apparatus as well as within the society as a whole. The international context—1965 was the year of the imperialist offensive in Vietnam and of the Indonesian catastrophe—sharpened the contradictions even further. There was a real possibility that the dynamic of the war in Vietnam could provoke a direct attack on China and this forced the Chinese leadership to consider a strategy for dealing with this problem—something which involved, among other things, China's relationship with the USSR.

There are two interpretations of the cultural revolution—both incorrect—which have to be rejected. The first interpretation starts from the indisputable fact that the conflicts started in the highest echelons of the party—after which appeals were made to the masses (first to the students, then to the workers). Taking the final outcome of the crisis also into account, this interpretation attempts to reduce the phenomenon of the cultural revolution to a conflict within the bureaucracy in which workers and students took part under strict control from above, i.e., as forces which were essentially manipulated for the purpose of consolidating the hegemony of the leading group. The partisans of the second interpretation take as their starting point the equally indisputable fact of mass mobilization (particularly in certain phases), and the fact that the masses took over certain organizational structures, in order to present the cultural revolution as a relatively spontaneous movement of the masses aimed at the destruction of the bureaucracy and the establishment of democracy from below. In actual fact, the cultural revolution represented at one and the same time a deep crisis of the ruling apparatus at all levels and a very wide rallying of social forces which, encouraged at first by the contesting factions, soon gained their own impetus and confronted the framework of bureaucratic rule itself.

It is necessary to grasp this point in order to understand the decision of the group around Mao Tse Tung (who after all had taken similar initiatives in the past) to bring fresh forces into the conflict between the various currents in the party leadership: this decision was crucial to its ultimate success. At the same time we can understand why, as soon as the upheaval went too far and hit not just at specific forms of bureaucratic rule but at bureaucratic rule itself, the same faction took energetic measures—including violent repression—to arrest further mobilization of the masses and channel it into a more appropriate direction. This first happened when the student movement got under way—in autumn 1966 and afterwards—and then—on a more explosive and significant scale—at the time when widespread strikes shook a number of Chinese towns, reaching a peak in the first month of 1967. It is symptomatic that all the apologists of the cultural revolution try if not openly to ignore workers' mobilizations and strikes then at least to reduce them to insignificant dimensions—in spite of the fact that the official sources themselves give a good indication of their scale. Indeed, they try very hard to ignore exactly those events that speak most openly about the conflict between, on the one hand, the aspirations of broad masses and, on the other, the interests and orientations not only of the more conservative tendencies but of Mao's faction as well.

Secondly, the role played by the army must also be brought into the picture. It is not accidental that one of the first battles signalling the crisis, from the middle of 1965 to the beginning of 1966, was conducted precisely within the army. The Mao-Lin Piao faction was keen to consolidate its control over the armed forces before moving to a frontal attack. For this purpose, a meeting was called of the army top brass and Lo Jui Ching, then the Commander-in-Chief, was replaced. In fact, the army played a decisive role in the most important phases of the cultural revolution. At the time when the state and party apparatus was deeply shaken and paralyzed, with the leadership

drastically reduced in size, the army was hardly touched and came to acquire in a natural way functions normally exercised by other sectors of the apparatus. For this reason the army was vital in bringing the crisis to its end—something that naturally follows from its position as the first line of defence for the bureaucratic order.

Thirdly, we have to consider the methods with which the political battle was fought before the masses. During the cultural revolution, there was no open confrontation over real problems and on real positions. Instead of this, various 'transcriptions' and 'translations' were used in worst Stalinist fashion. The purged leaders were not allowed to defend themselves publicly against the charges levelled against them and therefore became easy targets for public attack and abuse, in order finally to be branded as agents of the class enemy and imperialism. Insofar as it is possible to check the evidence, there is no doubt that their positions were distorted if not completely misrepresented. When judging the nature of the leading faction we must also take into account the fact that, instead of conducting their policy of confrontation in the spirit of Leninist principles of democratic centralism, they approached the problems involved in the worst Stalinist manner. This does not necessarily imply that the accused expressed progressive positions, or positions more progressive and revolutionary than those of Mao and Lin Piao. The positions and perspectives offered were sufficiently differentiated to prevent a simple classification. Nevertheless we can say that Liu Shao Chi and Teng Hsiao Ping expressed the more traditional and organically bureaucratic approach to the role of the party and the state, and that this lost them the battle in a situation which provoked a political awakening of the masses.

Finally, it is important to remember that, in the course of the upheaval, some of the aspirations of the masses came to be articulated in quite concrete ideological and organisational terms. Workers' and student committees were formed which opposed the official channelling of the masses. Various texts (of uneven significance and value) were produced calling for a consistent anti-bureaucratic struggle and charging the leading faction with unwillingness to lead the cultural revolution to its completion. These committees even held discussions on the nature of socialism in China, a clear sign of growth in the political consciousness of the masses. It is not surprising then that, at certain crucial moments in the cultural revolution and quite recently as well, these 'ultra-left' tendencies came under heavy attack from the Maoist faction, marshalled by Chou En Lai.

III

Certain interpretations of the cultural revolution talk of the destruction of the old party and state apparatus and the creation of new democratic organs expressing the will of the masses. We do not deny that these structures were shaken or that significant replacement of cadres occurred at all levels, ensuring a more in-

UNFINISHED UTION



Khrushchev (left) and later with Lin Piao



intimate and lively contact with the masses. We believe that at local administrative levels the masses now have a greater say in what goes on and that, at least in some enterprises at the peak of the crisis and immediately afterwards, the workers could influence the running of factories. Indeed, we believe that the balance of forces is more favourable to the masses after the cultural revolution than before 1965—in particular because, as we have said already, the crisis stimulated a growth in the political consciousness of the masses. We further believe that the implications of this change will be shown in the future pattern of upheavals that are bound to shake Chinese society again. But for us the important question is whether the cultural revolution really did represent a qualitative break, i.e. an end to bureaucratic degeneration through a complete re-organisation of society on the basis of really democratic and revolutionary new structures. Is the road now chosen by the Chinese leadership a new and better 'model' for building socialism?

First of all, if we examine the concepts and perspectives articulated in the course of the cultural revolution, we find that they neatly follow those put forward in the past by Mao and other leaders, especially at the time of the Great Leap Forward and Peoples' Communes. This undeniable element of continuity is also reflected in the massive exploitation of old texts and quotations by the party leaders during the crisis. As for the main direction of economic policy, the Ninth Party Congress re-affirmed the 1961 directive: 'Agriculture is the basis of our economy and industry its leading element'. Many interesting studies and articles published at the time on problems in the countryside have as their central concern the dialectics of collectivisation and mechanisation. But the main formulations on the whole follow those already outlined in the 50s. In some cases, when tractors are handed over to the communes, we find peasants being painted an almost Khrushchevite vision of the future. No basic changes have occurred in the system of remuneration of peasants either. On the whole we can say that no fundamental metamorphosis in the countryside has occurred.

As for industry, the polemic conducted between 1965 and 1968 concentrated on criticizing authoritarian and technocratic forms of management. Here the principle of the leading role of the party, announced at the time of the Great Leap Forward, was re-affirmed. In the period of restructuring the main role was played by revolutionary committees where party members always had a clear majority. The wage system, as far as we know, was not changed. Certain restrictions on workers' initiative in production have been removed, the cumbersome managing system has been simplified, the principle of co-operation between specialists and management was proclaimed, some experiments were made towards breaking down the distinction between intellectual and manual labour, and workers were given some scope for personal advance. None of this adds up, however, to real workers' management. Like peasants,

workers have no say on the fundamental economic choices that concern the country as a whole and which, after all, determine local economic policy. In this decisive area, the hegemony of the bureaucracy remains untouched.

The cultural revolution gripped the imagination of people outside China because it produced a number of texts—above all the famous Sixteen Points—which evoked the principles of the Paris Commune, hailed by both Marx and Lenin as laying the foundation of proletarian democracy. What were the practical results of the cultural revolution in this domain? After the 1966-67 shake-up in the political and administrative apparatus, revolutionary committees were formed in twenty-nine Chinese provinces. But only in a few cases were these committees elected, and then they were allowed to function only after being explicitly recognized by the leading faction. The committees were in most cases appointed: rather than expressing the will of the masses, they were the result of agreements, validated from above, reached between the components of the so-called triple bloc: the army, the leading cadres and the masses. It is not accidental that the key role in these committees was played by the army. Also, it is most significant that this restructuring took place only at the provincial level. Official instructions were always crystal clear: 'taking power' did not extend to the State Council (the government), the Central Committee or even the provincial central committees. In other words, the real centres of power remained untouched.

Here we have to remind ourselves of something which is fundamental to Marxism: when political decisions on the most important matters are not made by the masses, or organs directly created by them and whose work they permanently control, then power does not belong to the masses and proletarian democracy does not exist. The bureaucratic petrification present in China before 1965 could not be removed by replacing a few individuals or by reorganisation of certain levels, but only by a qualitative change at all levels. Hence the so-called 'cultural revolution' was essentially an attempt at reform within the framework of the existing bureaucratic order and not a revolutionary destruction of it.

IV

Revolutionary Marxists have always stressed the importance of the debate between China and the USSR and openly declared that Chinese criticism of the USSR and of other CPs was often valid. Chinese support for the armed struggle in Thailand, for example, significantly contributed to the development of anti-imperialist struggle in Asia. In criticising the opportunism of Western CPs, in extending sympathy to the revolutionary left during the May 68 events in France, in condemning the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Chinese leadership objectively contributed to the crisis of the bureaucratic regimes and parties, and inspired new political vanguards. Such acts explain the attraction of Chinese posi-

tions in many parts of the world, although this attraction is limited, particularly in the East European workers' states, by the failure of the Chinese leadership to break with Stalin and Stalinism. Nevertheless, any analysis of Maoism as a current in the international working-class movement must go beyond a mere comparison of the Chinese and Russian positions. It is necessary instead to grasp the nature of Maoism as a whole in order to understand the fundamental logic of its politics.

When we come to analyze Chinese foreign policy, we must remind ourselves of something which has decisive implications for struggles in the colonial and neo-colonial countries. Here the strategic orientation taken by Peking, and groups under its influence, rests upon a premise of democratic or national-democratic revolutions which are aimed not against capitalism as such but against feudalism and imperialism. From this follows the policy of alliance with national bourgeoisies and "other democratic, patriotic and anti-imperialist forces". It is not necessary to point out the original inspiration of this orientation: it follows conceptions dominant in Stalin's time and taken over by his successors. The tragedy of the Indonesian CP which, on Chinese advice, had long worked closely with the national bourgeoisie represented by Sukarno, illustrates forcefully the necessarily disastrous consequences of such a strategy. But the lessons of Indonesia remain to be learnt: after the destruction of the Indonesian CP, after the cultural revolution the Maoist leadership continues its policy of cooperation with the 'national' bourgeoisie—even when this bourgeoisie is represented by military dictators of the Ayub Khan-Yahya Khan type, who were both triumphantly welcomed in China at the very time when they were engaged in merciless repression of the workers', peasants' and student movements in both East and West Pakistan.

It would be a mistake to believe that this policy is the consequence of a mistaken analysis or an erroneous strategical perspective. The fact is that the Chinese bureaucracy defines its line first of all in relation to what it considers is required by its own needs and its own diplomacy. For a number of years China maintained good relations with Indonesia: hence its cooperation with Sukarno, practised also by the Indonesian CP. After the revolution and in the 50s China worked closely with India. Once tensions appeared between the two countries, Peking drew closer to Pakistan and this special relationship with Pakistan represents even today a significant factor in Chinese foreign policy. We would not deny to a workers' state the right to maintain diplomatic relations with bourgeois or even reactionary governments. But for revolutionary Marxists it is unacceptable that, in a military conflict between two bourgeois states, the Chinese leadership should not only take the side of one of them but defend it as its ally. It is even more unacceptable to us that the interests of the international revolutionary movement should

be subjugated to diplomatic manoeuvres and alliances. This is a policy characteristic of Stalinism. It is the policy practised by China for a number of years. This is what China did in the case of Pakistan, when it gave support to one of the most brutal repressions in history against a people who rose for their national independence. This is what China did in the case of Ceylon, where it quite openly and cynically (see Chou En Lai's letter to Bandaranaike) took the side of a bourgeois regime that survived only by appealing to all conservative forces in the world. This is what China did when it gave unhesitating support to the dictatorship in the Sudan, to murderers of communists and trade unionists. This is what it did when it welcomed with the highest honours the Emperor of Ethiopia—country subject to the most barbaric social and national oppression, and which also provides American imperialism with one of its most important bastions in Africa. This is the policy that reacts positively to certain manoeuvres within the Common Market, passing in silence over what this alliance represents: a pressure towards international concentration of capital.

Now new and serious conflicts have yet again erupted in China, Lin Piao has been eliminated most of the top army commands have been changed, and Chou En Lai has apparently achieved a new dominance within the leading faction. Although the ultimate outcome of these events is impossible to predict with confidence, it is nevertheless understandable that deep differences should have emerged on a whole range of questions: from problems of economic development to the reorganization of the party and to the direction of foreign policy. So far, the basic confrontation seems to have been between the party and the army. As we have seen, the relative vacuum that appeared at the peak of the cultural revolution came to be filled by the army. But once a minimal reorganization of the party was completed, a confrontation between those who wanted to prolong army hegemony and those who wanted a return to 'normal conditions' (i.e. the leading role of the party) was inevitable. And the swing to the right—symbolised by the agreement to Nixon's visit—has apparently now provided the occasion for a split at the highest level.

The Nixon visit was not simply a question of 'normalisation' of diplomatic relations. It must be seen within the context of, on the one hand, the Chinese leaders' view of the Soviet Union and, on the other, the present phase of the war in Indochina. The Chinese interpretation of the Soviet Union as capitalist and of Russian foreign policy as social-imperialist is not just completely anti-Marxist: it has profound implications for China's own foreign policy. For if the Soviet Union is a capitalist country with imperialist aspirations, then it may at any given moment be considered as the principal enemy and American imperialism as secondary. Such a view would justify the Sino-American entente in the face of recent Russian diplomatic successes in the Indian sub-continent. But the latest victories of the Vietnamese drive home tellingly the absurdity of the theory of Russian 'social-imperialism'. The second thing that must be clearly understood about Nixon's trip was that it occurred at a time when, as the Vietnamese themselves repeatedly stressed, American imperialism was in fact escalating the war under the cover of 'Vietnamisation' with the confident aim of maintaining an anti-communist regime in Saigon (as in Pnom Penh and Vientiane). The statements by Vietnamese leaders leave no doubt as to their views on the Nixon visit to China; they were only too aware of the assistance it gave Nixon in disguising the real character of American strategy in Asia.

At all events, what is clear is that we have not yet seen the end of political upheavals in China. The new generation of workers, peasants and students who have acquired valuable experience in the course of the cultural revolution will play an increasingly important role in the future and, learning from the experience of other countries, they will finally succeed in overthrowing bureaucratic rule and replacing it by true proletarian democracy.

Livio Maitan

(This article is based on a talk given by Comrade Maitan to Yugoslav students at a public meeting in Belgrade on 6 December 1971).

REPRESSION DEEPENS IN CEYLON

Two new bills have just been put through parliament which further facilitate the Bandaranaike government's ability to dispose of its 14,000 political prisoners as it sees fit. Many are likely to face charges carrying a mandatory death penalty.

Ever since its massive onslaught on the revolutionary socialist Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front) a year ago, the government of Ceylon has maintained a state of emergency and followed a policy of severe repression. Behind the emergency is Ceylon's deteriorating economy, the result of sharply declining terms of trade over more than a decade. With world prices of tea and rubber, Ceylon's main exports, continually decreasing, and with rising costs of imported rice, machinery and industrial products, Ceylon has become more and more indebted to Britain, West Germany, Japan, the U.S.A., the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. By early 1971, unable to fulfill its election promises of 1970, the supposedly left-leaning government of Mrs. Bandaranaike faced widespread discontent and the possibility of armed revolt. In March-April 1971 the government responded with pre-emptive terror, killing about 10,000 and jailing 16,000 youthful members and supporters of the JVP. Under attack, the Front fought back vigorously and in early April 1971 it almost overthrew the government. In an extraordinary show of counter-revolutionary solidarity, Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, India, Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Malaysia, and the United Arab Republic rushed military aid to Colombo; even the government of China supplied a \$30 million interest free loan to help put down the insurrection.¹

A year after the crackdown, revolutionary armed struggle has virtually ended, but spiralling prices and unemployment produce pervasive corruption, burglaries, pickpocketing, gang-robberies, and rising discontent.

Under the State of Emergency since 15 March, 1971, fundamental democratic freedoms of speech, assembly and publication have been suspended and workers have been deprived of the right to strike. The police and military have retained powers of arrest without warrant, and have transgressed safeguards provided under normal laws against arbitrary ar-

rest, torture, the murder of prisoners, and the secret disposal of dead bodies of persons in custody. The statutory access of Members of Parliament to prisons has been denied, and no means of investigation of complaints of the brutalities against or shootings of prisoners are available to their relatives or legal representatives. Fourteen thousand prisoners are still held without trial in concentration camps, about which sombre reports have been made by rare visitors allowed in these camps or by prisoners fortunate enough to have been released after nine or ten months' imprisonment. According to one such report by a revolutionary partisan: "On a number of occasions the army has shot into these camps, causing deaths. At the slightest provocation the detainees are baton-charged or shot at. Food is bad; diseases spread quickly due to overcrowding. Prisoners are tortured for information and 'difficult' cases are either bumped off or kept in solitary confinement; they are allowed to leave their cells only once a day, and that too only for one hour. The government does not know what to do with them. They cannot bring them to trial because they have no real evidence against them."

The brother of Rohan Wijeweera, the leader of the JVP who was arrested before the State of Emergency was declared in March 1971 and was placed in Jaffna prison, has reported that in early August 1971, "Certain CID officers came along with Crown Counsel Ian Wickremanayake and... he was removed to a lonely house and there was tortured and thrashed for seven days and threatened with death and was forced to make a statement, which was tape-recorded by them." For at least four months afterwards Wijeweera was kept on such short rations that he developed pains in his limbs and joints and blisters on his tongue. When, in early December, he fell ill with fever and tonsillitis he was left lying for two days in vomit and received no medical treatment (*Intercontinental Press*, 10 April, 1972).

Although Ceylon's Maoist Communists opposed the JVP and the insurrection and al-

though China supported its suppression, the Bandaranaike government has shown no more mercy to the Maoists than to the JVP. Their chairman, N. Shanmugathan, was arrested early in the repression and the Maoists have issued public complaints of the torture and ill-treatment of their cadres.

With the JVP and the Maoists temporarily immobilized, the government recently turned its fire against the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), Ceylon's Fourth International group which has its base in the urban trade unions. The LSSP-R broke away in 1964 from the parent Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Ceylon's thirty-five year old 'Trotskyist' party and largest left group, which, like the pro-Moscow Communists, had become increasingly entangled in parliamentary and reformist politics. Both the LSSP and the CP are coalition partners in Mrs. Bandaranaike's "left front". Like the parliamentary Communist Parties in India, their leaderships are therefore now deeply compromised by their repression of revolutionaries.

The pay-off for Members of Parliament is that under Ceylon's new constitution the present government, originally elected in 1970 for a five-year period, will be given a fresh six years from the promulgation of the constitution. Government M.P.s have access to special privileges such as automobiles, now rarely obtainable because of the scarcity of foreign exchange. Members of the 157-member House of Representatives have also received Rs. 50 per day extra while sitting in the Constitutional Assembly engaged in drafting the new constitution. In contrast to their erstwhile comrades who now sit in parliament, fifteen members of the LSSP-R were arrested in early March while holding a meeting at the home of the party's Assistant Secretary—perhaps a response to the party's attempts to mobilize the population in demands for civil rights.

In February, the government decided to dispense with normal trials of prisoners in a novel and "scientific" manner. It announced that computers had processed data gathered on each prisoner and that about 4,000, who faced charges only of attending revolutionary lectures, would soon be released. The other 10,000 odd will be dealt with later, and "those against whom there is substantial evidence of direct involvement will have to face charges of high treason which carries a mandatory death penalty" (B.H.S. Jayawardene in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 February).

In early April the government further facilitated its disposal of prisoners by introducing two new bills in parliament: the Criminal Justice Commissions Bill and the Interpretation (Amendments) Ordinance. Under the former, the practice and procedures of ordinary courts are declared to be inadequate to administer justice in the case of offences relating to rebellion, insurrection, or widespread breakdown of law and order; to large-scale misuse of currency or foreign exchange; and to widespread damage to factories

or other private or public installations. In future the proceedings of courts designed to deal with such offences will be inquisitorial. Commissions appointed to enquire into them may present either written or oral evidence of any kind (and thus by implication, evidence obtained under torture), and the court may exclude the press and public from part or all of any enquiry. The act provides for forced confessions to be used in evidence not only against the confessor but also against any person indicted by him, without the accused having the right to cross-examine the confessor. Defence and cross-examination are also precluded with respect to any report "purporting to be under the hand of the Government Analyst or Assistant Government Analyst or any other person acting in such capacity in regard to the identity, composition or character of any thing or matter submitted to him for examination," since the report itself "shall be conclusive proof of the statement contained in such report, without such person being called to testify at the enquiry." The jurisdiction of such special criminal courts is final and precludes appeals, and the act is retroactive, thus neatly taking care of the present backlog of prisoners. The second bill, the Interpretation (Amendments) Ordinance, shuts out Habeas Corpus applications or other writs which challenge an act of the government on the grounds of illegality, *mala fides*, etc.

The second reading of the Criminal Justice Bill passed on 5 April with a two-thirds majority in parliament. The only hopeful sign was that the voting created conflict within the coalition government. Of the six pro-Moscow Communist Members of Parliament, two abstained, three were absent, and one voted for the bill. Moreover, trade unions attached to both the Sri Lanka Freedom Party of Mrs. Bandaranaike and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party have begun to express opposition to the acts. If the Communist Party splits or goes into opposition this could herald the beginning of mass resistance.

These changes in the situation make it even more necessary to carry out at least basic solidarity activities in Britain; and to support the efforts of the Ceylon Solidarity Campaign in publicising as widely as possible the recent and current repression in Ceylon and exerting pressure to bring about the release of the political prisoners and an end to the State of Emergency. Details of the CSC's activities can be obtained from the Secretary, Ceylon Solidarity Campaign, 9 Dennington Park Mansions, London N.W.6. The C.S.C. also publishes a bulletin which gives a brief analysis of the economic and political background to the situation in Ceylon; this can be obtained from the same address, price 5 p.

Devi Azad

1. According to a letter from Premier Chou-en-Lai to Mrs. Bandaranaike printed in the *Ceylon Daily News*, 27 May, 1971.

TANZANIA RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

Some three thousand people have been rounded up in Tanzania since the assassination of Shaikh Karume, the hated ruler of Zanzibar. The assassination itself was designed to trigger off a general popular uprising, but although a number of key points were seized on 7 April, order was restored by the Army, reinforced by fresh troops flown in on the order of President Nyerere. Since then Nyerere has assisted Karume's former henchmen in restoring his viciously reactionary regime. The mass arrests of trade unionists and leftists both in Zanzibar and on mainland Tanzania, together with a number of summary executions, have all been part of the campaign to stamp out bitter popular unrest. The Committee for the Release of Babu (former Minister for Economic Affairs and Development Planning) and all political prisoners in Tanzania has listed

the following as among those who have been shot: Ali Sultan Issa, Ahmed Badawi Qulatein, Shioni Mzee, Ali Khatib Chwaya, the latter a former executive member of the Federation of Revolutionary Trade Unions.

The origins of recent events in Tanzania must be traced back to the revolution against the Sultan of Zanzibar in early 1964. A prominent part in this revolution was played by the Umma Party which proclaimed its adherence to Marxism and supplied the militants who seized the Sultan's police stations. Many of the members of this Party had received training in Cuba. Very soon after the triumph of the Zanzibar Revolution it became clear that it could develop in a socialist direction. It was at this time that Nyerere and Karume devised the unification of Tanzania as a mechanism for applying brakes

to the revolutionary process. Although at this time and later Nyerere may have been somewhat embarrassed by Karume (the Umma Party was dissolved in 1964, the Federation of Revolutionary Trade Unions banned in 1965), he nevertheless infinitely preferred Karume to the prospect of a real workers revolution in Zanzibar which could easily spill over and cause problems on the mainland.

For exactly the same reasons Nyerere has been anxious to forestall any possibility of revolutionary developments in Zanzibar recently. Most of those arrested are former members of the Umma Party. However, the overthrow of Karume has helped to re-ignite the flames of revolution in Tanzania and Nyerere's further lurch to the right will not be able to dampen them down for long.



Shaikh Karume before his assassination



Inhabitants flee from Hue as the liberation forces continue their steady advance towards the city

HUE: Dien Bien Phu 72?

On the 18th anniversary of the fall of Dien Bien Phu (May 1954), the Vietnamese liberation forces are in possession of the provincial capital of Quang Tri and threaten Hue, ancient capital and second city of South Vietnam. Vietnamization lies in a million shreds. Whole divisions of the ARVN puppet army turned and ran away at Quang Tri; many turned their guns on their commanders and deserted to the side of the liberation army. Morale in Hue and Saigon has dipped so low that even the American advisers are now admitting the possibility of a total collapse of the Thieu regime. Thieu's shuffling of commanders around Hue is an attempt to overcome the "crisis of leadership" which American pundits think is the source of all Thieu's problems—these stop-gap, largely publicity measures will hardly succeed where the other half of the Vietnamization equation in the form of American bombs has failed.

And the bombing has been massive. Continual bombardment from over a thousand strike aircraft (130 B-52s) based on five aircraft carriers and Thailand; an all time record of sorties in one day during the final assault on Quang Tri; the virtual levelling of An Loc and now Quang Tri as well. Yet not only was the bombing not enough to save the latter city, the multi-front Vietnamese offensive has multiplied the number of areas where bombers are needed, straining air forces to such an extent that a transfer of planes to the "Ho Chi Minh trail" or to North Vietnam could seriously weaken South Vietnamese troop positions on any of the major fronts.

As we go to press, the situation of the Thieu government is disastrous on all fronts and the Northern sector liberated, probably for good. The provincial capitals of An Loc and Kontum are still besieged and could be attacked again at any time. The Central Highlands are already cut, as the Communist forces hold most of the

province of Binh Dinh on the coast and everything except Kontum further inland. In the first week of May, the main route connecting Cambodia and the Delta area of the South was cut, further isolating Pnom Penh and opening wide the rice-rich and populated Delta for troop infiltration to assist the NLF. Sporadic attacks on the last remaining relatively unaffected government outposts and cities, like Saigon, are being increased.

In the other two countries of Indochina, Laos and Cambodia, liberation forces' control of the countryside, again probably irreversible, is even clearer. In Cambodia, the FUNK controls 80 per cent of the territory and well over 60 per cent of the population, and disputes 15 per cent of the remaining territory—leaving only 5 per cent around the capital Pnom Penh in government hands. With serious assistance from regular troops, the capital could be taken as well. The situation is in fact so shaky that there were fears of total collapse of the Lon Nol regime when the students in the capital city occupied a statue in opposition!

The situation after six weeks is thus considerably more favourable for the liberation forces than many had at first thought possible. The relative ineffectiveness of US bombing in aid of press-ganged and unwilling ARVN troops has combined with the amazing determination, strategic ability, and heroism of the liberation forces to give American advisers nightmares about a Communist military victory in the South. The battle of Hue is universally seen as the turning point of the war. If Hue falls, the morale of the ARVN troops and the Thieu regime threaten to collapse completely, opening the way for a successful insurrection in the remaining cities under Thieu's police-state control, Saigon in particular.

The fall of Quang Tri marks the end of any illusions in the policy of Vietnamization—and

thus poses major problems for Nixon. His support from the Western bourgeoisie, temporarily united in the face of North Vietnamese "aggression" six weeks ago, is now steadily slipping away, a process very similar to bourgeois reaction after the Tet offensive in '68. As in '68, the stock market in the US jumps every time there is news of a negotiated settlement only to plummet again when this is denied by the State Department or when another escalation is announced. For most of the bourgeoisie (as reflected in their press), the best solution seems to be a negotiated settlement and American withdrawal. In short, they see the need to bargain on the fundamental points of the PRG programme: what form of government there will be to replace Thieu.

Yet gloom is not the only emotion expressed by the bourgeoisie about the future of Vietnam; alongside the gloom there is also considerable fear as well. Fear on the one hand because the defeat of American imperialism in South East Asia is a major blow not only for American, but for German, British, French, and Japanese imperialisms; not only for South East Asia, but for the Indian sub-continent, the Middle East, and even Western Europe and the United States. And the threat of a Vietnamese military victory is still more frightening.

Only the use of 'tactical' nuclear weapons can win the war for the Americans. But this would mark a return to Dulles and Cuba type brinkmanship between the United States, Russia, and now China—upsetting the fragile equilibrium Nixon has so patiently knitted together over the last four years and threatening the whole set-up of peaceful coexistence. This is indeed a frightening prospect for the European (and American) bourgeoisies, already hard-pressed by the fragility of the international monetary scheme, industrial stagnation, domestic unrest, unemployment, and so on.

And even if the majority of the American and Western European bourgeoisie come out in favour of a negotiated settlement, this does not necessarily mean that an American military escalation of untold consequences, will not take place. The fact that only two of Nixon's advisors were in favour of the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in April did not prevent the bombing then. His suggestions to earlier presidents about an invasion of the North, or tactical nuclear bombardment, take on a frightful reality now that he is placed in a position where he does have the power, and a situation where he could choose to use it.

The whole situation thus rests on a razor's edge. Whatever decision Nixon makes will affect international class struggle for a whole period. The balance rests on Nixon's options in the face of massive pressure. This poses pressing tasks for all socialists and revolutionaries.

SOLIDARITY IN BRITAIN

In a whole number of countries, there have been important mobilizations in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution and in opposition to American escalation of the war. Our solidarity in Britain with the national liberation struggles in Ireland and Indochina are vitally important if one has any perspective of developing a revolutionary consciousness in the British working class. Not only does it allow us to explain concepts of imperialism, to expose peaceful coexistence, and so on; it is a concrete demonstration of international working class solidarity, for far too long absent from the workers' movement in Britain and the West. When the workers of Britain understand that it is in their interests that British troops be defeated in Ireland, and American imperialism in Vietnam; then and only then will it make sense to talk about creating our own Vietnam at home.

In the short term, the British bourgeoisie does not want further domestic trouble over Vietnam. October 27, 1968 and the VSC had their effects; disruption and mass involvement can have their effects now. Concretely, this means that we must go back to the streets over the issue of Vietnam. We must treat visiting American diplomatic and military "dignitaries" with the welcome they deserve; we must multiply the meetings of propaganda about the war and the current stage of the struggle; we must reply to any American escalation by a response in kind: American and British military hardware outposts come immediately to mind.

If there need be any more justification for the revival of Indochinese solidarity, consider the following quote from the representative of the Provisional Revolutionary Government:

"We are grateful for any support you can give us, even moral support. We know that you want to do more than this but that you feel powerless. You think—we have demonstrated in Trafalgar Square, in Coventry, all over the place—but still the war goes on. So what more can we do?"

"No, my friends, you must do more. If the Americans carry on with the war, it's because you haven't done enough. It isn't that your demonstrations and your petitions have been useless, but that they haven't been enough—they haven't been enough... We understand your many problems and difficulties—but they are as nothing to the problems of Vietnam."

(7 Days, May 1, 1972)

Bob Braxton

For more information contact the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, c/o 182 Pentonville Rd. London, N.1.

HANDS OFF FREE DERRY!

The period which has passed since the imposition of direct rule has clarified the reality of the situation in Ireland.

The change of strategy of British imperialism arose from its inability to defeat the IRA without first isolating it from a sizeable section of the Catholics in the Six Counties. When Stormont stood in the way of this new policy the British Government had no choice but to push past it.

And in pushing past Stormont, Britain has started the process of disintegration of the Orange monolith.

The two fundamental beliefs on which this monolith has rested are maintenance of the Union and maintenance of the Orange ascendancy. Previously there has been no conflict between these aims, but the British decision to suspend Stormont means that the Protestant power structure now has to make a choice.

Basically what the British ruling class is saying is that to maintain the Union it is necessary to defeat the IRA. To defeat the IRA it is necessary to threaten the Ascendancy. And so all sections of the Unionist camp must now choose which is the most important.

One section of the Protestant power structure, represented by the Alliance Party, the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and the 'moderate' Unionists, has decided that the Union is the more important. Another, representing the plebeian and petit-bourgeois elements headed by Craig's Vanguard movement, has decided for the Ascendancy.

Faulkner represents those who think they see a way out of this dilemma. He believes that if the present policy of the British Government can be reversed, and Britain returns to a policy of all-out-war against the Catholic population, then the Orange Humpty-Dumpty

could be put back together again.

This is only possible if he forces the Conservative consensus to the right on the Irish question and if he puts such pressure on Heath as to force him back into an old-style confrontation policy with the Catholic community. The high point of this campaign will be a demand for an attack on the no-go areas, such as Free Derry.

This is the meaning of the Loyalist rallies in Britain. Behind the megalomaniac pretensions of Craig lies the expertise of the Faulkner apparatus, which is drawing together the National Front, the Monday Club, and the other British right-wing organisations.

Supporters of the Irish struggle in Britain must organise a counter-campaign to these moves. The two immediate points in this campaign must be: protest demonstrations against the Craig rallies, and support for the defence of the liberated areas.

The broadest possible forces must be drawn together in united front actions to protest

against the Loyalist rallies and the Unionist propaganda. And this means that the forces already active on the Irish question must understand the key importance of Craig's British intervention, and the need to draw the British labour movement into opposition to it.

A good start in this process can be made by organising tours of speakers involved in the resistance of Free Derry and any other liberated areas. This will help to explain to broader sections of the labour movement the importance of protesting against the Loyalist rallies. The Irish Solidarity Campaign is willing to play its part in such united action.

Gery Lawless
Reprinted from Irish Citizen.

The Secretariat of the IMG notes that the Anti-Internment League has recently changed its slogans. The implications of this are being discussed by the IMG leadership.

WOMENS LIBERATION AND THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

We reprint below one of the papers given at the first Socialist Woman Conference in January this year. Discussion of such a general question might seem a bit academic in a paper like *The Red Mole*; but comrades who are facing the problem of involving women in the fight against capitalism will know how overdue such a discussion is. Women's oppression is so deeply rooted in the processes of everyday life of every person, regardless of class or nationality, that most of the revolutionary left and labour movement have still not thought out the practical implications of their pious wishes for "women's liberation", and find it more comfortable to continue operating on the basis of what is essentially ruling-class ideology where women are concerned. We therefore have to start the discussion at such a general level in order to take in some of these unexamined assumptions on the way to working out our practice today and tomorrow.

Many comrades here will at some point have had discussions of the Leninist conception of the revolutionary party. But for women militants who have gone through this discussion, there still remains a problem: the condition of the revolutionary left today and the backwardness of large sections of it on the woman question. So what I want to try to do now—which I think is necessary and which hasn't been done very explicitly before—is to go from the very general to the very immediate and particular in discussing the relationship between the women's movement and the revolutionary left.

To take the more general theoretical side of the problem first, and make a brief summary of that relationship:

The proletariat as we know it is the only class capable of taking state power and smashing capitalism, but until it organises under the leadership of the revolutionary party and on a revolutionary programme, it can't be said to have full class consciousness. The revolutionary consciousness of the working class has to encompass an understanding of the role of all classes and all sections of capitalist society, and this is basically for two complementary reasons: 1. so that it can develop a strategy to smash capitalism, and so that it can bring into alliance with it all those forces which are capable of fighting capitalism; and 2. because the dictatorship of the proletariat isn't an end in itself, but the necessary condition of the struggle for a communist society, a society in which all forms of private property and all the oppressive relationships based on private property have disappeared. So it's necessary for the proletarian vanguard to understand its own historical role, to gain an awareness of all the oppressive social relationships of capitalist society. The role of the revolutionary party is to intervene in a whole range of struggles, to generalise within the working class this understanding of the various classes and sections of capitalist society, and of its own historical role.

So far, so good: that's a neat rosy picture—but how does it relate to the situation today? The present situation between the revolutionary left and the women's movement can only be understood in a historical context. The oppression of women is such a deep-rooted part of bourgeois society and ideology that even revolutionaries often find great difficulty in breaking from it. The turns and developments in the working class movement during the present century have had a great effect on the extent to which revolutionaries have been able to break from the bourgeois ideology of women's oppression.

If we look at the occasions on which the woman question has been raised in revolutionary struggles, it has clearly always been through the activation of women in periods of revolutionary upsurge: the Paris Commune, the first years of the Russian Revolution, and more recently, to some extent, the experience of the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions.

In the experience of the Russian revolution, there is evidence in the writings of the time that by the early '20s, certain sections of the party had come to understand something of the experience of women in the revolution, and what was happening to the proletarian family, as both men and women became active in the party. You can see it in the pamphlets by Kollontai which have recently been re-published; and in some of Trotsky's pam-

phlets. For the first time in the history of Russia a broad layer of women, working class women, were becoming conscious of the nature of their oppression because they were struggling to militate in the Party on equal terms: the family structure of bourgeois society was no longer passively accepted.

Why do the lessons of this and all the other historical struggles of women appear to have been so largely lost to the labour movement? It is of course a part of the whole process of the Russian revolution—with socialism in one country and the onset of Stalinism the door was opened to the crystallisation of bourgeois ideology in various social forms, within a society in transition between capitalism and socialism. Because of the importance of the Russian revolution to the whole world movement, this meant that the ideological effect on Communist Parties, on the vanguard of the working class throughout the rest of the world was very detrimental. This applied to the woman question as well as the most immediate political questions. So for over 40 years the working class has been dominated by parties which are of the working class but not revolutionary—the Social Democracies and the Stalinist parties—both of which have been incapable of understanding women's oppression in capitalist society.

The revolutionary forces to the left of these groupings are now on the increase on a worldwide scale, and undergoing very rapid growth. But they too have only just begun to give serious attention to the question of women's oppression: and this does not even apply to all the groups concerned, as we know from experience in Britain. The fact that the question is now becoming an important aspect of the intervention of some revolutionary groups, is in part a function of the way the revolutionary vanguard is re-grouping in late capitalist society. Given that the working class organisations have been dominated for so long by Stalinist or social democratic ideology, many of the forces which are first to break from these ideologies are not at the

Discussion at Socialist Woman Conference (photo: Anthony Vincent, The Observer)



The ambivalent attitude of the left has its counterpart in the threatened direction of large sections of the women's movement away from the class struggle into radical feminism or reformism; an illustration of this danger is the hostility shown both to trade unions and to socialist ideas generally—not just specific left organisations—by many of the women at the national women's conference held in March in Manchester.

The fact that the ruling class is so ready to exploit the effects of its ideology to its own advantage—the media's treatment of the miners' wives and the so-called "Women Together" movement of Andersonstown are just two examples—makes it all the more urgent for the left to clarify its own position and put it into practice.

centre of the working class movement: they include students, young workers who may not have the experience of the traditional labour movement, oppressed minorities such as the blacks within imperialist states, and so on. Of course the process takes place very unevenly, and already we can see that in many advanced capitalist countries sections of the working class are moving to a position where they can break from bourgeois ideology and accept revolutionary ideas much faster than has so far happened in Britain—Spain and Japan are just two striking examples. In general though, it still remains true that the spread of revolutionary ideas amongst the youth—students and young workers—is very important to the regroupment of the revolutionary left.

Women's liberation has a place in this process—it is in a sense a late outcome of the youth radicalisation. Many of the people in women's liberation have been involved in political movements: more generally they have been affected by the experience of loosening family ties and the revolt against bourgeois family ideology which has been formative for the new generation of revolutionaries too. This process explains the largely petit bourgeois composition of many of the groups in the women's liberation movement: young petit bourgeois women have much more access to this experience, on the whole, than working class women.

So far the experience of the relationship between the revolutionary left and the women's movement has largely been that some women in the women's liberation movement have come to accept or continued to hold revolutionary ideas, and some have joined groups on the left; while sections of the left have woken up to the question of women's liberation. In many cases this awakening would not have happened without the women's liberation movement posing the problem. Some of the groups have however intervened quite a lot in the women's movement in the past two years.

But the process is not a nice, smooth gradual one, leading to some point in the future where the two movements happily merge: we live in a class society where class struggle is constant, but develops sometimes very rapidly, sharply changing the context in which the women's liberation movement first emerged. The past two or three years have in fact seen a very rapid acceleration of the crisis of British imperialism, obliging the ruling class to make a very sharp attack on the working class. This makes it very difficult for women's liberation groups to avoid the question of taking sides in the class struggle: unless they take a position, the slide into bourgeois individualism seems almost inevitable—and already the bourgeois press is taking up that side of the women's movement. The way in which we take this stand is of course what we must discuss in the course of this weekend—it's not simply a question of turning to working class women on the issues which immediately affect them, we also have to develop ways in which to combat bourgeois ideology as a whole on the question of women. That is, we don't only want to organise on the question of equal pay: we want through all the work we undertake to go on putting forward our understanding of the role of the family in capitalist society.

But it's not only the women's liberation groups which face a choice on this point. The woman question is now posed for the revolutionary left in rather a new light. When there is a sharpening of struggle such as is going on at the moment, but there is no mass revolutionary party, and no generalised revolutionary socialist consciousness in the working class, it is all too easy for militants to capitulate to backwardness on the woman question as on many other questions. Women's unemployment, the difference between men's and women's wages, and the idea of the 'responsibility' of the male breadwinner to 'keep out of trouble'—all these are important instruments the ruling class can use to divide and weaken the working class at the present time. Many trade union militants have no answer to these questions: but this is all the more reason for the revolutionary left to take a clear stand.

It is in this absence of a revolutionary party, and in this context of sharpening class struggle, that the Socialist Woman movement offers a real way forward for socialists in the women's movement, because it gives us the perspective of both propagandising among working class women where there are few enough other forces able to do this; and in a sense, of operating as the 'conscience' of the revolutionary left on this question.

If in the course of the weekend we can develop a perspective for operating in this way, as women's liberationists who have taken sides in the class struggle, then I think that this development can be very favourable for the building of the revolutionary party in Britain: our movement can contribute to such a party taking a correct line on the question of women and the family from the start. The revolutionary party can then rapidly increase its understanding, and increase the understanding in the working class, of the perspective of going beyond the dictatorship of the proletariat to a truly communist society, and the ending of oppression for women and men throughout the world.

Judith White

Open letter to the Communist Party

Dear Comrades,

We have noticed a series of hostile and misinformed articles in recent issues of *The Morning Star* on the question of the LCDSU. We are very perturbed that in these articles you should accuse the LCDSU of splitting the student left. We are disturbed by this because the forces in the LCDSU are convinced of the absolutely essential need for the left to unite in the face of the unprecedented State attacks on students. What we do insist on, however, is that this unity be on a principled basis.

That students were under attack from the State became absolutely clear to the mass of students with the Thatcher proposals on the financing of Students Unions. But this was not the first nor the only element of the attack. Both before and after Thatcher's document, various State agencies were on the offensive. College authorities, LEA's and the police and the Courts have actually been given a shot in the arm by the Thatcher proposals. Major struggles have been waged in recent weeks in Lancaster, N. Poly, LSE, Portsmouth Poly, Aston, Brighton College of Education, and many other less well-known colleges. New struggles begin daily. In this situation it is es-

sential that all forces on the left unite to fight on all these fronts.

The LCDSU has taken a principled stand against any compromise on the question of autonomy, against state accountability, against collaboration with college authorities or LEA's and the rejection of any capitulation to the Courts when used to strengthen the hand of the college authorities. At the same time it has seen its interests as being intimately linked to those of the working class and has attempted to mobilise the mass of students in solidarity with the workers in struggle. Similarly, it has taken an unequivocal stance in relation to the struggle in Ireland, giving unconditional but not uncritical support to both wings of the IRA.

The LCDSU is holding its third national conference in Aston on 20/21 May where all these positions will be re-evaluated in the light of our experience over the past period. We invite visitors from the Communist Party and urge the CP to organise its forces in the colleges to elect delegates to this conference and unite with us on a platform which will bring the left together and take the struggle against the State in the colleges forward.

Yours fraternally,

Steering Council of the LCDSU.

REVIEWS

The Cologne Communist Trial, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (Lawrence and Wishart, £3.00)

This book contains all the texts and passages written by Marx and Engels on the history of the first Communist Party in the world, the Communist League (1847-1852). It was this party which signed the immortal *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, as relevant today as when it was first written. This communist party had remote origins, a difficult birth from the French *secret societies* in the reign of Louis Philippe. It was the first party whose statutes broke with this type of society and implicitly contained the principles of democratic centralism, well before the term had been invented. This party too experienced internal difficulties - a split. And, of course, it experienced provocations and repression with the Cologne trial where Marx, from London, denounced and exposed the documents forged by the Prussian police, and did his utmost to support the accused - although in spite of this they were finally condemned.

Among the political documents included in this book there is the 'Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League', written by Marx in March, 1850. Here Marx draws the lessons of the 1848 Revolution at a time when he still thought that the revolutionary wave would rise to a crest again, and - formulating its policy for the future - he concretises it in the unforgettable sentence: "Their battle cry (to the proletariat) must be: the revolution in permanence!"

The Communist League had only a brief life of about five years. But it was a time full of experiences and trials immediately before and after a revolutionary crisis which spread all over Europe. One hundred and twenty years have gone by since then. The world today is totally different; the revolutionary Europe of 1848 is today no more than a small part of a world completely rent by massive struggles between the forces of the socialist revolution and those of the capitalist counter-revolution. Even in 1848 Marx was denouncing in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* the alliance posed by the reformists of the time between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, which infected the former with the weakness of the latter. More than a simple historical account, these remote years and this communist party of which we are the descendants still have many lessons for us.

The Threepenny Opera

It is not Brecht who is at fault in Tony Richardson's presentation of the 'Threepenny Opera' at the Piccadilly Theatre. The stringency, bawdiness and realism in the language of his plays stands out like a sore thumb amidst this tired shell of a production. Allied to Kurt Weill's jarring, memorable music, this enables some of the positive points of the play to be salvaged. For instance, the brilliant marriage scene where Mac the Knife, chief crook, procurer, demagogue and philosopher weds his sweetheart, Polly Peachum, daughter of London's leading beggar surrounded by gangsters, and dining on newly-lifted silver platters. The close friendship between Mac and that gentleman of gentlemen, the Assistant Commissioner of Police. The final capture of Mac the Knife, but then Brecht's eleventh-hour denouement, where

our hero, head in executioner's noose, is rescued by Britannia riding in on a milk-white steed like the American Cavalry, takes the final piss out of both the melodramatic tragedy and the light musical.

Only Barbara Windsor and Joe Melia, forgetting that they are in the West End theatre, portray Brechtian characters. The rest are uninspiring and deathly dull. Unlike his later plays which are didactic and more overtly political in nature, Brecht is content here to portray the struggle for survival of the poor, the reversal of values whereby theft and violence are the bread and butter of many people's existence; also interestingly, the subjection of women to the whims of men, manipulating them like puppets in a Punch and Judy Show.

Brechtian drama was meant for the people, intended to be about them and for them. A commercial production like this one can never do justice to the themes, since Brecht himself was anti-traditional theatre, anti-capitalist, and fundamentally a revolutionary so far as his conception of the theatre was concerned. His ideas about realism, alienation and exploitation in the theatre must be used for the benefit of all people struggling to change the conditions of their daily exploitation. The only struggle that middle-class audiences at West End theatres ever experience is the struggle to reach the bar first at the interval. Phil Cohen

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LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

real issues behind the personalities

The struggle at Lancaster continues (see *The Red Mole* 40), with the University Administration openly implementing the now vital policy for the British ruling class; the full integration of higher education into the productive forces of capitalist society, and disposing of any possible dissension via an intimidating use of other facets of the bourgeois State.

There is much evidence that "our masters" regard Lancaster as a test case in establishing the best method of ensuring this integration. Thus it is that recent developments here have aptly indicated the need for students everywhere to see beyond the personalities involved in this particular struggle and to be able to identify the same basic underlying trends that constitute the present contradiction of higher education under capitalism (see Ernest Mandel, *The Changing Role of the Bourgeois University*), and that will continue to manifest themselves in other struggles and behind other personalities.

The need for such an approach is best illustrated by a resume of events at Lancaster during the past few weeks. Last term ended with the suspended English lecturer Dr. Craig waiting to face dismissal charges for alleged advocacy of disruption and with nine students, randomly victimised for participation in the occupation of University House and the Computer Building, facing charges laid with the Director of Public Prosecutions as well as internal disciplinary action.

The authorities moved fast during the vacation to consolidate their position in the eyes of 'public opinion'; the media was used with a relish.

"Would you let your children be taught by a Marxist?" demanded the *Daily Express*. "Academic thugs terrorize Liberal University", screamed the *Daily Mail*. Vice Chancellor Carter then teamed up with ultra hawkish Sir William Alexander of the Local Education Authorities Committee in an attempt to get a pre-emptive paper pledge out of students in exchange for handing over their LEA grants at the commencement of the summer term. Carter also displayed a penetrating understanding of the forces arrayed against him and the State by declaring that the NUS was a "paper tiger". The introduction of the grants issue was a skilful political manoeuvre, in that it appealed to the reactionary elements outside and inside, it confused the students and distracted their attention from the pending cases of Craig and the nine students, and it also gave the local CP dominated student bureaucracy and its NUS counterparts the opportunity to ignore the State policy of increased integration which provided the real motor for the whole Lancaster confrontation.

Thus at a mass meeting on the first day of term a "left" motion for the continuation and reinforcement of last term's academic strike was defeated. A call for a full scale rent strike was however passed. When two days later, the legalistic red herring of the grants issue was finally buried and a total student strike ratified, it was consequently twice as hard to mobilize and to enforce, and never really started to bite.

All attention was then shifted to the National Demonstration to take place on Tuesday, 2

far. They have also got a lot of other support from all over London, as well as from the other workers on the St Thomas's site. Some students and workers at St Thomas's Hospital itself are also organising support for the men, making use of the question of the site lavatories to relate to a campaign they are running for Occupational Hygiene in the college.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: Bro. J. Draper, 92 Gilbey Road, Tooting, London S.W.17.

STOKE NEWINGTON 8

For over a year now—since 12 January 1971—the police have been raiding the flats of leftists ostensibly looking for the Angry Brigade. Last December Ian Purdie was acquitted and Jake Prescott found guilty of addressing three envelopes and given 15 years (by Melford-Stevenson). The next big trial—which the press will undoubtedly bill as 'The Angry Brigade trial'—starts in early June; the trial of the Stoke Newington 8. The Eight (Chris Bott, Angela Weir, Kate McClean, John Barker, Hilary Creek, Anna Mendelson, Stuart Christie, Jim Greenfield) will be charged with conspiracy; in which just about every single guerrilla action for the past four years is included. The prosecution is trying to project the idea that incidents like these and, more

May, the day Craig's case was to come up before the University Council, basically the supreme lay administrative body, packed with retired headmasters, clerics and representatives of local gentry and various commercial interests. However in secret arrangements—not sanctioned by any mass meeting—the Student Representative Council had agreed with the Police to have the speaker's meeting at the end of the demonstration take place, not in the large square outside the Town Hall, where the Council were judging Craig's case, but instead, on an obscure and empty plot of waste land, over half a mile out of town.

This reality of bourgeois academic justice and freedom; a rigged trial of a well known and qualified don by a wholly undemocratic body, composed entirely of members and faithful servants of the ruling class, was an extremely blatant example of the underlying political nature of all recent events at Lancaster. And it was as such that it should have been presented to the mass of mobilized students. It was upon these lines that IMG comrades argued for and presented a demand that the demonstration should culminate outside the Town Hall and stay there, if possible, until the hearing's outcome was declared that evening. Predictably, the NUS and the local bureaucrats, as well as I.S., argued against this. A fantasy picture was presented of frenzied student riots and possible police brutalities if our demand was met. This scare tactic worked and it was voted to terminate the march in the political wasteland.

When the findings of Council were announced that evening, they had the fully intended effect of creating confusion and doubt amongst the student body. The settlement that Craig agreed to was:—

1. That he admitted he had in effect been a "naughty boy" and thus publicly regretted his past actions.
2. That he agreed to be fully bound by the statutes of the University—which of course, he always had been anyway, but this clause seemed to imply that he—a senior lecturer—was now on some form of permanent probation.
3. That he would be moved from the English Department—which had initiated the original student strike—and that he would carry out his teaching duties in the service of a number of related departments.

Next day, Carter publicly announced that he was surprised that Craig had accepted such a settlement—it was an actual agreed settlement, as Craig's lawyers had finalized terms with the University Council—and that he, Carter, regarded this as the victory he had been intent upon. And indeed at this level this is just what it was, though it is really necessary to know something of the background of the people and underlying issues involved to fully appreciate all the implications.

Carter had, via Council, in effect been able to diffuse a very dangerous situation for the Administration and while some of the professorial hawks were denied their full taste of blood, he had managed to sever the link between Craig and the victimized students without over-exposing the real material and ideological motivation behind his own current hard line position.

important, the revolutionary ideas involved are confined to a small isolated group of madmen.

There is no question of political or legal compromise with the lawyers at the trial. The object of the defence will be "to create a political dialogue with the jury and to try and heighten the awareness of the power we have as a movement to destroy the control the oppressing class has over our lives". This will of course be helped by support from outside the court. Speakers and material for distribution can be obtained from: Stoke Newington Eight Defence Group, Box 359, 240 Camden High Street, London, N.W.1.

There will be a solidarity demonstration on the opening day of the trial (probably June 6). Write to above address for further details.

SOVIET INSURANCE POLICY

The Soviet bureaucracy in yet another shameless betrayal of the principles of international solidarity has agreed to underwrite insurance cover of American corporations against expropriation by the governments of underdeveloped countries.

But just why did Craig accept such a solution? The explanation lies in the fact that he is an example of that special product of the British Universities, the CP liberal academic with a personal bent towards Utopianism—as witness his actual belief in and advocacy of the viability of the Free University within bourgeois society. This deluded Marxist actually believes his new, non-departmental position to be the foundation stone for the Free University of Lancaster, when in reality he is now none other than the accredited and wholly tamed Marxist, serving as an embellishment to Lancaster University Ltd similar to the long existing Creative Arts-Workshop and the now projected swimming pool.

On Wednesday, 3 May, the mood on the campus was one of general disillusionment. At the mass meeting Craig was applauded by a sizeable section of students as the returning hero, but when after his little speech of justification he started to answer some pointed questions, the talk of "Sell Out" grew apace. The CP controlled SRC, once again helped by imported NUS bureaucrats, attempted to present the settlement to assembled students as a "partial victory" all wrapped up in a composite motion, full of red herrings, such as placing Carter under his own disciplinary procedure. IMG comrades hurriedly put forward an amendment that expressed complete dissatisfaction with the settlement, but noted Craig's acceptance of it, and stressed that the case of the nine students and the whole Lancaster University affair remained linked, that the nature of the struggle must be understood as such and intensified. This received overwhelming support from the meeting—the liberals and moderates being genuinely disturbed, at least, by Craig's and the CP stance, but still really unable to see why the sell out had taken place.

Amid this confusion the academic strike collapsed and a state of suspended animation reigns at Lancaster. The staff are now visibly cowed, many are applying left, right and centre for new posts away from Lancaster. Carter is just waiting his time and then he will hit the nine students plus perhaps a few more likely "suspects". Then he can relax, secure in the knowledge that at last the campus is entirely safe for massive capitalist investment.

However, during this present limbo and with the CP and other bureaucrats completely discredited, the opportunity exists really to get across to broad layers of the student body the actual issues involved in this and other struggles.

It is also imperative that other universities and colleges are fully informed of the real issues at Lancaster, so that they can:—

1. Respond in solidarity with large scale mobilization when the oppression at Lancaster becomes particularly harsh.
2. Learn from our experience and be able to identify "friends" who might turn out—as they did at Lancaster—to be more destructive to student solidarity and collective action than the commonly accepted enemies.

To this end comrades from Lancaster have, in conjunction with the LCDSU, been speaking to Student Union and Soc Soc meetings up and down the country.

Lancaster IMG Members

This collusion with American imperialism which *The Times* (April 24) described as a "startling break with Marxist economic philosophy" was disclosed by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The OPIC announced that the Black Sea and Baltic Insurance Co., a subsidiary of Ingosstrakh, the Soviet state insurance agency, had agreed to underwrite part of the \$26 million increase—from \$2.2 billion—in the amount of expropriation insurance protecting US investment in developing nations.

Bradford Mills, president of OPIC in announcing the Soviet decision said, "It is the first time that an arm of the USSR government has supported the United States government in insuring US private investment overseas. We hope this is the beginning of similar mutually satisfactory arrangements between the two governments."

Although the amount of insurance the Soviet bureaucracy has underwritten is understood to be not much more than \$2.6 million, the move is regarded by Washington circles as extremely significant. It shows how far the bureaucracy is willing to make compromises with imperialism in return for trade advantages.

The OPIC is at present engaged in negotiations with the Rumanian and Yugoslavian governments on schemes for extending its insurance against expropriation in these two countries. Soviet participation in the reinsurance arrangements means that a similar "safety incentive" for US companies is likely soon to be extended to other East European countries.

HOSPITAL SITE STRIKE

The EET&PU members working for the Phoenix Electrical Co. at St Thomas's Hospital building site in London have been out on strike since 21 April, fighting for the re-instatement of one of their members. The victimised worker—a strong trade unionist who does not take any nonsense from jumped-up foremen—was accused by the management after half a day on a new job of "lack of production" and being "absent from site without permission" (going to the lavatory because of the abominable state of the on-site lavatories).

After many attempts to negotiate his re-instatement the men came out. The Full Time Area Official then moved in and tried to impose on the men something they had already decided was unacceptable—that either the victimised man be suspended on basic pay until the 'Joint Industrial Board' had looked into it, or that he be moved to another site to be given an opportunity to "prove himself". The men unanimously rejected this manoeuvre and insist on the status quo.

Twelve or so EET&PU branches in London have so far asked the national leadership to make the strike official—but to no effect so