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1/6

**FRANCE: ON THE  
SPOT REPORT**



**THE POWER  
OF STUDENT  
ACTION**

# PEACE NEWS PEACE?

by Harold Holt

Early this year PEACE NEWS asked its readers to take part in a survey "Towards a definition of ourselves." This is both typical and significant. Normally, one judges the policy of a paper by its leaders and by the kind of contributions it accepts for publication. It is difficult to do this so far as PEACE NEWS is concerned. There is no single editor to take decisions. "leadership passes freely" from one to another of a group of editors and, according to the editors themselves, "Too often so far the result in the office has been chaos." Not only in the office. In the April 19th issue one of the editors ended an article on "Berlin, Dutschke and the new dimensions" by referring to the militant students in the following words: "Who can blame them? And who can blame their counterparts in Britain, America and elsewhere? If we are to have any future at all, the main hope lies with the young." If these are not rhetorical questions, then the answer is PEACE NEWS!

It was predominantly the young who demonstrated - with their German comrades - in Grosvenor Square on March 17th. But on March 8th PEACE NEWS published from its own address a letter signed "Chairman YCND", urging its readers to "Forget March 17th. It is irrelevant and dangerous." Only on the very eve of the demonstration, March 15th, in response to a letter from Adrian Mitchell threatening to withdraw from the YCND platform, did PEACE NEWS publish a disclaimer from the YCND executive saying that the letter was written "in a personal capacity", that YCND had "not had any official position as regards the March 17th demonstration," that some members of the executive would "definitely be taking part"!

The March 8th issue also contained a leader "Sham Solidarity" - in which PEACE NEWS attacked the motives of the organisers, and those who contemplated taking part in the demonstration, in language which, in its misrepresentation and pejorative and emotive use of words, could not have been bettered by the yellow press. It was suggested that the organisers "...ask the mass of supporters simply to shout raucous slogans from the safety of the horde, to interfere with passing motor traffic, no doubt, and to break through a few police cordons." Two days before the demonstration PEACE NEWS leaders were still attacking it "....there is bound to be violence, either sporadic or more probably widespread" - and questioning the motives of the organisers. In the event four policemen were treated in hospital for slight injuries and all had been discharged the following day!

## UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MARCH 17TH

Nowhere in PEACE NEWS leaders was there any understanding of the fact that thousands of men and women wanted, by their actual presence at the symbolic centre of aggression, Grosvenor Square, to express their solidarity with the Vietnamese in their suffering. Nor, afterwards, was there any recognition that masses of people had risen above indifference, risk of arrest, injury and loss of employment to "vote with their feet" against the enormity of the American presence in Vietnam.

If a paper has no consistent policy in times of social, political and economic stress, it inevitably

becomes reactionary. This is the position in which PEACE NEWS now finds itself. In Britain at least, where so many libertarian intellectuals have their cosy little niches, demonstrations must at all costs be peaceful. It still seems to believe when it comes to action, that there is something ethical about the law itself, whereas in fact it is a bludgeon in the hands of the establishment, and that we should continue to play the democratic game according to the rules although everyone knows the cards are stacked. It is significant that in Paris, Rome, Berlin, London and New York it is the students' heads which have been bloody but are still unbowed!

## RAYMOND WILLIAMS ON "WHY I DEMONSTRATE"

The crunch is coming but PEACE NEWS just doesn't know what it is all about. Recently Raymond Williams spoke over the BBC on "Why do I demonstrate?", and the playwright David Mercer wrote an unpublished letter to THE TIMES. Williams said: "I think we have to remember that violence can be present in an established order where all is superficially calm, just because the reserves of sheer power are effective. I don't think men who disturb such an order can be honestly charged with beginning the violence. It is necessary to say soberly and quietly that the decay and corruption of the political system and the intolerable violence now actually directed against the poor of the world, will go on being fought by all effective means; and that unless the demonstrations grow into a new and open political movement, that fight will be ugly. Under a strain like this, it's time, not simply for those of us who are demonstrators, who want a new democratic politics, but for the society itself, a society more and more openly based on money and power, to change and be changed."

Mercer says: "With quite extraordinary obtuseness you recommend demonstrators once more to those constitutional procedures which they know perfectly well will have no results... The violence on Sunday was not some kind of discreditable lapse from decent standards of public expression in a democratic society - it was the dramatic outcome of profound and irreconcilable differences cutting across young and old, right and left... So long as it takes place in Vietnam or elsewhere, most people are not unduly disturbed, except to click their tongues over the horror of it all. When it happens in Grosvenor Square, there is a sense of public outrage - and columns of self-righteous drivel in the newspapers. The unreality of the response is amazing."

These are truths which PEACE NEWS would do well to ponder. When, before March 17th was PEACE NEWS quoted with approval by the BBC?

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# For unity of the Left

Two contradictory processes have made unity of the left both necessary and possible. Unity is necessary because the traditional left has shown to be impotent. Nothing could be more certain than that Labour's left, the Communist Party, and other sectors of the "old left" will be unable to bar the way to Powellism and other right-wing developments. On the other hand, the success of a number of militant organisations like the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, the fact that large numbers of young people and students are prepared to struggle, and the response to the workers' control campaign all prove that there is a large potential waiting to be organised.

We must unite or suffer the fate of the German and Italian working classes before the war. If we do unite, it is possible to envisage in the not too distant future decisive struggles in Britain which could start the process of the overthrow of British capitalism.

What then are the obstacles to immediate unity? For our part, we see no barrier to the IMMEDIATE FORMATION OF A UNITED FRONT LIAISON COMMITTEE bringing together many strands of the left. In particular, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign has shown that such liaison can and has been taking place. Moreover, it can be irrefutably argued that the success of this organisation has lain in its application of the united front strategy.

## UNITY IN ACTION

But this took place in a certain context: that of the working together of all those who support militant action in solidarity with the heroic

Vietnamese people. This unity in action meant a break with those who would not take a firm line on Vietnam. It meant creating an organisation which was ACTIVE on this question and did not confine itself to resolutions and articles.

We think that the lessons of the VSC point the way towards building a wider unity. The liaison committee we have in mind would be one that organises militant and mass activity. It would be an organisation which excluded the "soggies". It would, whilst attempting to achieve the widest unity, be a body that did not equivocate in its support for all those engaged in struggle.

This committee should have a positive programme based upon unifying principles which would seek to link the struggle in Britain with the worldwide advance towards national liberation, social advance and workers' democracy. By its very nature its strategy should be offensive rather than concentrating on meeting the attacks of the employers and the Wilson Government. Only in this way could it become a body which organised a struggle designed to lead the workers towards socialism and the taking of power.

The more difficult problem of the unification of various marxist groups would be much easier to solve after a period of working together in such a committee. Nothing does more harm to unity than an ill-conceived and ill-prepared unification. We are, however, convinced that the creation of such a committee would rapidly lead to a genuine unity of organisations.

## Letters

Your editorial comment on "Vietnam Perspectives" the Russian role (P.12), is complete rubbish.

Do you realise what a difficult position Russia is in? The complete irrational fear, of the US of Communists, the anti-Communist disease - is what limits Russia's role in Vietnam - not America's might. All the communist countries apart from China realise that if Russia did all in her power to remove the Yankee bastards from Vietnam, the probable outcome would be the use of nuclear weapons by the US; in which case the misery would become greater not less. Can you imagine, if the roles were reversed if the Soviet Union was devastating (say) Panama, that the US would restrict itself to providing defensive weapons (free of all strings) and reasonableness? Do you think that bastards like the bloody crooks in the Pentagon would behave sanely as did the Russians over Cuba when nuclear war looked imminent? I believe in Marxism but I don't think your way will achieve it. The whole world of thinking people is impressed by the Vietnamese courage and single-mindedness. Non-Marxists the world over, are being gradually impressed by the Russian resolute support and restraint in this war, and are realising just what capitalism is and being revulsed by it.

I have been to Russia recently and I can tell you the average Russian is shaking with rage at what the US is doing to their comrades in Vietnam. If we take up my example of Panama again -



can you imagine what pressure the "Super Patriots" like Goldwater and his like would put on the Government if their country restricted itself to supplying defensive weapons?

## AN INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

Well, I can tell you that the US has not got the prerogative of "Super Patriots" - Russia has them as well. I think the Russian constraint is the sign of their maturity. But for nuclear weapons, and the US willingness to use them, the Russians would have aided the Vietnamese to the hilt and driven out the Yanks years ago. I am now of the mind that the only method of making the US pull out of Vietnam would be a successful call for an International Brigade.

continued on page 10.

# Marxists and the Labour Party

## PART 2 by Pat Jordan

### WHY LABOUR DOMINATES

This is why the Labour Party dominates working class politics and why, indeed, even those not in the Labour Party or even hostile to it have to orient themselves towards it in day-to-day politics. The mass of the workers see no alternative to that of trying to express themselves politically through the Labour Party. This explains the ability of the Labour Party to even improve its position after such experiences as the 1929 and 1945 Labour Governments. History indicates most definitely that in the absence of a mass-based alternative the Labour Party will survive even Mr. Wilson's tenure; and that we could see the politics of the mid-1970's dominated by the question of a return to power of Labour in face of a viciously anti-working class Tory Government (which could, perhaps, incorporate some of the features of de Gaulle's regime in France). Such an eventuality would mean the loss of the experience of a whole decade.

To those who would point to the by-election results as an answer to this argument we would reply: did you notice something very funny? Despite the policies of the Labour Government and despite all the dissatisfaction, thousands of workers still went to the polls for Labour. This is the most extraordinary feature of the by-election results. This is the factor which would puzzle the mythical man from Mars.

The experience of the Communist Party is most salutary: It has had a daily paper for some 38 years, a full-time apparatus of some strength for over 40 years, and the prestige and backing of the Soviet Union for nearly 50 years, and yet it remains little more than a sect. Of course, the crimes and zig-zags of stalinism have played a large role in discrediting it but this is by no means the full explanation. Even with the disadvantage of being associated with stalinism the French and Italian Communist Parties have grown into mass formations. What is the essential difference? In answer one must say that in both those countries the Communist Parties arose out of mass currents within long-established Socialist Parties (even to the extent of commanding a majority). Those who would put all their efforts into producing a daily paper should ponder the experience of the British Communist Party.

### AVOIDING A "STRONG" TORY GOVERNMENT

It would be a serious mistake to think that the arrival of a "strong" Tory Government would mean an upsurge of workers' struggle. It would take place under conditions in which the working class had suffered a defeat. Most likely this defeat would be paralleled with a decline of workers' organisations. Moreover, the Tories are not fools: by demagogy and clever tactics they would seek to minimise the workers' struggle. We believe that the best way to avoid such a disaster is by building a mass left wing alternative to Wilson within the Labour movement. For the next year or two a jump to revolutionary

consciousness by very large numbers of workers would be too big a step to expect (although we would like to be proved wrong). Without that alternative, apathy and, in the best circumstances, concentration on pure trade union struggle would remain supreme.

Such a mass left wing will not come into existence as the result of any fight put up by the remnants of the traditional left; that much is clear. But it is still possible that the huge trade union opposition could, if it avoids compromise and the abandonment of political struggle, provide the mass base for such a left. The role of marxists would have to be that of helping this mass left to work out a consistent, realistic and offensive strategy and programme. Marxists will have to organise within this trade union opposition a firm core which will act as a counter against tendencies towards making the kind of "errors" Cousins and others made in relation to the dockers' and busmen's struggles. This is best done by us making the firmest and uncompromising criticism. Silence is the equivalent of complicity.

Of course, this mass left would undergo many political and organisational developments before it laid the basis for the mass socialist party. Without doubt there would be severe political struggles and even fresh schisms before that process was completed. But such a struggle is inevitable for anyone who wishes to build the mass socialist party. It cannot be avoided by remaining within a small but pure little group - politics, especially revolutionary politics, is a tough business. If one does not like getting wet, one should not go swimming.

### THE NEW FACTORS

Is, then, our attitude towards the Labour Party exactly the same as in 1964? The short answer is - how could it be? When the attitude of the vast majority of the workers has altered, how could we retain the same approach?

In a period when the mass of the workers have great illusions in the Labour Party it is no little thing for marxists to be thrust out of that party. In such a period marxists are justified in being circumspect on organisational matters and, politically, must appear in the public eye as the foremost advocates of Labour to power. In a period when the mass of the workers have lost their immediate illusions in the Labour Party it is imperative that any marxist in that party is a resolute and dynamic opponent of the right wing policies of the Government. If this means the risk of expulsion so much the better. A marxist would conduct his fight against expulsion and for re-instatement on the grounds that he was defending the true working class traditions of the Labour Party by opposing the policies of the Government.

Because so many militants have left the Labour

Party and because the left is so fragmented - not least on the question of its attitude towards the Labour Party - it is necessary to create non-exclusive united front organs of struggle on particular issues. To argue, as some do (e.g., supporters of the British MILITANT), that activity in these organisations is a diversion from "true working class politics in the Labour Party" is to completely misjudge the situation. This argument - together with its corollary: the insensitive castigating of people who can't stomach the Labour Party ("go back and capture your ward") - is one of the misapplication of tactics at the best and servility before the right wing at the worst. It is a thoroughly healthy class feeling to be sickened by the Labour Party and its terrible internal life. Those who are NOT sickened are the ones we should be suspicious of.

#### UNATTACHED MILITANTS AND NEW FORCES

The truth of the matter is that we will be quite unable to draw people back into the struggle inside the Labour Party until we have demonstrated that we can wage a real struggle and that the struggle has some perspective of success - that is why it is all the more important that no one leaves the Labour Party voluntarily.

Activities such as the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the workers' control campaign keep together unorganised militants in meaningful activity and exert a pressure on local Labour Parties. More important, they provide a means of attracting and bringing into politics thousands of young people who have no interest in traditional British political formations.

From these two strands: the unattached militants and the newly interested young people, can come the bulk of the new cadres to provide the hard marxist core for the mass left of the future. If this mass left can be brought into existence out of the trade union struggle against the Labour Government's incomes policy we may yet break the impasse in British working class politics. We must hurry; this has to be done before Wilson does irreversible damage to the structure of the Labour movement.

Neither passive work in the Labour Party nor sectarian adventures in the political wilderness will help this process. Continuing the struggle within the Labour Party in an open and vigorous manner can. Hand in hand with this must go the creation of united front organs of struggle. A fight to get people involved in the Labour Party struggle will be won by example and thorough discussion and not by the invocation of fetishes. Unless there is some drastic change in the relationship between the organised working class and the Labour Party, marxists must conduct the struggle along these lines.

There is no simple answer to this question. We are in the middle of a process which has not yet jelled out. There has been no significant move at union conferences for a rupture with the Labour Party, neither has any alternative force appeared on the scene. (Despite the election reverses of Labour, the Communist Party made very minimal gains and in Scotland clearly lost votes to the Nationalists. It gained two seats, nationally, the same number that the Cornish National Movement gained).

#### PRESENT POSITION CANNOT CONTINUE

On the other hand, it is clear that the present

state of affairs cannot continue: if Labour's election position remains as it is now, its relationship with the unions is bound to suffer. Union leaderships will be under tremendous pressure to drop their embarrassing links with a totally discredited party.

This factor is the key to understanding the question: no matter how low Labour's fortunes may be NOW WHILE EVER THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIONS EXISTS THERE IS ALWAYS THE PROBABILITY OF A RENEWAL OF ITS SPECIAL POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE WORKING CLASS. This is all the more so because there is no sign whatsoever of an alternative political party filling the gap.

But it is clear that British politics can no longer go on in the same manner. Already, there is talk in serious bourgeois journals of the need for a "strong man" (although those commentators who quoted the example of France to back this argument must have red faces now!)

#### THE POWELL AFFAIR

The Powell Affair has shocked many sections on the left. It is to be hoped that this shock will expedite the process of the formation of a united front against the Government's right-wing policies and other right-wing forces. But the key is to dispose of the obstacle that the Labour Party presents to the building of a mass marxist party.

This obstacle will not be disposed of by workers abstaining from politics or voting Tory or nationalist. Neither can it be eliminated by pure industrial struggles - even when these struggles are, by implication, against the state. The large-scale defection of workers from the Labour Party, to apathy or the right, makes this job more difficult because the essential lesson has not been learnt.

Marxists should still remain in the Labour Party but doing everything in their power to initiate the most vigorous opposition possible to Wilson. They should seek to use the municipal election results to convince the remaining socialists in the party of the disastrous folly of not fighting Wilson TO THE END.

#### POSTSCRIPT: AFTER THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

It is difficult to exaggerate the extent of Labour's defeat in the municipal elections held this year. In some large industrial towns, Leicester, Birmingham, etc., Labour failed to win a single seat. Some of the Tory victories were so sensational as to be scarcely believable, for example taking of control in Islington.

In Scotland, the success of the Scottish Nationalist Party was just as decisive and unexpected by most political commentators.

In political terms these results can be seen as the rejection of the Labour Party and Wilson and his Government by sections of the working class on a scale that makes the 1931 election seem mild. Does this, then, mean that the arguments I have used in this article are no longer valid?

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# SOLIDARITY WITH *revolutionary* CUBA

by Bob Turpin and John London

Cuba has come a long way since 1959 and its journey has not been an easy one. Even now, despite the considerable social, political and economic advances that have been made, there remain many problems. In the early days many mistakes were made, and the Cubans would be the first to admit this. In the first years of the revolution Cuba's political role was not entirely clear, but now with many developmental stages complete, many problems overcome and a radical agrarian reform carried out, a clear-cut political pattern has emerged. What we are witnessing is the creation of a genuine workers' state which has made international extension of the socialist revolution an essential part of Government policy. In this sense, Cuba's present position is of great historic importance.

Cuba's advances are all the more heartening when one considers the vulnerability of its position. With remarkable courage, the Cuban leadership has dared to take a political line independent of both Russia and China at the risk of pressure being put on it from both countries. This is especially so in the case of the Soviet Union, which is now Cuba's principal trading partner.

## BUREAUCRACY AND THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The Cubans have obviously drawn lessons from China and Russia. In China it is witnessing a similar degeneracy into bureaucratism to what has occurred in Russia. Hence the great attention that the Cubans pay to questions of bureaucracy. The Cubans have also learnt the lesson of the defeats suffered in many countries through the theory of the revolution in stages. That is why they reject the idea that the national bourgeoisie can play a revolutionary role in Latin America and similar countries.

The Cuban revolution and its enormous achievements have inspired the world and put new hope into the liberation struggles of the Third World. This is the revolution that transformed barracks into schools, wiped out illiteracy, poverty and disease more quickly than any other workers' state. In some fields of education it is not far behind the most advanced countries in the development of new techniques. No less spectacular are the advances in medicine, the eradication of many diseases which plagued the country before the revolution. These steps, together with the development of advanced methods of treatment, have made Cuba one of the healthiest countries in the world.

## STATE FARMS AND SMALL FARMERS

Seventy per cent. of the land is now state-owned

and the remaining thirty per cent is owned by small farmers, who belong to the National Association of Small Farmers through which they obtain credits and regulate their relations with the state. (There were two excellent articles in INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS recently on this topic. Available from: Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1. - ask for the April 19 and May 20 issues; they cost 2/- each, plus 6d postage.)

Since the great polemic in the first years between the "agricultural" sector and the "industrial" sector as to which should be the economic base for the country's advance, many industries have sprung up. The early ones being subsidiaries of agriculture, especially the manufacture of machinery which has greatly increased Cuba's sugar output.

Cuba has many economic problems and not the least is the economic pressure being brought to bear by the USSR. This is hardly the sort of relationship one would expect from a fraternal state, but seen in the light of Russia's attitude towards the liberation movements of the Third World and its policy of "peaceful co-existence" (in part a reflection of its own internal weaknesses) it is not altogether surprising.

## THE LEFT MUST SUPPORT REVOLUTIONARY CUBA

Under these circumstances, and in view of the American policy of laying seige to Cuba, it is imperative that all socialists give solidarity support to revolutionary Cuba. The record of the left in Britain is not very good in this respect and it is to be hoped that this will be soon be put right.

A victory for Cuba's present revolutionary policies would represent an enormous step forward for world progress. A defeat for them, on the other hand, would be a terrible blow to world socialism. It is up to all of us to make sure that the outcome is favourable.



# The politics of the student upsurge

by Julian Atkinson

The traditional left-wing view of students has been that they were a privileged elite who drove trains in the General Strike. This view corresponds less and less with the reality of the student movement. Very roughly since the days of the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley, a wave of student unrest has travelled round the developed world. Rome, Warsaw, Berlin and Paris have been rocked by student demonstrations. In Britain, although the wave of student militancy has been less aggressive and less well organised, considerable changes in the temper of the students have been apparent. Sit-ins, supported by considerable sections of the university population, have been held in L.S.E. and Leicester. Militant demonstrations have been launched against establishment figures in Leeds, Manchester, Essex, Sheffield and Sussex. The March 17th demonstration owed much of its success to student participation and university activities.

The old analysis of the political role of students seems not to make much sense. It was not the students who were scabbing in their recent confrontation with the dockers. Why has student politics moved so sharply to the left in recent years? One answer lies in the de facto coalition between Wilson, Powell and Sandys, which has closed the option of traditional party politics to many young radicals, but other reasons lie firmly rooted in the university based situation.

## UNIVERSITIES HAVE BECOME KNOWLEDGE FACTORIES

The rhetoric of liberal education lives on but only as a facade to cover a university that is now a knowledge factory. As the technology of capitalism grows more complex, so there is a commensurate need to churn out a skilled labour force to service the economy. The university as a function of big business has been adequately discussed in the Robbin's Report, let alone in any socialist critiques. In destroying liberal education - which it is agreed was over-ripe for destruction - capitalism has substituted a stunted utilitarian alternative whose watchwords are "specialisation" and "practical". University education is no longer the finishing school for gentlemen, but the "socially necessary work of training and study", to use the phrase of Andre Gorz, without which the economy would not survive today. The "dilettante" student is now being turned into an apprentice.

As well as the global view of the University in capitalism, it is necessary to fill in some finer details. A part of the British student experience has been a revolution of rising expectations. Even a few years back, many working-class were surprised and delighted that they had been allowed to go to university. This deference to the myths of the self-governing, independent citadels of learning has subsided, leaving many who are willing to question the function and quality of the education they receive. On top of this, the grant situation is such as to put many students in very serious financial difficulties. The present rise of £25 a year in the grants of provincial students is an insult. At Nottingham, Hall fees have promptly been raised by £17.

## "OVERPRODUCTION" OF STUDENTS

One surprising aspect of this situation is the

crisis of "overproduction" of students. This is a well known feature of India and other third world countries, but it is now seriously being debated in Europe. During the recent student strikes in Paris, Marc Zamansky, Dean of the Science Faculty, asked the following question, "How does anybody think that our society can absorb every year 3,000 sociologists, 2,400 psychologists and 750 archaeologists?" Earlier, the chairman of Kodak had raised a similar point and answered it. "It is a bad thing to be in a country where there is a surplus of highly skilled personnel, since, should a crisis arise, young people who have spent a long time in studying but without being able to get a suitable post at the end, are not merely a point blank loss, from the point of view of wasted investment, but also a threat to the established order". This aspect may not be acute in Britain, but, for example, in the cut-down of teachers in spite of their "scarcity", it could be a growing problem.

The response of the left to the student upsurge has been confused. From Wright Mills and Marcuse has arisen the concept of students, as opposed to the working class, being the progressive force that is capable of radically reforming society. Many Marxists - even those who recruit mainly students - or, perhaps, especially those who recruit mainly students - have countered with a rehash of the "driving trains in the General Strike" thesis. They defend, it must be said correctly, the prime role of the working class in any transition to socialism. In a very mechanical manner they then convert this truth into a simplistic truism by downgrading completely any activity directed along student demands. The students must be brought off the campus into real struggle.

## "GO ON THE BUSES"

This confusion of short-term and long-term strategies seems endemic to the British left. Just as some will counterpose "workers' uniting" to Black Power, so at the recent Leicester student conference some marxists were calling for students to "go on the buses" and take part in the real struggle rather than organise on the campus. In fact the only way of getting large numbers of students to adopt a marxist approach is via student demands. Both the L.S.E. and Leicester sit-downs showed that a sizeable minority of students can become student-militants. This does not mean that all of these will become politicised, but sizeable numbers will be. The way ahead for the student left can only be by a judicious mixture of agitation on anti-imperialist struggles, involvement in working-class struggles and a systematic defence of student conditions with a series of probing demands aimed at the University establishment. The fruition of such work, owing to the death of NALSO, will be the creation of a national Student Socialist League.

## READ

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# French students initial

by Linda Fryd, Briton, active in French student politics

What made the French students descend en masse into the streets of Paris and then of the provinces? What was it that brought about the open confrontation on May 3rd and subsequent days in violent and bloody street battles between French youth and the forces of "law and order?"

## *on the spot report*

The week May 3rd to 10th represents a decisive turning point not only for the students but for working class struggles also. For the first time young workers flowed into the streets to support the students and school pupils with their teachers; and it was the young workers, eager and enlightened, who were helping students to erect the barricades: something they had never been taught by their own organisations.

One of the main issues was that within the educational establishments there existed no medium through which students, school pupils and young apprentices could express grievances and their desire for free discussion. Provided with no material facilities, the students of Nanterre, a new residential faculty on the outskirts of Paris, were left with no alternative than to occupy the lecture theatres in order to carry out their political discussions. The intervention of the extreme right-wing group "Occident" to try to halt the movement of "contestation" against the bourgeois university, and the system which engendered it, led to the closing of the faculty by the panic-stricken administration. This sparked off a wave of radical protest among students everywhere, and the Nanterre movement went to the Sorbonne in order to extend the resistance to the repressive measures adopted by the authorities.

### WHY "CONTESTATION" STARTED

The movement of "contestation" owed its development since the beginning of the academic year to the educational "reforms" contained in the Fouchet plan. The main purpose of this plan was to "rationalise" the system of national education - with more streaming and selectivity, and more examinations which effectively reduced the opportunities of working class children to obtain higher education.

The radical trend was reinforced by news of the struggles taking place in universities in other parts of Europe, particularly in Berlin, Milan, Warsaw, Prague and Madrid. With the assassination attempt on Rudi Dutschke, West German students intensified their struggle and extended to a general attack on the right wing press for its red-baiting and smears against Dutschke and the SDS. The following day, in Paris, a joint demonstration and protest meeting was organised in solidarity with the German students.

### INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

During this period, there were also left-wing solidarity demonstrations supporting the students and workers of Poland in their fight against

repression and for a true socialist democracy. And the National Vietnam Committee (CVN) and the Maoist Comites de Base escalated their Vietnam solidarity demonstrations, adopting new forms of action to coincide with the Tet offensive.

On May 3rd, the day after the closing of Nanterre a gathering of students of militant left-wing groups in the courtyard were planning the defence of the Sorbonne against a rumoured fascist attack - the rector called in the police to clear the courtyard. The students offered no resistance to the police but the men were arrested, nevertheless, as they left the precincts, by riot police who had surrounded the university area.

It was this repressive and illegal action which aroused the indignation and loud protest of the students and bystanders who witnessed it, and against whom the police turned in fury, chasing them with truncheons flailing out of the square and up side streets, whether or not they were involved in the struggle. This provoked violent retaliation by the students some of whom began throwing anything they could lay their hands on. This fighting went on late into the night and many arrests were made.

### EXPLAINING TO THE PUBLIC

Over the week-end, the left-wing students union (UNEF) took up the task of explaining the struggle to the public and trying to demystify the distorted accounts presented in the press, which were not denied by the authorities. The following Monday, the struggle was resumed in the form of an organised demonstration in which the political youth groups participated and which culminated in further street fighting when the police attempted to drive the students out of the Latin Quarter, using tear gas bombs to clear many areas. But whole streets were occupied by students who had dug themselves in and erected barricades.

So far, the leading groups in this struggle had been the March 22nd movement of Nanterre, (whose leader, Daniel Cohn-Bendit had been among those arrested and whose release was being demanded); the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (JCR) a marxist revolutionary youth organisation which developed from an opposition tendency in the CP student organisation; the UNEF, (the Union Nationale des Etudiants de France) the left-wing students' union referred to above; the Federation des Etudiants Revolutionnaires (the Lambertist student movement linked with the Revoltes youth group); and the recently-constituted Maoist youth organisation, the UJGML (Union de la Jeunesse Communiste-Marxiste-Leniniste).

Occupying a prominent place also was the School Action Committee (GAL) - formed in the spring in order to defend victimised militants who had been trying to organise protest activity in the schools. The expulsion of comrades from the schools led to the demand for freedom of expression, trade union and political freedom. They organised sympathetic strikes in the schools and participated actively in the student struggle.



# te decisive struggle

## THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party, hitherto hostile to the student movement, which it saw as a powerful and rival cohesive force among the radical youth, capable of appealing to young militant workers, now seized the opportunity to adopt a leading role by joining the demonstration organised by the movement on May 7th. It was coolly received.

On the Friday, May 10th, a demonstration was organised starting at 6.30 in the evening. The police made no attempt to block the students' entry to the Latin Quarter - in fact they seemed almost to channel the demonstration into that area. The students proceeded to dig themselves in; the police waited until all the barricades were completed, then they moved in with tear gas bombs and combat gas grenades, similar to those used by the Americans in Vietnam and in the Black Ghettos. For five hours the students fought to defend their positions, determined not to yield until their demands were satisfied.

These demands were:

- a) re-opening of the Sorbonne and the Nanterre faculty;
- b) release of all comrades arrested during the struggle; and
- c) withdrawal of police from the Latin Quarter.

In the early hours of the morning, around 5 or 6 o'clock, the students were finally able to disperse and the police withdrew. Hundreds of people had been seriously injured and many were still being taken to hospital.

## PUBLIC SYMPATHY GROWS

By the following day, public sympathy for the students aroused by the multitude of reports of police brutality, and solidarity demonstrations in the provinces, created intense pressure on the Government to comply with the students' demands.

Government spokesmen later announced that the students' three demands would be met. Meantime, the Communist-dominated General Confederation of Labour (CGT) and the other unions (CFDT and FO) called a general strike and a massive demonstration for Monday, May 13th. This demonstration gathered about a million people and among the slogans were: "De Gaulle, Murderer", "Happy Birthday, General!" (referring ironically to the tenth anniversary of the coup that brought de Gaulle to power); "Ten years is too much!"; "Fouchet resign!"; "Grimaud resign!" (Grimaud is the Paris Chief of Police); "Popular Government"; and "Down with Repression!"

The students proceeded to occupy the faculties and carry out debates and discussions to prepare future action, and in particular to organise local action committees in order to make contact with young workers.

What began as the movement of "contestation" of the university based on educational grievances had grown in strength with a developing consciousness of the class nature of the repression. It was increasingly realised that the struggle was with the state and all the forces of bourgeois society.



Since the students had achieved virtual satisfaction over their demands, the student and youth political organisations, which had transcended their political differences in order to be most effective in the fight against the police and judicial authorities, resumed their autonomous work at a higher level. At the time of writing it is too early to predict the outcome of the present wave of strikes and seizures of factories which have brought France to a standstill. Much depends on the ability of French workers to grasp the revolutionary possibilities of the present situation. There appears to be no alternative leadership within the existing working class organisations strong enough to lead the workers in a revolutionary struggle against the ossified trade union and party bureaucracies.

## INDEPENDENT CLASS ACTION

There is, however, a consciousness among the workers who took independent class action, over the heads of their organisations, that the Communist Party has betrayed them, and betrayed the students by its initial desire to isolate their struggle from that of the workers. (HUMANITE, the Communist newspaper, eagerly seized on any opportunity to denounce as "leftist" and "adventurist" those elements on its left, including the so-called "German Anarchist" Cohn Bendit, who had been in the forefront of the students' movement).

Although the Communist Party and the Left Democratic Federation (reformist class-collaborationist Alliance) along with the CGT, CFDT and FO, are demanding a new Government and General Election, which will "unite all the left democratic and anti-monopolistic elements", there is still an atmosphere of freedom and relief and of a new self-confidence which the workers discovered in struggling alongside the students and school pupils against a common enemy.

The task of the young revolutionary organisations that have come to the forefront of the French political scene must be to carry out a process of clarification of the nature and aims of the students' fight, its perspectives, and the whole question of power which the present situation poses.

\* "Contestation" - the policy of contesting and opposing the university authorities and their new policies.

# French students show the way

Who, on the left, could fail to be thrilled by the struggle of the French students. Their courage and determination set into motion a process which has sent bourgeois France reeling. It must be said in the most categorical terms THAT IF THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT STRUGGLE IN FRANCE IS NOT THE CREATION OF A WORKERS' STATE THEN THE ENTIRE RESPONSIBILITY WILL LIE WITH THE REFORMIST COMMUNIST PARTY.

The students have filled the void left by the absence of a revolutionary party to the best of their ability. They have done more than this: they have brought back revolution to western Europe. Those who have doubted the possibility of decisive class struggles taking place in the "affluent" west now see that their fears are ungrounded.

The example of the struggle in France is one which must both inspire us and make us think. The overthrow of capitalism in the west is not something for the far and distant future: the French students and workers have taught us that if we fight hard enough and create the necessary organisations IT IS ON THE ORDER OF THE DAY NOW!

## SOME VALUABLE LESSONS

For this valuable lesson we have to thank the French students and especially those left groups who refused to be intimidated by either the regime or the bureaucratized "left" parties. We are especially proud of the role played by our collaborators - the JCR (see elsewhere in this issue) - in this struggle.

But there are deeper lessons to be drawn: the left-wing French students were able to bring into action thousands of students because they fought on STUDENT ISSUES. In this country, many groups have yet to learn this lesson; according to their mythological marxism a student can only be a revolutionary by purging his petit-bourgeois nature on the picket line. We are not opposed to students going on the picket line or taking part in tenants' struggles, etc. But first of all, they must struggle as students for student power.

Should anyone think that this is an abstract question or mere quibbling we would refer them to the terrible mistake made by the co-thinkers of the Socialist Labour League in France. This group, organised in the FER, opposed the building of barricades because this would "isolate the students from the workers". Whilst the fierce battles were taking place with the police in the Latin Quarter, they held a meeting calling for "student-worker unity". This action shows the terrible consequences of persisting in sectarian mistakes. Let no-one think that the consequences would be any less disastrous in this country.

## IT CAN HAPPEN HERE

The French students have shown the way - let us follow it. All over the country, small-scale and - up to now - isolated student struggles have taken place. It is quite clear that the pre-conditions for a more generalised and coordinated fight exist. There are moves to create a revolutionary socialist student federation - we shall support this move to the best of our ability. If this organisation is to play an important role in breaking the present impasse in British

politics it must have the right theories. We shall do what we can to help on that score too.

The student struggles have another important lesson for the British left: that internationalism is vital. The struggles of the SDS, the Italian, Czech and Polish students all helped to inspire their French counter-parts. It is up to the left to develop these links and try to emulate them in the field of workers' struggles. But again, we have an example to work from.

The French students have - with their cracked heads and fighting spirit - shown us the way. We owe them a debt. We can best repay this debt by developing a similar militant struggle here. Let our slogan be:

We can fight! - We can win! - LONDON, Paris and Berlin!



It would have to be a successful call to arms with 2 to 3,000 volunteering from Britain, 4,000 from France, the same from Italy, and so on, if the Yanks are to get a fright big enough to make them get out. The International Brigade is now on the books and much will depend on how things go in Paris.

## WHY THE VIETNAMESE ARE NEGOTIATING

Your editorial criticises Ho Chi Minh. The only reason the North Vietnamese are going to talk about talks with the Americans is so they can expose to the world the hypocrisy of the West and the barbarism and war crimes committed in the name of such lofty motives as "freedom", "democracy" and "Defending free peoples", etc.

I don't think the Russian system is perfect or likely to be for a long time, but considering the set-backs of the intervention forces, war, and policy mistakes, they have a better system than the US and are pointing in the general direction of progress and, that - in 50 years - from fifteenth century feudalism to the space age.

Ian Hall.

(editorial note: see page 11; we would be pleased to learn what readers think of this letter)

# VIETNAM

## *a balance sheet of Russian aid*

(Editorial note: this article has been translated from the Belgian socialist weekly, LA GAUCHE. The introduction is by LA GAUCHE.)

Every time we notice a red star on a supply convey bound for Vietnam, whether Soviet, Chinese or other, we commend it because we want this aid to increase.

Until now, in the face of the tremendous and scientific character of American aggression, this aid from socialist countries has remained insufficient, in our opinion, and badly co-ordinated.

The report of Gerard Chaut, a comrade specialising in strategical questions, proves it to us, at least insofar as it concerns the Soviet Union. Has this aid increased much recently? It remains to be seen!

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Day and night, for the last two years, a flood of fire and steel, without historical precedent, has crashed down on Vietnam, a socialist country. The workers' states affirm that they are furnishing "all necessary aid" - but necessary to whom? Soviet aid, if it increases, always follows rather than precedes the degrees of American aggression. At each stage of escalation there is a "readjustment" of Soviet aid. These "readjustments" constitute defensive acts, which just allow Vietnam to hold on but in any case will not serve to stop the escalation, and, for a very strong reason, repel it. In this article we analyse the quality of the military aid furnished by the USSR, in the context of the armament that it can technically give.

Such an analysis, however summary, is overwhelming for the Soviet leadership: the military aid given is in every respect very much short of Vietnamese needs and, above all, the military possibilities of the USSR.

The restrictions pertaining to the Russian military aid have political reasons: they derive from the strategy of "peaceful co-existence" that the Soviet leadership applies to Vietnam as elsewhere. In any event, they try to avoid involvement in a potential direct confrontation with the USA. They must reply to escalation with counter-escalation. That is why Soviet aid only represents a mere minimum in the face of American air-power, necessary for survival but not for victory.

### IS THE QUALITY OF THE MATERIAL GIVEN INFERIOR?

#### EXAMPLE 1: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

The MIG 21C, the most modern apparatus given to North Vietnam, "doesn't carry much weight" at the side of the Phantom F4A of the American Air Force. The latter beat the world speed record of the YE-66 in 1961, a specially streamlined version, with an overpowering special turbo reactor, stripped of its armament, of the MIG 21D, which is, of course, superior to the 21C.

The frontal radar of the MIG 21C, lodged in the cone of the air-intake is fairly sufficient to spot the enemy. It cannot be used for fire-direction, nor for a good reason, to guide the machine, like that of the F4A.

The result is that the MIG 21C can only fight in clear weather, for the clouds interrupt the infra red. The MIGs 21 D,E,F, have a flexible capacity for use in all weathers.

But:

(1) None of the MIG 21E,F have been given to Vietnam (a few MIG 21D appeared a little time ago in the Vietnamese sky.)

(2) The USSR has given a very small number of air-to-air infra-red Atoll machines. Even when the sky is clear, the Vietnamese pilots must attack from the rear with canon. This tactic can usually be used against sub-sonic aircraft (flying less than the speed of sound) but it is suicidal against faster aircraft, particularly the F4.

(3) Moreover, the majority of the Vietnamese forces remain equipped with MIG 15 and MIG 17, sub-sonic aircraft.

It is superfluous to specify that the USSR has fighters far superior to the MIG 21. The MIG 23, all-weather fighter, derived from the MIG 21, mach. 2.6 to 2.7, that is to say more powerful than the F4A.

The Yakovlev Fiddler, all-weather fighter, very heavy, a wide field of action, armed with air-to-air rockets with very complete electronic equipment.

Both have been operational since 1961 (the Tuchino parade).

And there is a new class of Soviet fighters:

- the new MIG, variable shape, mach. 2.7, superior to the American F4.
- the Yakovlev all-weather fighter, ultra-rapid mach. 3 and above.
- the vertical take-off fighter.

All these machines were exhibited with much publicity in July 1967 at Domodoviedo: and they are already in use (TASS AGENCY statements and those of NATO experts).

#### EXAMPLE 2: GROUND-AIR MISSILES AGAINST AIR ATTACK

The SAM-2 missiles date back to 1951! They are useful against aircraft flying at mach. 1 and above 1,000 metres altitude (e.g., the B52s shot down at Vinh Linh).

Table of comparison between the MIG and the F-4A

	MIG 21	F-4A
Prototype	1955	1958
Series	1959	1960
Speed	Mach 2 to Mach 2.1	Mach 2.5 to Mach 2.6
Reactor	1 "Kuznetzev", 6,500kg thrust (with post-combustion)	2 "General Electric", with 8,500kg thrust, with post combustion
Range of action	1,250 miles	2,300 miles
Maximum armament	1 to 2 30mm cannon 750 litre tank 4 air to air Atoll infra red missiles	4 air to air Sparrow III missiles, guided by radar 4 air to air Sidewinder infra red 2,000kg of bombs

But the slightest electronic jamming makes them swerve.

In a like manner, during October 1967, the B52s exploded the SAM rockets at 100 metres from them. But again you must fire about 50 SAM to have a chance of knocking out a supersonic aircraft. The weakness of the SAM at low altitude is such, that an American F4B pilot (an aircraft which climbs quicker and turns more sharply than the aforementioned rocket) could say: "I saw it climb, like a long pencil, and turn round to find me. I didn't wait for the rest. I climbed. The SAM only knocks down the less perfected American machines, and rarely, "by surprise" the F4C.

Moreover, the SAM (some progress has been made since) needs a range of acceleration which drops near the area of penetration. The result is that the US pilots fear above all the classical DCA\*. (supplied, in the main, by China).

The trouble is that in 1967 aircraft flew 2,000 km per hour, not at 600. The rate of los-

ses is now 1 to 2 per cent. per mission, and the Vietnamese fight with guns against the F4C. (They shoot some down - see VIETNAM COURIER.)

If Soviet aid is increasing in quantity - it has doubled in a very short time - it stays the same in quality (SAM 2 rockets and MIG 21). This increase will lift the rate of American losses from 1 to 2 per cent. These have increased, until now only because the number of missions carried out rose. (2,408 US aircraft have been shot down - a very small number if compared with the means that Russians have at their disposal.)

UNTIL NOW THE MATERIAL GIVEN IS INSUFFICIENT IN QUANTITY

The "Seven Days War" (Middle East) allows us to ascertain that the United Arab Republic has received more MIG 21s than North Vietnam. Two thirds of the Egyptian losses were replaced within two months, by an airlift using A-N 16 cargo planes. Soviet harpoon-rocket destroyers anchor in the port of Alexandria.... but no-one has ever seen even a single one in Haiphong.

Continued next issue.

## NEW LEFT REVIEW KEEPS HIGH STANDARD

Of all the socialist periodicals appearing in Britain, much the most stimulating in recent years has been NEW LEFT REVIEW, partly because there has been a consistent attempt to develop a marxist alternative to the orthodoxies of bourgeois social science scholarship, and partly because the editorial board has tried to place this alternative within the context of the most stimulating developments in European marxism.

The current issue\* maintains the very high standard. An article by Goran Therborn, of the Swedish equivalent of VSC, examines the effect of the Vietnam war on European socialist movements, and another by Sartre examines the genocidal character of US operations.

A controversy over the political significance of Trotsky is continued, and there is a fascinating report on the Cultural Revolution in Canton, from a British teacher of English who is at present taking part in it. A rather less successful series of reports by socialist workers on their lives at work is continued by a militant shop steward in the aircraft industry, whose article

is much less pretentious than most.

There is a short selection of writings from a marxist literary and art critic. Finally, Martin Nicolaus argues, not very convincingly, that the best of Marx still awaits discovery. Twenty cigarettes could well be sacrificed for this magazine.

\* NEW LEFT REVIEW - No. 48, March-April, 1968. Available from 7, Carlisle St., London W.1. costing 5/6d, post paid.

David Riddell

THE "OBSERVER" ON THE JCR

In an article on the French crisis which appeared in the May 19th issue of the OBSERVER the following appeared:

Behind these organisations (UNEF and SNESUP) lies one further body, the only really political movement among them. It is the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (JCR), the French branch of the world Trotskyist movement\*, under the unified secretariat of the Fourth International. It can claim to have provided the chief inspiration and political direction of the insurrection of the

continued on page 14.

# James Connolly - a tribute

"The Citizen Army is out today and if you wonder why, Go ask the Lords of the Banking House if their cash returns be high, For if they are there and we are here and a fight to the knife again, The Citizen Army is out today, come, workers, are ye men?"

James Connolly

It is important for socialists to remember and honour our heroes and martyrs, their example inspires us, lifts us above the day-to-day struggles and petty frustrations, gives us a standard by which to measure our own efforts and a scale by which to judge our disagreements and factional disputes. It is no accident that the murder of Che in Bolivia was followed by a massive radicalisation of youth all over the world, for them the slogan "Che lives!" is as potent and relevant as any economic demand or programme for social advance, and without this spontaneous upsurge of altruism and solidarity a socialist society would be impossible.

This month sees the centenary of the birth of James Connolly, the Irish marxist, trade union leader and republican revolutionary. Connolly was born on June 5th 1868 in Edinburgh to parents who had emigrated to Scotland from County Monaghan.

Connolly did not actually go to Ireland until 1896, when he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party; his close friend and fellow veteran of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, William O'Brien, recalls him during those early years as "a low sized sturdily built man with a pronounced Scottish accent." In 1898 he founded his first paper THE WORKERS REPUBLIC and spent some years propagandising for socialism before being forced to emigrate to America in 1903.

In America Connolly had a variety of jobs, finally becoming an organiser for the famous WOBBLIES - the Industrial Workers of the World. His experiences of this period had a great effect on him and turned him into an able trade union agitator.

But the call of Ireland was strong, and in 1910 he returned with the aid of Irish friends and well wishers to take up work for the Irish Transport and General Workers Union.

Connolly's experiences and ideas formed in the US helped to build the ITGWU, and the Irish Labour movement into a powerful force, the employers were not slow in reacting to this and in 1913 they provoked the Dublin Lock Out in an attempt to smash trade unionism. Despite all the power of the employers, their attempt to enforce the signing of the "document" - a declaration that employees would repudiate or refrain from joining the ITGWU, the co-operation they received from the British imperialist forces, the starvation imposed upon thousands of innocent men, women and children, the workers held firm, and despite being forced to give concessions, they won the right to organise the union of their choice.

The outbreak of the First World War was a turning point for Connolly, he had always urged that the Irish Workers fight for Irish independence, reco-

gnising the importance of the struggle against imperialism. Now he saw the opportunity. The outbreak of war had meant the selling out of a large section of the petit bourgeois nationalist movement, with Redmond sharing platforms with the British Prime Minister to urge Irishmen to march off to die for their oppressors. But a section stood firm and in September 1915 a conference was called of those sections of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish Volunteers, leaders of the Irish labour movement and Irish Citizen Army. At this conference Connolly urged that definite preparations for an armed uprising be made.

Thus on Easter Monday, April 24th 1916, units of the Citizen Army and the Volunteers established positions in the GPO, Stephen's Green and City Hall area, while proclamations of the "Provisional Government of the Irish Republic" were posted all over Dublin, announcing that Ireland was a "sovereign independent state, and claiming the allegiance of all Irish men and women.

The fighting was bitter, and the Volunteers and Citizen Army men fought tenaciously. Despite their small numbers their street fighting methods - worked out by Connolly - were very effective, but the outcome was inevitable and on April 29th Pearse, Connolly, who had been severely wounded during the fighting in the GPO, and McDonagh, signed the instrument of surrender. The decisive factor had been the bringing of gunboats up the Liffey to bombard the GPO, Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the ITGWU, and, incidentally, large areas of Dublin surrounding them.

On May 12th 1916, too ill from his wounds to stand up, Connolly was shot, propped up on a stretcher. How typical of the hatred and baselessness with which imperialism treats brave men who defy it!

## CONNOLLY'S IDEAS

What of Connolly's ideas? What can we learn from them today? Connolly's writings reveal him as a first class socialist propagandist, with a firm grasp of basic marxist ideas, and a knack of explaining them in simple terms. He did not, however, have a deep theoretical understanding of marxism, and tended to echo syndicalist and De Leonist ideas rather uncritically, but on the major questions which faced him, he was always correct, and he had that quality without which the most brilliant theoretician will inevitably betray, as did Kautsky and Plekhanov, tremendous personal courage.

It has been said that Connolly was wrong to participate in the Easter Rising, and that he should have concentrated on building a workers movement. Such an argument ignores the concrete situation, Irish labour could never emancipate itself until British imperialism had been defeated. It was Connolly's duty as a revolutionary to strike the blow when it was most opportune - the middle of the imperialist war. Connolly had no illusions about his fate. William O'Brien recalls: "As we parted shortly before noon on that Easter Monday of 1916 he whispered to me 'We are going out to be slaughtered'. When I asked 'Is there no hope?' he replied 'None whatever'. Yet I never saw him look happier or more satisfied." That the flame of revolution was not caught up from his embers is a reflection on the other leaders of Irish labour - not on Connolly.

# British monopolies' explosive growth

From the FINANCIAL TIMES of May 21

The 50 largest U.K. companies based on size of market value of quoted equity capital at March 31 1968, are shown in the accompanying table. This has been compiled from a list supplied by the London Stock Exchange.

Of the "Top Ten", Shell Transport and British Petroleum have reversed their positions at the head of the table, while ICI and British-American Tobacco remain unchanged in third and fourth positions. Unilever and Rio Tinto-Zinc have moved into fifth and sixth places respectively - Burmah Oils, Marks and Spencer and GUS have fallen back to seventh, eighth and ninth places, while General Electric (having taken over AEI) has moved into tenth position from 23rd of last year.

The market value of the 10 leaders has increased from £5,413m. to £7,960m., accounting for 50 per

cent. of the total value for the 50 companies of £15,976m. against £10,540m. of last year.

This year there are 65 companies with a valuation greater than £100m. apiece, as against only 39 companies in 1967. This reflects to a large extent the big rise in share prices.....

The figures in parenthesis indicate each company's position in the corresponding list for 1967.

(Editorial comment: these figures, which require careful analysis, indicate two things: firstly, that despite any fall in dividends, big business is doing extremely well under Wilson; and secondly, that the growing monopolisation of British industry is concentrating capital at a fantastic rate. There are many lessons for the labour movement in all this.)

	£m.		£m.
1 (2) Shell Transport	1,833	26 (27) English Electric	191
2 (1) British Petroleum	1,378	27 (59) Glaxo	191
3 (3) Imperial Chemical Industries	1,235	28 (39) Plessey	188
4 (4) British-American Tobacco	661	29 (18) Boots Pure Drug	184
5 (11) Unilever	567	30 (32) Leyland Motors	182
6 (19) Rio Tinto-Zinc	501	31 (25) Commercial Union Assurance	174
7 (6) Burmah Oil	497	32 (20) Associated Portland Cement	169
8 (5) Marks and Spencer	447	33 (24) British Motor Holdings	164
9 (7) Great Universal Stores	422	34 (26) Allied Breweries	164
10 (23) General Electric	419	35 (42) Coats Patons and Baldwins	163
11 (10) Imperial Tobacco	411	36 (28) National Provincial Bank	160
12 (8) Distillers	372	37 (15) Rank Organisation	159
13 (9) F.W. Woolworth	326	38 (49) Thorn Electrical Industries	158
14 (14) Courtaulds	316	39 (41) Dunlop	157
15 (13) Prudential Assurance	303	40 (47) Associated British Foods	150
16 (12) Royal Insurance	303	41 (38) Westminster Bank	148
17 (15) Barclays Bank	279	42 (30) BICC	147
18 (16) Guest Keen and Nettlefold	270	43 (70) English China Clays	144
19 (35) Charter Consolidated	265	44 (50) Radio Rentals	142
20 (22) Beecham	251	45 (77) Selection Trust	136
21 (17) Midland Bank	231	46 (46) Metal Box	135
22 (---) Bass Charrington	215	47 (29) International Publishing	120
23 (31) General Accident Fire and Life	205	48 (54) Reckitt and Colman	120
24 (21) Lloyds Bank	196	49 (34) Reed Paper	119
25 (55) Consolidated Gold Fields	193	50 (68) Electric and Musical Industries	115

Continued from Page 12.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent our editorial views.

past two weeks, which may justly be described as the greatest success the Trotskyists have ever achieved in Europe.

The JCR believes that revolution is war. Like Trotsky, its prophet, it is fascinated by military strategy. Its members are inflamed by the twin themes of the ills of bourgeois society and what they call "colonial revolution" like the Vietnam war. They provide the principal French link with the German League of Socialist Students (SDS) led by Rudi Dutschke.

In France they are estimated to have some 1,000 hard-core members spread over 30 cities. In Paris, scratch any one of the proliferating Sorbonne committees and you find their man. Their directing hand is at work in the 22 March Movement, the May 3 Movement, and also in the GAL (Comites d'Action des Lyceens), the secondary school action committees, which are leading the attack on the baccalaureate - and which, if

successful, could plunge France into a crisis even graver than the university revolution.

From the first day of the crisis a group of men has been meeting regularly, outside the ferment at the Sorbonne, to direct operations. Their organisations and names are:

22 March Movement: Daniel Cohn-Bendit

2 May Movement: Kravetz and Peninou

UNEF, the students' union: Jacques Sauvageot

SMESUP, the teachers' union: Alain Geismar

JCR: Alain Krevine

GAL, secondary students' organisation: Recanati

This is the secret high command of the revolution which, with the snowballing industrial strike, has brought General de Gaulle hurrying home from Romania.

\* in an otherwise fairly accurate article this is an error. The International Communist Party (PCI) is in fact the French section of the Fourth International. The JCR has close links with the PCI.

# FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF



## REVOLUTION IN A REVOLUTION?

Regis Debray's book, *REVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION*, has recently become available in paperback edition which brings it within most people's budget. The book should be seen as a contribution to an analysis of the revolutionary possibilities in Latin America and as a starting point for discussion on future strategy. It is essentially divided into two parts: 1) To free the past from the present - which deals with the history of previous unsuccessful struggles and the policies of some of the principal political tendencies and, 2) The principal lesson for the present and some consequences for the future, which describes the tactical and organisational questions involved in guerilla warfare, including the relationship between the guerilla movement and the party.

Throughout the book he emphasises that the duty of a revolutionary is to make revolution and that if your political theories do not lead to this end then you need a new theory. However, in his analysis of past experiences he has a tendency to throw out the baby with the bath water, e.g.:

### ARMED SELF-DEFENCE

This is traditionally defined as the creation of a region in which the army and state cannot proceed to exercise their normal function. The classic examples are in China and Vietnam in the earlier stages of the war. Debray contends that these tacit non-aggression pacts between the oligarchies and the popular forces will no longer be tolerated by imperialism however small their effect may seem. He includes as a more up-to-date example of this theory the exclusive defence by trade unions of workers' job interests, including the formation of workers' militias. The inadequacy of both these forms of activity is seen to lie in the fact that they do not have the conscious perspective of taking political power and leave the workers unprepared for the final confrontation.

Debray's classification of the Bolivian tinminers into this category, however, does little to explain events which have taken place since the overthrow of the oligarchic government in 1952. The new government, which had the support of the mass of workers and peasants, carried out a measure of nationalisation and land reform, but being essentially bourgeois in character it was unable to fulfill a really progressive role and unrest became apparent in the country. A pre-emptive military coup took place which led to the response of a general strike during which the army viciously killed many hundreds of strikers. How a guerilla band defined by Debray as "an armed detachment organically independent of the civilian population, freed from the tasks of civil defence and with the goal of winning political power", could have ensured the successful exploitation of the revolutionary situation and prevented such a massacre is not clear and seems to be a somewhat facile formula. It does not examine how the progressive forces, led by the miners, lost the initiative, and why having conquered power in 1952 they gave it into the hands of the bourgeoisie. To sum up, Debray's main criticism of self-defence is that it allows the enemy to take over the initiative and deprive the revolutionary forces of their main advantages; mobility, secrecy, flexibility and surprise. Hence, although it may be able to protect the population for a limited time, in the long run the opposite is true.

### ARMED PROPAGANDA

This tactic is dealt with in the next section of

the book and comparisons are made between the situation in Vietnam, where it is widely used, and Latin America. Debray concludes that there are several features which would make it premature at this stage to integrate large sections of the population into the revolutionary struggle. The three most important features being:

- 1) The lack of any definite military gains which could convince the peasantry that you are acting on their behalf as well as putting forward an abstract programme.
- 2) The low density of the peasant population in most areas of Latin America, which would obviously reduce the effectiveness of such propaganda.
- 3) The difficulty which the guerillas find in mixing with the peasants, since they are usually easily identifiable outsiders.

Debray does, however, recognise that at some stage there will be a need for agitation and propaganda among the peasants and for the formation of an established base which will begin to organise itself as the embryo of the workers' state. One of the weaknesses, however, throughout the book, is his neglect of the question of how the masses of the people are to be integrated into the guerilla struggle. Nor does he mention the strengthening of the guerilla fight which could take place if fronts were simultaneously operating in several countries as later proposed by Che Guevara in his message to the Tricontinental.

### THE ROLE OF THE PARTY

Almost every party and form of party organisation comes in for criticism under this heading, some of it petty and ill-informed and some of it very worthwhile. The communist parties are attacked for clinging to old concepts which are not based on a concrete analysis of the present situation, particularly on the following three points:

- 1) The concept of "a national democracy", i.e. the maintenance of capitalist relations of production freed from imperialist interference, which will at a later stage be transformed into socialism by the pressure of the masses.
- 2) The theory of a national front, i.e. an alliance including the national bourgeoisie.
- 3) An underestimation of the role of the peasantry.

The theory of an alliance with the national bourgeoisie has been shown by experience in Latin

America to be a failure but Debray does not examine in a very detailed way why the national bourgeoisie is unable to fulfill its traditional "marxist tasks." Does it have a national identity and interests apart from those of the imperialists in this time and place?

Having seen the degeneration of such parties and their inability to lead a revolutionary struggle, he completely rejects the concept of a traditional party and instead substitutes the idea, based on the Cuban experience, that the party must grow out of successful guerilla action. The guerillas are the nucleus around which the vanguard party grows, which means that those who do not physically take part in military activity must remain outside the party. Political and revolutionary consciousness, according to Debray's thesis, can only grow out of participation in guerilla activity. He does not consider whether the Cuban Revolution might have had fewer setbacks if it had had a firm party base earlier in the struggle.

#### STRATEGY FROM TACTICS

To continue with Debray's proposals: they are that strategy should grow out of tactics, the party should follow the guerillas, that the military leader should become the party leader and that within that party there is an absolute necessity for a central command. He points out many of the difficulties which can arise from too great a dependence on the cities.

The forces of the oligarchies and imperialism are always strongest in the cities and operate most effectively there, carrying out selective political assassinations of key leaders. He also suggests that the elementary comforts of city life lead to a bourgeoisification and softening of political cadres and that when it comes to giving aid to the guerillas the city-based people are apt to have a different order of priorities, not realising perhaps, that the guerillas are fighting a daily life and death struggle not only with the oligarchies but with the elements themselves.

#### ARMED STRUGGLE NOW

The book puts the strategy of armed struggle now on the table and should be followed both here and in other countries by a detailed discussion of the specific objective conditions in each of the Latin American states, i.e., what differences of tactics will be required in Peru with its large peasantry and Venezuela with its highly urbanised population

Since the publication of "Revolution in the Revolution" the destruction of Guevara's guerilla group in Bolivia has been interpreted by some people as a failure of many of the theories put forward in the book. Before jumping to such conclusions, however, we must remember that the guerillas were forced to commence activity prematurely and that their network of support in the towns, doctors, etc., was completely destroyed by the police after they acquired an uncoded list of all the people involved. Indeed two of the conditions which were stated by Debray to be of major importance for guerillas - effective security and maintenance of the initiative by the revolutionary forces - were violated.

The book is very refreshing because at the forefront of everything written in it is the basic belief, stated by Castro and others, that the duty of a revolutionary is to make revolution and not just talk about it.

**Barbara Wilson**

## May Day Manifesto

May Day Manifesto 1968 is an attempt by a group of intellectuals to explain what has gone wrong during Labour's first four years. First produced as the "New Left May Day Manifesto" in 1967, it has been considerably enlarged, especially in those sections on economic analysis and on the present position in the Labour movement.

The authors of the Manifesto largely succeed in their self-appointed task of "making connections" between the symptoms of the present crisis in British capitalism and presenting a comprehensive alternative view of the system. They do this first by examining some of the current realities about poverty and social inequality - compressing the findings of such researchers as Townshend and Abel-Smith into a concise critique of the myths of the "Affluent Society". Other aspects of the conventional wisdom of our society are also examined. For instance, the usual view of the Cold War - of an aggressive Russia with 15-20 million dead after the war threatening to overrun the rest of Europe - is demolished.

#### BRITAIN'S ECONOMY

It is above all for its economic analysis that the Manifesto is important. Britain's crisis is set in its world-wide context - the rise of U.S. economic hegemony in Europe, the rise of the international company and the new imperialism. The large corporations have been driven, in order to survive, to invest abroad both in their competitors' markets and in sources of raw materials. Thus figures are given for the 50's and 60's showing the enormous outflows of capital invested abroad. The balance of payments surplus on current account has been too small to finance the outflow and government military expenditure overseas, increased reinvestment rather than repatriation of foreign earnings, and the decline of the Sterling Area have further accentuated the problem. The solution adopted - resort to greater and greater short-term borrowing - could only be temporary in nature. Devaluation and the other crises showed that the illusion could be maintained no longer.

#### FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The future course then can be fairly easily visualised. There will be increased restrictions on existing institutions of dissent which conflict with the efficient working of the system - the trade unions, the Labour Party and so on. Ultimately also the expropriation of the peoples' political identity. Whether the authoritarianism of the sixties will be as bland as the Manifesto claims remains to be seen. Certainly the recent upsurge of racialism, especially among the working class, is an ugly symptom of what may happen as the present frustrations and set-backs continue.

What, then, is to be done? The ending, as with the 1967 Manifesto, is disappointing - though perhaps understandably so. In the present situation there are no easy and clear cut courses of action and the Manifesto's suggestions are sensible but hardly inspiring. We are given a survey of the existing position of the Labour movement and of its organisations. The only way to defend these organisations and to move forward is to make new and more flexible demands attacking the new capitalism on the basis of human priorities. At the same time the different struggles must be linked - they cannot succeed in isolation and in any case they all stem from the same source. The purpose of the Manifesto is seen as an educator - a useful, if limited, role.

**Brian Davy**