

The Week

A PROGRAM FOR THE DOCKERS

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

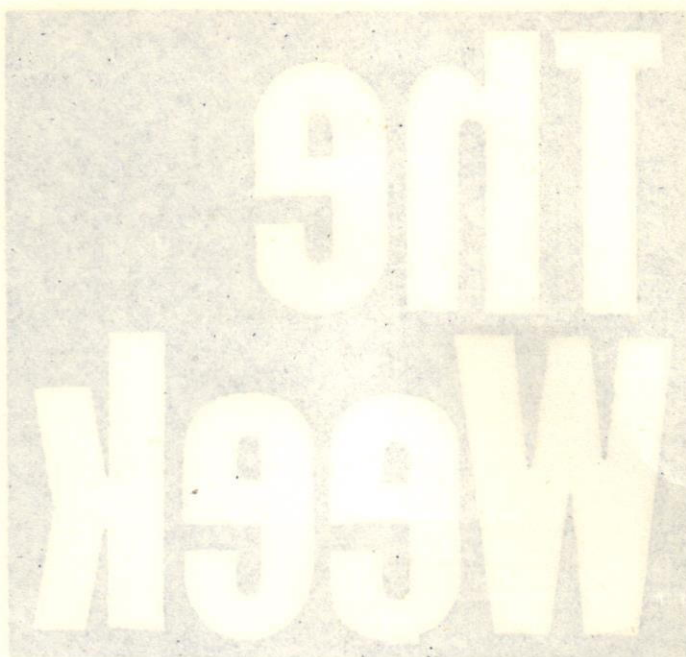
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Labour and Black Power

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BLACK POWER AND LABOUR

The Labour Government seems to be determined to prove just how completely subservient it is to Johnson. The banning of Stokely Carmichael from this country is linked with the refusal of the Home Office to grant visas to representatives of the N.L.F. to visit Britain. People who tell the truth about the crimes of the American Government, whether these be in Saigon or Detroit, are not welcome in Britain. The excuse that Stokely was likely to stir up racial trouble just doesn't hold water: every serious commentator acknowledges that the so-called race riots in the U.S. were caused by slum conditions, etc., and not by outside agitators. Labour Party members should not be deceived by the press propaganda: it is a trick as old as the hills to accuse "troublemakers" of being responsible for actions of the discontented. To ban Stokely whilst allowing the recruiting of mercenaries in this country is despicable and, hypocritical racism.

Insight, in last week's Sunday Times, showed clearly that the rebellion of the black people in Detroit and other towns is a class question. The Negroes of America's large towns feel anti-white because the people who oppress them - the police, the money lenders, the town officials, etc. - are white, whilst the mass of the white population are at best indifferent to their plight and at worst, filled with the most vicious prejudices. The surprising thing is not that the black people have revolted, but that they have waited so long to vent their feelings.

The British press, which daily ignores the slaughter of Vietnamese in Vietnamese towns, is shocked when a few white policemen are injured and when American towns are damaged. Once again we are confronted with hypocrisy and racism. Labour should support black power - it represents in the special American conditions a movement which is struggling for the same ideals which inspired the founders of our movement. If the black people of Detroit and Watts have to use violence to draw attention to their needs and aspirations it is not their fault - it is the fault of the rotten set-up in the U.S. which is incapable and unwilling to give 20 million people a decent living and dignity. The Negroes have taken up arms to fight for their rights and we should be on their side, just as we should on the side of any oppressed people who take to arms. It is claimed that millions of dollars of damage has been done - we should shed not tears about that. The objective effect of these struggles is to divert men and resources away from Johnson's endeavours to hold back social progress - so we should welcome them.

In this country we can show our support for the just struggle of the American Negroes by campaigning against the banning of Stokely Carmichael.

For a whole complex of reasons, Britain's portworkers are now virtually at a crisis-point. The crisis is about redundancy, wages, and the ownership and control of the ports. The crisis involves, in different ways, all the portworkers' trade unions - the T.G.W.U., the N.U.R., N.A.S.D.U. (and in certain ports the G.M.W.U.) and the Unofficial Portworkers' Committees. The growing sense of crisis among portworkers in recent weeks is indicated by the current outbreak of strikes on the docks. There have been dockers' strikes in Hull and Liverpool as well as strikes by N.U.R. dockworkers in the British Transport Docks Board ports at Hull, Southampton, etc.

With all their differences, the various portworkers have a common conflict with their employers on the issues of wages and redundancy. And it is the implementation of the Devlin Report recommendations on decasualisation (due to start mid-September) which is the immediate concern of many dockers. It is becoming increasingly necessary for all dockworkers to thrash out a socialist programme for the docks; such a programme should pay no peculiar respect to the private property of the owners. Such a workers' programme must begin with the idea that workers' rights and authority must be first safeguarded and then increased. We believe that neither official union policies nor unofficial port workers' committee strategy are beyond the reach of serious, fraternal discussion and examination, and it is in this spirit that the following observations are offered at this critical stage in the history of the industry.

- (1) Taking first the view of those who say that the transition to Devlin must be supported, since it leads on towards certain advantages for dockers, and that beyond it lies nationalisation. It is argued too, that the T.G.W.U. is strong enough to take an independent line in the new set-up, and can use that strength only if it responds positively, and from a position of participation.

This argument, however, requires one missing factor to make it a realistic policy. All who are familiar with the industrial struggle, and particularly with the docks industry, know that the employers, the profit-makers, and the Government have certain definite objectives which they wish to achieve. If the union participates without an equally clear vision of its objectives, it will always be on the defensive, responding to their solutions, never proposing its own. What the union must take into any negotiations, any participation, any struggle for further reforms (such as nationalisation) is a clear set of workers' goals, based on the defence and advance of workers' rights. It must learn to think positively, independently, and in advance of the moves of employers and Government.

- (2) Take now the view that total opposition is a sufficient policy. This apparently defends the workers against the danger of participation, against the loss of hard-won rights. There is certainly no moral argument which can legitimately be used against this position.

/Cont'd.....

* This article first appeared in the August issue of HumberSide Voice, available 9d., post paid, from 60, Southcoates Lane, Hull.

THE DOCKERS NEED A PROGRAMME (Cont'd.)

But there is a more serious reason for questioning it: that it is likely to be defeated. If you begin a battle by stating that your objective is to defend the existing situation, you are inviting defeat. If you are to win a militant majority for your fight, it is necessary to explain not only what you are fighting against, but also what you are fighting for. In other words, your resistance must be inspired by a firm view of what ought to be, as well as of what must not be.

The fate of the miners and the railwaymen must be ever present in the minds of the dockers, and of those who express policy on their behalf. If the dockers are not to be the victims of a huge rationalisation drive which decimates their rights, which reduces their will to stand up and order their lives with humanity, which divides docker from docker in a scramble for a share in a declining labour market, and which places the industry at the mercy of private interests (as the railways to the roads, and the mines to oil and natural gas), then a very clear responsibility lies with all sections of the workers' organisations in dockland. Those who choose to work within the machinery of the T. & G.W.U. and its lively branch network, must have in mind always the need for a vigilant defence of the workers' positions based on a clear vision of the needed alternative. If they can conduct a serious campaign within the union for that alternative, this will be a major contribution to the whole future of the docker, and will raise his contribution to the whole labour movement debate - now starting - about the need for alternative, socialist-inspired policies to those of this disastrous Labour administration.

- (3) If the Blue Union can likewise turn its attention to the adoption of positive workers' policies, and away from its present over-defensive and narrow concerns, it too can still contribute mightily to the future strategy of the dockers. If the port workers' committee, without in any way abandoning its independence or its vigilance on defensive questions, can move on from opposition to Devlin to the adoption of an alternative programme, then it too will be greatly helping to supply the missing factor.
- (4) The N.U.R. docks branch has a unique contribution to make to the creation of a workers' policy, for its members have been the first dockworkers to face the threats of redundancy and insecurity which follow from the use of public boards to rationalise industry in the private profit-making interest.

They should approach, and be approached by, the other sections, to assist in the building of maximum unity. Above all, workers must avoid being put in positions where the employers can set them against one another, by playing on their sectional, rather than their common, interests. "Voice" views on what the alternative workers' programme should be are well known. We believe that public ownership is the basis of it, but that it is essential for workers' control to be established in that set-up, and equally important that the existing workers' controls (established by dockers' militancy and solidarity) should be defended and advanced now, and in the day-to-day trade union actions.

We claim no exclusive rights, however, in the formulation of alternative policies. We shall be happy to stop writing of a "Humberside Voice" programme, and to report increasingly in the future on the emergence of a united dockers' programme.

The worldwide protests against the imprisonment of Regis Debray have nettled the Barrientos dictatorship in Bolivia and rendered more difficult its plans to frame the young French journalist. Debray, Professor of Philosophy at Havana University and author of the recently published Revolucion en la Revolucion, was seized on April 20 with seven others by the Bolivian police, accused of leading a guerilla band, held incommunicado for weeks and only after international agitation has been promised a "legal" trial. Francois Maspero, Debray's French publisher, was expelled from Bolivia after being questioned for four hours about alleged connections between Debray and Che Guevara. The police pressed Maspero to admit that he knew Che was in Bolivia and had instructed Debray to join him. The publisher insisted that he had simply commissioned Debray to write some books on Latin America.

The British journalist George Andrew Roth, who was arrested with Debray, was suddenly released on July 8 and authorised to leave the country after giving depositions that the prosecution intends to use in the trial. The absence of so important a witness will deprive the defence of the possibility of verifying the truth of his statements while giving the prosecution every chance to exploit them. Bolivian President Barrientos, who had cynically declared that Debray is "an adventurer" whose "adventures will end in Bolivia," replied to his defenders by announcing that "any new interference in our affairs can only intensify our determination to defend our sovereignty." He said that outside pressure only complicated the situation and repeated the false accusation that Debray had been captured in the course of an armed action.

Le Monde (July 13) pointed out that this assertion was unconvincing because, according to the Bolivian authorities themselves, Debray, when apprehended, was unarmed, in civilian dress and with two other journalists. It said that the Bolivian military has not yet come up with a single concrete piece of evidence confirming Debray's guilt. On July 28 Barrientos admitted that Debray was being held because of his political views and not because of his involvement in any military action: "Debray is the principal, he is working with ideas, he is the one who motivates others", the President said.

Barrientos has been driven to state that Debray faces a lifetime in a Bolivian cell because of his ideas. Agitation must continue until the full facts of the case are freely available and Debray and the other political prisoners in Bolivia are released.

DIAPPEARANCE OF PERUVIAN POLITICAL PRISONER. statement from MIR

On April 25, Enrique Amaya Quintana, a national leader of the MIR - Movement of the Revolutionary Left, was arrested in the Province of Paucartambo, Department of Cuzco, along with several peasants. Thereafter, he was separated from the other prisoners and disappeared. In view of these alarming facts, we appeal to the revolutionary and peoples organisations which defend civil liberties to demand that the authorities extend Enrique Amaya all the guarantees accorded all citizens equally by the constitution and the laws.

Fighting between demonstrators and the police has recently increased in Hong Kong, according to a Chinese student who has just returned from the colony after a three week visit. United States servicemen have been confined to restricted areas; fewer tourists are to be seen on the streets, and nine emergency laws have been passed to help the police and penalise demonstrators. Truckloads of British troops now accompany police carrying out raids on premises suspected of being left-wing propaganda centres or communist hideouts. Within the last few weeks the motor workers' union headquarters, the Kowloon bus workers' union, the dockers' union offices and a number of schools have been raided.

Most riots start in the most depressed areas of the city, in the Wong Tai Shin, Wan Chai or Monok areas. These are ghettos taking the full impact of the Hong Kong unemployment rate of 20%, and the effects of only 50% of the colony's children receiving any kind of education. The police are afraid to enter these districts except in force; 'non-political' teenage elements resent the police and harrass patrols with bottle-throwing or stoning. Even when carrying out simple tasks like erasing political slogans from walls or tearing down provocative posters the police turn up in dozens.

The Hong Kong left-wing press has published a pamphlet containing a number of what are called 'fascist atrocities' showing bleeding demonstrators being beaten by Hong Kong police, the various weapons being used to intimidate crowds and with a commentary attacking police brutality. This and a large number of sympathetic communist newspapers may be bought in the streets of Hong Kong. Curiously many of these papers appear to be published privately by wealthy individuals whose relationship to the Communist Party is not certain.

My informant was among a crowd of onlookers when police were raiding a department store and experienced the effects of a tear gas grenade fired by the police to dispel the crowd. 'The gas irritated my eyes - I had the impression that the skin on my face was peeling off. The gas smelt like ammonia'. Doubtless much police violence occurs when police panic faced by hostile crowds. Such incidents are probably like the recent riots occurring in the United States, with complex social origins. However, many incidents such as the burning of buses and trams have been well organised reprisals against blacklegging; drivers strike against evil working conditions and the ill-treatment of other striking workers.

It is important to remember that for the working-class, Hong Kong resembles 19th century Britain as far as working conditions and housing are concerned. Alongside the squalor of the worst areas exist elegant upper-class suburbs. The Communist Party leadership, attacked in undertones by Peking for being in the hands of the anti-Mao faction and sympathetic to Liu Shao-chi, seems to be in the hands of professional people, businessmen and lawyers who have difficulty in appreciating the fundamental and appalling problems of the workers in really depressed districts. Bomb and grenade attacks on police stations near the Chinese border have been half-hearted and bungled so far. The nucleus of a genuine anti-imperialist workers' movement lies in the sweat-shops which horrify tourists who keep their eyes open.

CANADIAN LABOUR PARTY SWINGS TO THE RIGHT from an article in Workers Vanguard

The 1967 federal convention of the New Democratic Party demonstrated the process which has seen the programme of Canada's labour party become more and more adapted to the pressures of big business interests and their spokesmen in Ottawa. Over 900 delegates attended the July 3rd-6th sessions in Toronto.

A resolution on the Canadian economy was presented as a new turn in policy for the N.D.P. It was pushed as the key to solving the problem of Canadian independence, posed by the framers of the resolution as a major issue. That there was, subsequent to the session some disagreement among the leadership on the emphasis given to Canadian independence reflects the fact that their economic policy itself was not new, merely the old formulas of economic controls in a mixed economy, with the system itself remaining essentially untouched, dressed up in a Canadian nationalist framework. A number of delegates raised this point and called on the convention to develop a policy from the point of view of the class realities of Canadian society. An attempt by a delegate from the steelworkers to concretize this criticism by referring the resolution back to include a clause on nationalisation of basic industries was defeated.

Quebec was approached in the same superficial way. The resolution on Quebec skirted over the real problems. The formula of special status was undefined and somewhat meaningless since the policy failed to recognise the Quebecois as a nation or concede them the right to self-determination. On Vietnam dozens of resolutions calling for a hard line against American aggression and Canadian complicity, and for more party action on the Vietnam issue reflected the overwhelming feeling of the delegates. When the officials brought the issue to the floor the delegates were lined up ten deep at the microphones. To the horror of the delegates Vietnam was buried in an executive resolution on foreign policy which covered everything from NORAD to foreign aid. The first speaker flayed the resolution for not dealing with Canadian complicity or demanding withdrawal of U.S. troops. He received an ovation. A constituency resolution calling for the party to work with the anti-war movement to build a mass opposition to the war was attacked by another speaker who charged that it was a plot to divert party resources to side issues. In the uproar that followed, this resolution was put to the vote and was subsequently defeated.

In a summary of the leadership's approach, Andrew Brewin M.P., in talking about the party's responsibility said "If we are to have influence with our friends extreme bitter words must be avoided". At this point there were cries from the floor of "How does this differ from the Liberals' quiet diplomacy" and "This sounds like Harold Wilson's sell-out in Britain". But the time for discussion was over and the executive's tokenist resolution was voted in.

The existence of Canada's labour party holds great promise for the Canadian working people. And it can be said that the New Democratic party is approaching "the responsibilities of power". All the more reason then for the party to deal seriously with the issues facing the Canadian working people. In continuing its opportunist and liberal-reformist course expressed in the various policy resolutions and its abdication of the Vietnam War struggle, the N.D.P. leadership failed in this elementary responsibility.

The resolutions for the Labour Party conference promise the Labour Party leadership a rough ride at Scarborough in October. The overwhelming number of resolutions are in some way critical of Government policies while many attack the overall direction of Government policy.

Resolutions on Incomes Policy criticise the Government for not controlling prices effectively. Salford City, Tottenham, and Liverpool Toxteth Labour Parties completely reject the policy, while others reject legislation against the trade unions and call for a policy based on nationalisation of industry. The Amalgamated Society of Boiler Makers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers calls for the withdrawal of the policy and describes it as "the negation of democracy". Resolution economic affairs also include demands for a minimum wage of £15.

On Vietnam there are nine resolutions attacking the Government's position of support for American aggression against the Vietnamese. The Bute and North Ayrshire CLP, "recognises that the war in Vietnam is basically a class struggle between the people of Vietnam, through the National Liberation Front, and the U.S. imperialists and the fascist puppet government in Saigon", and calls on conference to pledge full support to the victory of the Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front.

Nearer home the NEC comes under attack for its youth policy. Walthamstow East CLP refers to the removal of all forms of democracy in the Labour Party Young Socialists and demands that as a minimum the LPYS should have the democratic structure laid down in 1960. Resolutions on social security and poverty point very clearly to the disappointment that is felt throughout the ranks of the Party over the experience of this government and its unfulfilled pledges.

But the key debates at conference will undoubtedly be around the issues of Incomes Policy and Vietnam. No-where are the issues clearer. The Government will not easily sidestep these issues and confuse the conference. They are totally committed on both these fronts to policies that are being opposed more fiercely with each bombing raid on North Vietnam, and each cut in the living standards of the British working class. Nor is the government assured of the support of the key trade union leaderships: if the AEU delegation supports that union's national committee policy there is every prospect that Wilson will suffer a big defeat at conference.

Such 'paper' victories on Vietnam and Incomes policy could be vital in creating an atmosphere inside the party where oppositionists begin to build an alternative to the Wilson leadership of the party. Not only would this bring back into the Party those many militants who have drifted away in despair, but it would mark the beginning of the long task of undoing the damage that the right-wing Wilson leadership has inflicted on working class politics in Britain.

CASUAL LABOUR IN BUILDING MUST END

In evidence to the Phelps-Brown Committee the T&GWU says that no real and lasting improvement can be made in employment conditions in the building industry until permanent employment is introduced. The committee, which is inquiring into labour problems in the building industry, was told that a system which is a relic of the 19th century can no longer be tolerated and the malaise of the industry is a result of the instability of casual employment.

TWO LEADING BRISTOL COMMUNISTS SUSPENDED

from Tom Nicholls

The following report appeared in the July 21 issue of the Bristol Evening Post:

Bristol Communists Danny Ryan and Bill Paxton have been suspended from the Communist Party. They were suspended for three months at a District Committee meeting "pending investigations". And today the suspensions brought swift reaction from Yeovil, where the local Communist Party have issued a statement "deeply regretting" the move. But Mr. Dave Edmunds, a Communist candidate at several local elections and chairman of Yeovil Trades Council, admitted that some members of the local party had disagreed over the matter.

The statement describes Mr. Paxton as a founder member of the Communist Party and Mr. Ryan as an ex-industrial organiser for the party. It says: "We consider it a hasty decision, taken without any democratic discussion of the very deep issues involved. We consider it lamentable that solid working-class members like Ryan and Paxton should be sacrificed to keep up the respectable middle-class pretensions of the West of England Committee of the Party".

The statement is being sent to the Bristol Communist Party and the headquarters of the British Party in London. Bill Paxton and Danny Ryan are the founders of the Bristol Workers' Association - pledged to attack "the Right Wing policies of the trade unions and the Labour Government". After their suspension they issued a statement to Bristol members and the working-class movement in general. They say: "We are disgusted and disillusioned by the Communist Party's attitude to work in the Labour movement, and their betrayal of workers involved in the struggle, by refusing to organise and lead the fight to win workers at the point of exploitation - workplaces - for Marxist ideology".

Mr. Ryan added: "At the moment the Party would be content to finish up with two or three M.P.s and the general secretary making a few television appearances".

DISPUTE OVER MYTON CONTRACT from Ian Walker.

Myton is starting legal proceedings against the City of London Corporation to determine the legality of its claim to terminate its £5½ m. Barbican redevelopment contract. Myton should have completed its contract by the end of next year but no building has been done since last October when it provoked a strike and sacked its labour force. The site was the subject of a Ministry of Labour Court of Inquiry in June. The findings are not expected for some weeks but already Myton has suggested as an alternative to ending the contract that it should be re-negotiated to cover the remaining work.

£100 DONATION TO HOSIERY WORKERS from a DATA member.

At its last meeting the Executive Committee of DATA made a donation of £100 to the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear workers whose members are involved in a dispute for union recognition and against victimisation at CBR Jersey Mills, Brighton. Their working week is based on two shifts each of twelve hours. This amounts to 72 hours per week for £20 -£22.

It is a pity that the challenge presented by 70 MPs, in their "Never Again" Manifesto published by Tribune one July 21st, was so swiftly followed by the usual non-event in the lobbies at Westminster. It is bad enough that the degree of left militancy in Parliament is today measured by the yardstick of abstentions. When even this minimal act of "militancy" is foregone, it is difficult to counter the cynicism which paper protests habitually arouse, or to give a satisfactory answer to the jibe at the sponsors of "Well, what are they doing about it?"

However, to the extent that the Manifesto challenges the central plank of the Wilson administration, it must certainly be welcomed. The shocking summer unemployment figures - the worst for twenty-seven years, the resignation of Margaret Herbison, the almost universal disenchantment with James Callaghan, and, now, this Manifesto, all add up to trouble for Harold Wilson at the Party Conference in October. Already a fair guess can be made at the manner in which he will try to side-step his difficulties - a Government reshuffle, new faces for old, the promise of industrial democracy, using and perhaps misusing the vocabulary of the workers' control movement, and, of course, the forward march to the Common Market. There will be the appeal for loyalty to new men and "new" policies, and, once again, time will be lost and another round of Labour supporters disillusioned while new men and measures are "given a chance" to show their worth.

In the run-up to the Conference it is vital that constant pressure is maintained. To this end, the measures outlined in the "Never Again" Manifesto are tactically valuable, so long as they do not mislead people into thinking that such measures can, alone, cure the country's economic ills. Indeed, the options for individual socialist actions are very narrow unless they are underpinned by a socialist strategy, or, at the very least, by a socialist sense of direction. It is this sense of direction which is totally missing in the Wilson administration, and it is this fact that is, to a large extent, dictating the courses of action which are possible. There are ways out of this country's economic stagnation, but they are either capitalist ones in a capitalist framework (involving working class sacrifices in defence of the pound sterling), or they are socialist ones within a socialist framework.

The Manifesto poses the socialist alternatives to Wilson's policies without reference to this framework, which must, of necessity, involve a rethinking of our present dependency upon the capitalist world - a dependency which is responsible for many of the evils which the Manifesto sets out to eradicate. Having said that the Manifesto puts the cart before the horse, it may seem contradictory to wish it well. But, provided that the necessary action is forthcoming and that the MPs pursue their aims in Parliament as eloquently as they do in print, then a campaign of pressure to remove the easily recognisable evil effects cannot fail to challenge the basic structure itself.

"PARTICIPATION OR CONTROL"

by Ken Coates and Tony Topham, 1/9 post paid

A new pamphlet of vital relevance to the 1967 Party Conference
Bertrand Russell Centre for Social Research, 49 Rivington St., London, E.C.2.

In London Friday 28th July an enthusiastic audience expressed its solidarity with the aims of the O.L.A.S. conference on the eve of its opening in Havana, Cuba. Over 600 people packed into the Mahatma Ghandi Hall to hear speakers assembled by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which has taken on the task of developing and broadening the solidarity campaign which hitherto has been largely concentrated on the struggle in Vietnam. Films were shown of the guerilla movement in Venezuela, and of progress in Cuba. The very sight of the guerillas or of Fidel Castro directing operations at Playa Giron drew tremendous ovations.

The speakers, too, found a warm response to appeals for solidarity with revolutionary struggles. Paul Sweezy of M.R. quoted the New York Times as referring to several small dark clouds gathering on the horizon of U.S. politics, and drew a roar of applause when he suggested that one such cloud might be the pall of smoke over Detroit. Other speakers included Russell Stetler of the Peace Foundation and Gerry Lawless of the "Irish Militant" who had himself been engaged in armed struggle against British imperialism in Ireland. Santiago Diaz, first Secretary of the London Cuban Embassy, brought a message of support from the Cuban people. During the meeting, which augers well for the future growth of the solidarity movement, the chairman Pat Jordan announced that the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation was to organise a wide variety of activities in support of the Latin American revolution, including campaigns to aid political prisoners and educational activities. Hundreds of people signed their names to support these activities and a collection of over £40 was raised.

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ERNEST MANDEL ON CHINA'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION

by Jim Clough

A meeting organised by The Week on July 17 was attended by about a hundred and fifty people and proved to be an extremely valuable and interesting analysis of the phenomenon of Maoism and his cultural Revolution. Ernest Mandel, the speaker, editor of the Belgian paper 'La Gauche' and author of many important works including "Marxist economic theory" (to be published this year by Merlin press) put the Cultural Revolution in a historical and economic context which demonstrated the underlying causes and meaning of the subject. He emphasised the importance of the Sino-Soviet split in relation to the development of China over the past decade, and especially the effect of the withdrawal of all Soviet aid during the Khrushchev period on the economy of the country and the politics of Maoism. Mandel made a very strong criticism of this withdrawal of Soviet aid by the Khrushchev regime. He also laid much of the blame for the chaos in China at present on to the structure of the Chinese Communist Party which, unlike the Bolshevik party during the time of the Russian Revolution, was not a democratic worker's party, but was Stalinist from the beginning of the Chinese Revolution.

Despite the 2/6d entrance fee a very good collection was made. The audience was enthusiastic about Mandel's masterly treatment of the subject and showed its appreciation by vigorous applause. Such was the interest in the subject and Mandel's answers to questions that the chairman, Pat Jordan, had some difficulty in closing the meeting.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE OCTOBER MARCH ON WASHINGTON

from Claude Anderson

The Student Mobilisation Committee has begun its work in publicising the call for the march on Washington set for October 21st. The theme and rallying slogan of this march is "Support our boys in Vietnam.... Bring them home alive....NOW!" and the purpose of this particular slogan is to expose General Westmoreland's remarks about the Spring mobilisation when he blamed the protest for causing U.S. deaths in Vietnam, and also to show the administration that the Vietnam movement is on the same side as the soldiers in Vietnam who hate the war and want to go back home.

The Student Mobilisation Committee is doing a great deal of the publicity for the march on Washington, and has already issued two fine posters advertising the action. In a brochure being distributed by the Student Mobilisation Committee, entitled Confrontation Washington DC October 21st 1967, the cards are laid down on the table as follows:

"The major victims of this war are the young people of Vietnam and the United States. Both face continued, growing loss of lives, destruction of families, material hardships, and destruction of their cultural achievements and ways of life. Here in the United States the draft tears young men away from their families, homes, jobs and schooling to fight, kill and die to protect the U.S.-backed Vietnamese dictators. Our schools have been turned into factories for the military. In response to the attack by the U.S. the Vietnamese youth must sacrifice their lives to protect their families and homes.

The war in Vietnam is an illegal, immoral, unjust war. The U.S. government fights the Vietnamese people in our name - in the name of the American people - and with our lives. We have never been asked our opinion on the war. When young Americans organized and demonstrated against the war we were first dismissed as "dupes" and "traitors". When black youth declared their opposition to giving their lives in a fight against a colored people on behalf of a racist government they were called "ignorant rioters". When, on April 15, half a million Americans took to the streets of New York and San Francisco to protest the war the government could no longer write us off with such epithets. But the government has not yet responded.

On October 21 we are going to go directly to Johnson and the government. The National Mobilization Committee has called on the people of this country to mobilize in Washington, D.C. to support our boys, to demand that the government bring them home! Thus this will be not only a huge protest against the war, but a direct confrontation by those who believe we must go beyond protest to resistance. The Student Mobilization Committee in addition is calling on all draft age young men who are fed up with the war and the draft to march under a banner saying "We Won't Go". We will be joined on October 21 by millions of people from across the globe who will demand that the U.S. get out of Vietnam.

The Student Mobilization Committee is working to bring the youth of the United States to Washington on October 21. Young Americans have been among the most outspoken critics of the war. We have the opportunities, now we must use them to bring thousands of Americans to Washington on October 21 to demand that the government END THE DRAFT and BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!"

A LETTER FROM HUGO BLANCO

The following letter has been received by John Edmunds, secretary of the British Committee for Solidarity with the Victims of Repression in Peru, it is dated July 2nd and was sent from the El Fronton prison:

" I am deeply moved on reading your letter and the newspaper cuttings of your march and demonstration of February 19th and your meeting on May 26th 1967. Senorita Rose Alarco (of The Human Rights Committee in Peru) delivered these to me personally, in spite of all the trials and difficulties in getting permission to visit me here in El Fronton prison. At the same time she gave me one of the red badges your Committee had made, and also a great deal of news of your Committee's activities. We are deeply grateful for the great work undertaken by your Committee". (British Committee for Solidarity with the Victims of Repression in Peru). "It is evidence of your deep concern and your spirit of internationalism. Your solidarity with suffering and struggling Peru gives us great encouragement to continue the struggle to emancipate all mankind from its degradation. All my fellow political prisoners join me in thanking Bertrand Russell, Isaac Deutscher, William Molloy, Syd Bidwell, Hamza Alavi, Roger Protz and the two ladies Frida Laski and Millie van Gelderen. And to all those members of your Committee who are doing so much for our country. You have expressed your solidarity in such well-chosen words which strike such a sympathetic chord in me, and the news which you give us of your solidarity will resound from the heights of the Andes to the depths of the jungles and the valleys, so that all Peru in her anguish will know that our hearts beat with our brothers in distant lands....."

N.B. The Committee forwarded the sum of £20 to Peru last week for Hugo Blanco's family and for his and other prisoners' defence. More activities are to take place to raise further sums - these activities will be publicised in The Week.

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MESSAGE TO BRITISH MEETING "SALUTE CHE GUEVARA" from Ken Coates

The following message was sent to the meeting of solidarity with O.L.A.S., organised by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation on July 28, by Ken Coates:

Warmest greetings to the meeting of British friends of the Latin American Revolution, assembled to salute Che Guevara and to welcome the conference of the Organisation for Latin American Solidarity, in Havana.

As a participant in their Conference, representing the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, I would like to be able to tell our Latin American comrades that our London meeting will mark the beginning of a strenuous and active continuing campaign, to tell the truth about the United States role in the Southern continent, to describe the brutalities of the oligarchies, to arouse nationwide support for the victims of their oppression, and to campaign for solidarity with the martyrs and heroes of the liberation struggle. Names of the dead and the living: Fabricio Ojeda, Hugo Blanco, Lobaton, Yon Sosa: these names bring the ring of proud defiance, extraordinary self-sacrifice, intelligence and dedication, resounding again, back into the mainstream of the world-wide struggle for socialism. Over them all towers the living legend, the giant example of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. No Englishman who has any feeling at all, either for the sufferings of the poor people of the world, or for the force of heroic example, can fail to be stirred by the epic struggle which is now unwinding in South America.

The British Labour Movement is, sadly, very belatedly, but with real anger and shock, beginning to respond to the call of the people of Vietnam, martyred in a blaze of napalm and imperialist frenzy.