

Number 3.

JAN. 1968.

WORKERS' FIGHT

1968 —

**CARRY
ON
FIGHTING!**



6d.

OPPOSE all CUTS in the Social Services!

REFORMISM in REVERSE GEAR

From hesitant, petty reforms to drastic counter-reforms in the short space of three years. This is how the story of this second majority Labour Government is taking shape.

From the very beginning, when the tiny pensions rise of 12/6 came together with the first steps to the Incomes Policy, it seemed that any alleviation in the scandalous conditions of the poorest workers, the millions of old people and the $\frac{1}{2}$ million children officially admitted to be below the poverty line, was to be paid for by other sections of the workers.

Now there will be drastic cuts in Government expenditure on housing, health, education and much else, and it is finally apparent that the worst-paid and most exploited workers and their families, the unemployed and their families, the sick and their families, are just going to be left to rot.

7 MILLION SLUMS

The 7 million slum dwellings can continue to fester. The schools will remain overcrowded mind-murdering machines, the hospitals antiquated conveyor belts. According to a Ministry of Social Security study published last summer, an estimated $7\frac{1}{2}$ million people live in poverty in modern "technologically advanced", "20th century" Britain. These people have looked, albeit with growing misgivings, for some help from 'their' Government. The coming cuts are a brutal and catastrophic rebuff to their hopes for change.

All workers have the right to decent security: it is not a gift from anyone but a minimum right amongst the vast wealth of Britain. But our right to a decent

life, at the very least on the average standard, is less 'important' than the resources which the capitalist class can squander, even on its members' personal consumption, because it owns the means of wealth. All the capitalist-owned press has come forward to defend the unfortunate wealthy, in case anyone might actually try to make them part with any of their ill-gotten gains. As for the workers, it is our 'elected' 'representatives' who actually wield the carving knife.

The bourgeoisie are, of course, always immune, for it is their society, where the rules are made for them. In terms of freedom, they have the relationship to the class they exploit of the chess queen to the chess pawn. They are mobile and cannot be coerced by any government which accepts their rules. Wilson's cabinet, playing the game strictly by these rules, remains their pawn, administering their system which, as a system, depends on the present inhuman distribution of resources. Wilson, however, has found his own alternative to the classic capitalist dilemma GUNS or BUTTER? In this case it is quite literally GUNS OR MARGARINE ?

THE AXE

It is not yet known just where exactly the axe will fall. Hospital building will certainly be "re-phased" from the present snail pace to something even slower. Prescription charges will probably be reimposed, and there may be an attempt to institute a "board and lodgings" charge for hospital patients. In Housing, the Government's target of half a million houses a year by 1970 (already terribly inadequate as more houses each year become hardly habitable) will be put back by years. All talk of raising the school

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leaving age to 16 will be dropped - a particularly shameful retreat at a time when many youngsters go straight from the classroom to the dole. And school meals, already going up in April to 1/6, might be put up again to 2s.

It has been suggested that on transport, the minor roads should be left without maintenance, railway stations and waiting rooms will be left in their present Victorian state (after all, they are only for people) and yet another general fares increase can be expected. Up to this point, it has been possible for people of a charitable frame of mind to argue that there were still the good sides to this predominantly conservative Government. That we should suffer in silence its strikebreaking, its freezes and squeezes, its laws against the unions, its Tory foreign policy, its support for US Imperialism's bloody aggression in Vietnam, its own reactionary attempts to subjugate the workers of Aden and Hong Kong and its racist Immigration Act, and much, much else besides, that we should loyally put up with all this because, after all, Wilson was putting things right at home for capitalism's worst victims - or at any rate he was going to, when 'the economy' was 'on its feet' again.

Now it is clear that anything that has been done in this sphere up to now will be completely wiped out, not only by the vast collection of minuses in all the other spheres, but by the great annihilating minus that will send the social services straight back to 1964 and beyond.

Whatever cuts they do make in the social services, and however much extra they make us pay, one thing is certain: they will use the means test ever-more widely.

Under the sanctimonious facade of 'trying to help the really needy' they will squeeze and soak the whole of the working class, capitalising on the generosity of workers towards anyone worse off than themselves. They will dress up

the odious and degrading means test in some new name. But this will not disguise the fact that those already humiliated by poverty - in a society where it is a crime to be poor - are being asked to undergo the further humiliation of proving their poverty: not only to get National Assistance or rate rebates, but also school meals rebates, prescription charge rebates, rent rebates, etc. etc.

From the means tests already in operation it is common knowledge that it does not have the advertised effect of helping those in distress, that it puts an insufferable strain on those who do resort to it, and that the whole thing is nothing but a front behind which the whole of our class can have its living standards depressed. And when the whole class is pushed backwards, the most oppressed sections of the class go down with it.

It is one big lie that if you reduce the standards of the whole working class, then by some miracle the very poor become better off. No. Any extension of the Means Test is intolerable, and must be absolutely resisted throughout the Labour movement.

AUSTERITY - AND RECORD PROFITS

Without a single one of these cuts, working class standards have already been slashed by devaluation. Already nearly 200 grocery items have gone up in price. With the steep rises in council rents (25% in London and more in other cities) a big rise in electricity prices, for many families this will be a year when they can count without difficulty the items that don't go up. The extra burdens on the workers now being planned behind closed Whitehall doors, show conclusively that three years of austerity measures have been entirely in the interests of those rubbing their hands over The Year of the Record Profits.

Just how much further can Wilson go in showing the international bankers that he is not an 'idealist', and certainly not a socialist? If they don't know now - they never will!

These new attacks on our class are just the latest fruit of the service to capitalism rendered by the Labour leaders. For them the "Welfare State", and any spending on the needs of the workers, has always depended not on what was needed, but on the "state of the economy", not forgetting that even then there are what Margaret Herbison referred to as "competing demands": principally those of guarding from expropriation capitalism's main points of exploitation of workers in the former colonial territories. Last year this cost very slightly less than twice the total spent on our health. Not only has this government repressed the population of Aden, Hong Kong and Malaysia. It has squeezed, and continues to squeeze, the workers who elected it, in order to pay for this repression. Imperialism is truly beginning to take back its crumbs!

Britain spends less than most West European countries on social services: and very much more than most, if not all, on armies and armaments. The cost of buying 50 F1-11 bombers would be at least £425 million. The total spent on hospital building last year was £92 million. And yet the Government have the audacity to tell us that we should quietly accept what they are doing to the prospects of decent health and a decent education and tolerable living conditions of millions of workers - all because they are also going to make 'cuts' in military spending.

WEALTH TAX ?

And just to make an appearance of 'fair shares all round', they may talk about a wealth tax, but will no doubt find it 'impractical': as if there were an absolute practicalness! There is, of course, what is practical for the workers, and what is practical for the boss class - and never the twain shall meet. And whenever workers are persuaded that they have met, they invariably find out the dangers of walking with pickpockets!

But there will be talk of a wealth tax,

all the same, for the con-men and their advisers know how to disguise their work. And if there was a wealth tax, there can be no question about it balancing things out. A wealth tax would have no personal effects on the wealthy. But Wilson's cuts will have drastically harmful effects on the working class, which exists on the tightest possible margin. Whatever they say, there will be no equality of sacrifice.

The con-men know also how to utilise the determination of rank and file Labour supporters that there should be no arms for Vorster's semi-Nazi state. It was not



at all accidental that the cuts in government spending at home were announced in the same speech as the decision to uphold the ban on arms to South Africa. Maybe the whole episode was not engineered, but it was certainly utilised in the most cynical way: though the Economist, which ought to know, said that "it cannot be argued that selling arms to South Africa is central to Britain's ec-

conomic recovery" (23.12.67). If arms to South Africa and cuts in health, housing and education have no economic connection, the political connection was certainly used to the full by means of some very shabby manoeuvring.

In any case, for socialists there is no question of a choice between arms for S. Africa and cuts in the social services. The choice is maintenance of the still quite extensive military machine and the commitment to NATO - or cuts in the social services. Maintenance of the profits and interests of the ruling class - or cuts in the social services. In the final analysis, in this situation, it is a choice of maintenance of capitalism - or cuts in the social services and counter-reformist attacks on the working class. The Labour leaders long ago made their choice.

WE SAY :

★ The Left and Trade Union MPs must be told to fight any more cuts in our standards, not just protest. They must be prepared to break with the Government's Tory policies.

★ Left Trade Union leaders must be told

that we will take their opposition seriously when they set about organising industrial action to put a stop to cuts in the social services.

★ Unions must demand that wages keep at least abreast of the cost of living, plus a proportionate increase to make up any cuts in the social services.

★ Committees of rank and file trade unionists should be formed to link up with housewives and keep a check on prices for a Trade Union cost of living index and a sliding scale of wages worked out against this index.

★ Tenants committees must organise to resist rents increases. Increases should be fought by refusing to pay exorbitant rents. United action of tenants can ensure that no evictions or victimisations take place in the event of a rent strike by organising neighbourhood defense units.

★ Labour Party members must undertake concerted action against the new measures. Labour Councils must be made to refuse to operate Means Tests.

Rachel Matgamna.

CANDID CAMERA

**"So what
do I
do next,
Dad?"**



REDUNDANCIES on the SHIP CANAL

74

Steward Victimised.

The big question for dockworkers now is how to prevent the employers from implementing their new rights under the Devlin scheme. In particular the question of how to fight redundancy must be discussed. The spectre of redundancy and unemployment haunts the docks. All the assurances of the Government and the Employers are not enough to allay the certainty amongst dockers that there will be an attempt at a "Beeching Purge" in the Ports in the not too distant future, as the employers proceed to "modernise".

Shipping lines in London and Liverpool have already demanded the right to sack unofficial strikers out of hand: "They want the Docks Labour Scheme amended to make it possible for unofficial strikers to be dismissed instead of returning to the pool, which could be done simply and without Legislation." (TIMES 8.12.67). Amongst other things, this would be used to slash the labour force.

Dockers know that the employers only acquiesced in a substantial pay rise because they were promised the benefits from big redundancies later. Particularly now that there is every indication that the "plans" for nationalisation in 1970 will be dropped, dockers feel less inclined than ever to heed the assurances from the employers and the government. When have the former ever kept their promises? As for the Government's statements - why bother to add up the figures on a dud cheque?

A small foretaste of what's in store for a lot of dockers was given by the Christian gentlemen who run the Manchester Ship Canal just before Christmas. They prepared to celebrate the festive season by declaring 3 painters from the maintenance department redundant. One of them, a member of ASPD, was the Federation Ste-

ward for builders on the canal, and the general opinion amongst the maintenance men, at least initially, was that he was being victimised. They saw the other two men as being only incidental and an excuse for chopping the steward. They reacted, quite correctly, with a great outcry, alerting the Unions and gaining the sympathy of a number of dockers.

How the lack of a clear policy of resistance on principle to redundancy as such on the part of the Unions and the men UNDERMINED THIS DEFENCE OF THE STEWARD, and eventually isolated him even from the painters, before eliminating him altogether, is worth detailing. The lessons from this episode are vital for the self-defence of the dockers in the near future.

MANAGEMENT ALARMED

Brother Povah had been Federation Steward on the now-dismantled Salford Direct Works Department. Starting work for the M.S.C. 6 months ago he began to put some life into the Unions and was elected Chief Steward. He was militant and made things difficult for the management on issues where they were used to getting their own way. The tradesmen, not known, as a group, for their militancy, began to be a little more self-assertive, and the management became resentful and alarmed.

After a bust-up with a supervisor the Steward was suddenly told that he, together with two others who had started after him, was being made redundant. The response from the men was sharp: they were determined to fight victimisation, by direct action if necessary.

The Unions were called in and decided to go to arbitration. The men accepted this, and that was the first mistake, particularly because in the furore over victim-

isation the question of redundancy as such was forgotten. The men argued that there was no shortage of work. The Chief Steward, in a short leaflet to dockers on the situation, mentioned the fight against redundancy and unemployment ('the Dec. 12 Lobby', etc). But it was not specific. The painters were not induced to come out for the principle of no redundancy, although, being in a fighting mood over the victimisation, they would more easily have seen the need for such a slogan.

The arbitrators found that the Company had been 'at fault' for sacking a Steward "without consultation with the unions" - in other words their method had been wrong. The impression was given Brother Povah that a Federation Steward "couldn't be sacked for redundancy". The other two men, on the other hand, were still redundant. The Unions accepted this as a matter of course...

With the victimisation issue 'settled', it proved difficult to rally the painters to defend the two men. All the convenor managed was to get the sackings postponed until after Christmas.

Now a new twist. Povah learned that all the Arbitration Board had decided in his case was to refer it for discussion between the Union and the employers - and a new meeting was to take place. There was a suggestion that this had not been read out when the arbitrators' report was presented. However, the effect on the attitude of the painters by this time was anti-climactic.

STEWARD ISOLATED

The suggestion that the Steward couldn't be sacked and that if a third man "had" to go it would be someone else seemed to place him in a privileged position. And this began to destroy his support. The painters were being split amongst themselves, and no doubt this was now the bosses' intention.

When the consultation between the Unions and employers took place, it put the

seal on this. The Steward couldn't be sacked; and it was put to him that probably the next in line after him would be dismissed in his place.

This speeded up and completed the process of isolation. The next man in line threatened to contact his MP if he was victimised. The Union full-time officials, accepting redundancy, had little sympathy for Povah's dilemma. They claimed a victory, despite the fact that the Steward was now in an impossible position.

To get out of the dilemma, without waiting to see if a third man was to be sacked, he gave in his notice on the Friday before Christmas, when the other two men were given theirs. The employers had carried the day. The militant Steward had after all been eliminated, and the principle of redundancy had gone unchallenged.

FIGHT REDUNDANCY

The big mistake had been not to link up, concretely and immediately, the fight for the steward with a refusal to accept redundancy. The only demand that could have cut across the management's virtuoso performance in manoeuvring was the demand to share the existing work, without loss of pay, in a shorter working week. That is becoming an increasingly important demand throughout industry in the present conditions.

A heartening sign is that the crane-painters on the M.S.C., a "less skilled" group, have declared that if a threat is carried out to sack a crane painter with less time on the job than the three already declared redundant, they will all strike. They at least seem to have benefited from this experience.

*

(P.S. For factionally-minded readers not the least interesting thing about this episode is that it was conducted under the 'supervision' of the Socialist Labour League, with which the Steward is a close - and well known - sympathiser; and in-

volved, at least marginally, such experienced people as Comrade Bill Hunter. It is fascinating, if possibly idle, to speculate on how many pages of The NEWSLETTER would be given over to detailed ana-

lyses and denunciations had this incident been the responsibility of, say, the C.P. or the I.S. Group.)

S.M.

SMALL ARMS for the VIETCONG

At Glassboro' last summer Lyndon Johnson and Alexei Kosygin stood smiling side by side (and it is not often that the latter is seen to smile!) Each in turn took up the microphone and spoke of his concern for peace. One of them, unfortunately, didn't mean a word he said. The other one did mean what he said - almost unconditionally. So craven and unconditional is the Russian ruling caste in its desire for a quiet life for itself that it has actually undermined the peace it proclaims by giving US Imperialism virtually a free hand in certain areas of the world.

A healthy appreciation that a nuclear war will spell the end of civilisation, if not of humanity, is one thing. And here the Soviet Union is 'right' against China (which has, despite its talk, done even less than the Russians for Vietnam). But in a world torn by irreconcilable conflict, Russia's willingness to give almost free play to U.S. Imperialism in the name of "Peace" merely encourages the warmongers. Thereby the possibility of a global outbreak is increased, and in Vietnam the monstrously uneven war of attrition continues, with Russia confining herself to giving technical help to the Vietnamese ... and preaching a peace 'that passeth understanding'. Moscow and its satellite C.P.s continue to campaign not for Vietnamese victory, but for the nebulous slogan: "Peace in Vietnam". Johnson heartily concurs, and meanwhile continues the slaughter to ensure that the 'Peace' will be on his terms.

The Soviet Bureaucracy cares for nothing so much as its own national self-preservation. It will sue for peaceful co-existence with US Imperialism; lucrative trade with the monstrous jackboot regimes of Latin America; Soviet-Indonesian Friendship (after all, is not 'friendship' stronger than the memory of hundreds of thousands of members of the KPI slaughtered under the auspices of the Suharto regime?); to mention only the latest in a 40 year-old list of such hideous associations, entered into in the manner best calculated to hamper the struggles of the workers in the country concerned.

And there is now evidence that even in the field of technical help to which she confines herself, Russia is pulling her punches. The arms and equipment for defence which Russia supplies are not at all the best she could do in this line - a fact well known in Washington:

The Soviet Bureaucracy cares so much for "Peace" that they have managed to convince the U.S. Government that it can go to any criminal lengths to bludgeon the Vietnamese people into submission. There can be no doubt that one of the decisive reasons why Johnson has felt free to press on with his progressive escalation in Vietnam is the assurance of the "restraint" of the Soviet Union.

"Moscow could send many more different kinds of weapons to the war zone if it chose. And so far it has not chosen to send them.

"For example, the Russian arsenal possesses a wide range of surface to surface rockets which are easily moved on wheeled launchers. They have ranges of from a few miles up to 150 miles. There is no physical reason why such weapons could not be moved to the combat units

fighting in South Vietnam.

"Recently a Russian weapon of this type was fired by an Egyptian torpedo boat from Port Said harbour. It sank an Israeli destroyer.

"Why have such weapons not been used in Vietnam? ...

"Such weapons could make an enormous, and to the American forces a most painful, difference. They could be used against American warships patrolling offshore. At present those ships move in their own "privileged sanctuary". Occasionally some small calibre shot is fired at them. Damage from shore fire is negligible. But the kind of rockets used against the Israeli destroyer would end that "privileged sanctuary".

"Also such weapons could be used to reach into the heart of every American military base in all of Vietnam, and into every city. Nothing on the American side would any longer be in its own 'privileged sanctuary'."

This comes not from any Trotskyist publication - but from the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, a source more than sympathetic to the US State Department.

Presumably Kosygin wants to keep things in check, and perhaps have some say in the degree of escalation .. other peoples' sufferings are always easy to bear. Perhaps they want to be able to increase their 'contribution' step by step as Johnson escalates - and are keeping the most advanced arms so as to have something other than direct support, or the threat of it. Most probably they simply want to have added pressure points on the Vietnamese to make them more amenable generally, and in particular if it comes to negotiations. Whatever their bureaucratic calculations, it is a crying scandal that weapons that would greatly add to the mobile weight of the Vietcong are being withheld.

Members of the CP in Britain would give the Vietnamese a great deal more help by campaigning against the inadequacy of Soviet aid, than by the present endless petitioning for 'peace'.

Meanwhile in Hanoi, they have a saying: "If your neighbour brings you a bucket of water, you thank him, even if you know that he has left 10 buckets at home."

P.S.

LETTER

Y.C?L.

Dear Comrade,

the Open Letter to a Member of the Communist Party in WORKERS' FIGHT No.2 was great. As a former member who left in disgust a year ago, I find that it expressed exactly what I feel about the C.P. My own experience was in the YCL, which is mentioned at the beginning of the Open Letter. The situation in the YCL is really no better than the Party. Membership is at stagnation level. Their Great Leap Forward to 10,000 members has been a big flop. I have figures from the Internal Bulletin of September '67: the paper membership is 6,026 as compared with a year ago when I was a member, roughly 5,500. The big campaign to attract members, on which they must have spent a great deal of money, has failed because it has been directed at tea parties with the Young Liberals and Chri-

stian organisations, which for me sums up the YCL. I can't see their target being achieved unless there is a change in their approach to capitalism.

Their activity this year seems to have been directed at the 'big' demo on October 14/15 - timed to come just before the Vietnam Solidarity demonstration on October 22 - a weekend when they sang folk songs to each other, and rounded it off by handing in a petition to Harold Wilson. Harold won't worry of course, he's got plenty of bins: he could even start a fish 'n' chip shop with the petitions he's had!

The YCL must realise that calling for negotiations and signing petitions is going to do absolutely nothing for the people of Vietnam. They must give solid support behind the slogan Victory for the N.L.F.

Yours fraternally,

John Gaines
(Durham City).



JOHNSON'S OTHER WAR

Life is cheap in America, and so are the instruments of death. Last year guns were used in 6,400 murders, 10,000 suicides, and 2,600 accidental deaths. The figure is not unusual, and the phenomenon nothing new. But now for the first time there is a serious possibility that legislation will be passed making the possession of firearms more difficult. For decades all attempts to get such laws passed have gone down in defeat before the formidable vested interests of the gun manufacturers - and their motives haven't been to preserve this last survival of frontier democratic freedoms - the freedom to arm!

The new factor which has suddenly made Congressmen sit up and ignore the powerful lobby of the firearms manufacturers, is that last summer the guns were used by black workers in self-defence against the trigger-happy thugs of the capitalist state machine. They were asserting what Stokely Carmichael called the 'right to fight'.

The new move is a part of large-scale preparations being made by the US Government for next summer's expected Black rebellion. Just over 100 years after a Civil War ostensibly fought for negro freedom, America is on the brink - if not

a good way beyond it - of a second Civil War, inconclusive, drawn out, reverberating. Now the black people are fighting in earnest for real freedoms, challenging the supremacy of capitalist 'white society' at home and increasingly solid- arising with the anti-Imperialist strug- gles throughout the world.

In the last three years there have been more than 100 riots in 76 cities, caus- ing \$216 million dollars' worth of prop- erty damage and a further estimated eco- nomic loss of \$504 million.

The reaction of the Establishment has been nothing if not predictable. No doubt they would like to be able to 'pacify' the black ghettos with napalm and frag- mentation bombs! It is rumoured that al- ready a Southern Congressman advocated just such a solution - but the whole project was presumably thought risky ... for a start, the slum landlords wouldn't like it! Such is the concern for life among middle class Americans, that 20% of those questioned in a recent poll were in favour of 'rioters and looters' being shot on sight. These people have been rushing to arm themselves with all kinds of very offensive weapons - but somehow have escaped the publicity att- ending the black workers' self-arming.

"PACIFICATION" - IN THE GHETTOS

And what of the administration? It is still considering a number of solutions. Army commanders throughout the country have been told to hold special 'co-ordi- nating' meetings with the local authori- ties to 'develop strategies for pacific- ation'. The National Guard is to receive special training in 'riot control', and selected army teams are being prepared to go into the Northern cities to draw up contingency plans for the summer.

In lieu of Napalm and phosphorus, the Administration is researching a number of other possible weapons for use agai- nst the negro workers and any anti-War demonstrations that threaten to get out of hand. One such is a machine that is capable of laying down a carpet of foam

the width of a city street, 200 feet long and 5 feet high, in 10 minutes: it would have the effect of trapping a crowd of people "like so many flies in a jam-pot". There is also Teflon, which is too slippery to walk on; laser beams, heat rays, spinning-bullet rifles, and ball guns which stun but do not kill.

Also available on the market are a super water gun designed to spray a peppery mixture; a new kind of barbed steel tape coils; and a paint gun to mark 'rioters' for further identification.

'TRUNCHEON BEST'

The Institute for Defense analysis has recently recommended all these to the President's Commission of Law Enforce- ment. But apparently the report conclud- ed that "the best non-lethal weapon rem- ained the truncheon but chemical agents were the single most promising avenue for development of new, effective and useful police weapons."

Meanwhile, Black Power leaders are warn- ing that next summer's round will find them better organised. Since, as SNCC leader John Wilson says, "the only thing the Government understands is violence", it is going to be a long fight. Sooner or later the rest of the American work- ing class will join in with the black vanguard. And then it will be Johnson's - and US Imperialism's - last war.

Jackie Cleary.

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80 THE LAST CARD

"What is important, however" ran the paragraph is extra black type on the front page "is to understand that the Communist Party has now become the chief agency for inflicting defeats on the working class."

What is being discussed here? Which Communist Party? In what country? At what period? Perhaps it is in France, where the CP is the largest working class party? Or is it the Italian CP? Or maybe the underground Greek CP? They are all guilty of playing such a role.

But no. The passage, which appears in THE NEWSLETTER of December 16th. in an editorial article STALINISTS SABOTAGE JOBLESS FIGHT, refers to that well known mass party of the British workers .. the CPGB!!

This poor declining little group of largely middle-aged political ineffectives recently bared its pock-marked soul at its 30th. Congress. There, its hope for the future was an alliance with our own political dodos the "Left Labour MPs". This Party, in NEWSLETTER Editor Banda's eyes, is now the chief defence remaining in the hands of British Capitalism!

We would not deny the role of the CPGB in sabotaging workers' struggles. Nor that, with the forces at its command, it could do a great deal in this situation, if it were a revolutionary party. But its scope, role and significance remains as petty as its membership figures and its electoral performance. Contrary to all expectations, it is declining even while the masses of workers grow daily more disillusioned with social-democracy.

If this really is Capitalism's sharpest weapon - "The chief agency for inflicting defeats on the working class" - then the revolution is indeed upon us! God only knows why it hasn't come already...

Of course this statement, telling us nothing at all about either the British Stalinists or the condition of British capitalism, tells us everything about the Socialist Labour League, of whose Central Committee THE NEWSLETTER is, if you please, the WEEKLY ORGAN. For this particular article is in no way exceptional. The Newsletter has devoted much energy lately to fighting this last stout prop of British Capitalism. Presumably when this prop goes capitalism will come crashing to the ground, and The NEWSLETTER will become a daily..!

The SLL some time ago evolved a new inverted pyramid theory to explain the continued existence of British capitalism: on top is capitalism, propped up by the broad Labour Party, which is propped up by the Left MPs, who are finally supported by the tip of the pyramid - the CP. (We hear much less these days about 'the Pabloites', who used to be the prop at the plinth, preventing the CP from expiring under the weight.)

Believing as they apparently do that Labour has been decisively and definitively discredited before the whole of the working class, they are perhaps only being logical when they now, having 'exposed' the Left MPs in a recent NEWSLETTER campaign, see the CP as the last remaining obstacle and turn all their attention to discrediting it. It is only logical, after all! Just kick it hard enough and the house of cards that is capitalism as conceived by Healy, Banda et al. will simply collapse.

Whatever the logic, though, no doubt many of those who buy THE NEWSLETTER in the pubs where it is mostly sold, will be easily convinced that the CP is indeed their main enemy. After all, Ray Gunter and Gerry Healy can't both be nuts!

Or can they?

Albert Catte.

WORKERS' FIGHT

All correspondence, reports, articles, etc., should be sent to the Editor, Rachel Matgamma, 31 Leicester Road, Cheetham, Manchester 8.

1968: — Year of Conflict

Socialists sometimes tend to project onto reality our own wishes for a decisive crack-up in the system - one that would allow, and compel, the intervention of the working class to achieve fundamental changes in the way society is organised. The ruling class and its representatives, on the other hand, invert this and believe, or try to believe, or tell themselves and us that they do believe, in the permanence and immutability of their system.

Whistling in the gloom, if not in the dark, the SUNDAY TIMES consoled its readers at Xmas with the thought that by world standards: "the British condition is a passing ripple in the steady graph of (its) prosperity. In seventy-seven countries, gross national product per head is less than £50 per year. In Britain, beggar of the world, it is £590. If crisis describes Britain, what is there left for India?" Good stuff to go with the turkey - but it isn't so simple. It is not by absolute comparisons with the underdeveloped countries that the condition of Britain and what lies ahead of her can be judged. It must be by relative comparison with her actual competitors in the capitalist Big League today, and with her own past. Decisive changes in history as a rule become possible when there is a sharp turn in the line of development, a qualitative break in the graph of development. By these standards the condition of Britain is far more grave than any lightminded comparisons of the static figures would suggest.

INVALID ECONOMY

Against an international background which has recently experienced darker economic skies than for a number of years, which now sees changes in US economic policy ('to protect the dollar') that are bound to slow down even further the already slowing expansion of world capitalism - Britain has arrived at an acute turning point. A point of crisis and sharpening class conflict at home in the immediate period ahead.

The sick man of Europe is still flat on his back in bed. The quackery of Devaluation has immediately produced all the symptoms of a relapse with complications to follow. The next year will be one of struggle to see who pays the doctor's bills. Whatever the 'promises' of an advance in '68 or '69, even Britain's most loyal physicians have to admit that things will get worse - possibly much worse - before there is a chance for them to get better.

The bourgeoisie is openly experiencing a crisis of confidence, all the more sharp in that it is the cumulative result of the decades of living off its fat, in a world from which the reality of Britain's undermined and sinking condition - both absolute and relative - was deliberately filtered out. Now reality has begun to break through the blinkers and the chickens are beginning to come home to roost. In fact they are roosting with a vengeance. And the shock of Devaluation continues to reverberate through the weakened frame of British Capitalism. Talk of a Grand Coalition, á

la Bonn, to give the Government sufficient strength and stability to ruthlessly steam-roller through the drastic structural changes which British capitalism needs, has alternated with slightly abashed threats of a British version of Gaullist Bonapartism and talk of the need for a stronger direct role for the state machine.

Robens, one-time leading Labour politician, has opined that Britain should be run as a giant commercial enterprise... Cecil King, who used to go 'Forward with the People' says: "We are coming near to the failure of Parliamentary Government." The newspapers unanimously report these opinions as representative of the thinking of a large body of British businessmen, frustrated at the inability of 'the politicians' to solve the problems of the system of which they are themselves the personification. They are likewise impatient with the Conservatives who would hardly pursue different policies than Wilson - and with much greater difficulties in handling the labour movement.

Heath's schoolboy language in Parliament, arraigning Labour for its "Flabby response" to the "challenge of devaluation" etc., illustrated the fatuity of the Tory Conservative alternative to the Labour Conservative government. Of course they would feel more secure under Heath who isn't open to the same pressures that the Labour leaders are said to feel from the L.P. ranks and the Trade Unions - but this is a continuation of the head-in-the-sand attitude that has allowed the present crisis to build up. Heath, at this stage, couldn't even begin to do for Capitalism what Wilson is doing, though he is sure to capitalise on such gifts from the L.P. leadership as the coming legislation on the Unions, if Labour manages to establish it firmly as the norm.

A COALITION - OF POLICY

Heath has had to promise support to the Government if they pursue a policy of: cuts in the Social Services; shackles on the Trade Unions; tax 'reforms' to give more to the big bourgeoisie; & the abandonment of all further nationalisation. There is no room for doubt now that these are Wilson's policies. Nevertheless the dangers in the situation, the imminence of the social conflicts that will come in the next period as the Government tries to hold the line against wages, with food prices alone rising by 10%, have provoked differences of opinion, and disagreements amongst sections of the capitalists. In particular the opposition to the arms cut-back which the Government has reluctantly accepted is strong and seemingly growing. There have been reports of an apparent threat of large-scale resignations by armed-forces officers in protest. If the situation becomes really sharp we can expect such divisions to increase.

Contributing to the general disaffection is the fact that Devaluation is proving by no means an automatic solution to anything. Reports from America indicate that British exporters there prefer to sell at the old prices with a bigger profit margin rather than cut prices and drive for expansion. The National Institute for Economic and Social Research has come forward with estimates that flatly contradict the official forecasts that the Balance of Payments will show a surplus, to be followed by an export-led boom, from the Autumn of 1968. They reckon 1969 as the earliest possible date for a surplus and an easing of restrictions.

This only increases the pressure for what was all along implicit in Devaluation: the need for a sharp swing right to make Devaluation work, with another attack on living standards and on the Social Services. The Government possess the power and determination to decree these things. For them it is now a matter of preparing the forces and implements to enforce it, and finding means to contain the resistance to their policies which they rightly expect from the Labour movement.

The Confederation of British Industries has become more and more belligerent in its demands for strong state intervention against striking workers. Previously sceptical

about the effects of legislation ("you can't put thousands of workers in jail") they recently submitted evidence to the Donovan Commission on the Trade Unions, demanding a system of fines to be automatically collected from pay packets of 'unofficial' strikers. They believe that 'public opinion' would be willing to accept this. It is now obvious that when the Commission reports in the Spring, it will be the signal for a new set of laws against the Unions - this time with sanctions as teeth: a statutory 'cooling off' period, legally enforceable contracts, possibly fines as above, and so on.

1967 saw a growing state intervention against objectively small strikes such as the Barbican (Cover Photo), where police thugs were used in force. Moves in 1968 to carry out the increasingly strident demands of the G.B.I., the Conservatives, the bourgeois state functionaries and the bourgeois Press to deal forcefully with the Unions, must mean ever-growing State intervention, and in turn the politicising of the economic struggles which are inevitable. The highly-conscious bunch of bourgeois servants misnamed the Labour Government is aware of this, and can hardly desire it. It knows the dangers it faces from the alienation of the ranks of the Labour Party and the Unions, the people whose hides are at stake in this conflict. Wilson's crisis is summed up in the fact that he can hardly avoid it. He is caught in the cross pressures. He must run capitalism according to its own logic - which now demands tighter belts from a working class which will resist. To restore general confidence on the part of the bourgeoisie and the middle class masses (these now alienated by the disappointments of this Government's performance), Wilson needs to govern - and be seen to govern - with a strong hand.

THE UNIONS AND LABOUR

The Labour Government's only hope of avoiding big clashes is that the TUC and the Union Bureaucrats, traditional saviours of Labour Governments - and not only Labour Governments - in this sort of situation, will pull some of the coals out of the fire. On another part of the same front Wilson and company hope that the 'Left' of the Labour Party can be contained - or suppressed.

But the Union leaders are also on the spot. The wage-freeze they are asked to prop up against the assaults of their own members, looks like a candidate for the title "The Long, Long Freeze". It would have to last until 1969 at least, with very little let up. Even if they committed themselves, the leaders would find it increasingly difficult to deliver the goods. They will also find it difficult to get a united bureaucratic front to support the Government. Though the T.U.C. leaderships would seem to be amenable, and slunk away with their 'estimates' between their legs when their timid demand for a 3-4% norm was recently turned down, other moods exist side by side, basically the product of the self-confidence of the working class today, a mood in sharp contrast to the depression of defeat which prevailed in the 1920s and '30s. Such Unions as the AEU, with a new-broom, 'left' leadership which must show some "form" to the members, seem determined to ignore the Government and press ahead with demands for a "substantial" pay increase, and other concessions. The T. & G.W.U. likewise stands apart.

The big Engineers' pay demand alone affects 3 million workers, and would be an obliterating breach in the wages dam. The question is: Can the Engineers break through the Wage Freeze? This in turn boils down to: Are the leadership willing to fight and to challenge the State? Scanlon says he is. The militant mood of expectation of the engineering workers makes any retreat at this stage very difficult, but not impossible, and it by no means rules out manoeuvres to release some of the pressure. If the AEU presses ahead, very serious battles can develop. A formidable front could be built in support of the engineers and for the T.&G.W.U.'s slogan for a £15 minimum wage.

Whether it will or not, whether the 'lefts' will fight or run, will become apparent in February at the Union Executives' meeting to discuss policy for the coming year.

LABOUR'S DREAMING 'LEFT'

The other 'threat' to the policies of capitalist rationalisation is from the rank and file militants of the Labour Party - and the 'left', including the M.P.s. Last time we saw these gentlemen they were enthusiastically welcoming Devaluation, wistfully seeing it as a 'victory for the left'. But almost immediately they had to disengage, from what must be one of the shortest political honeymoons in history, in face of the notorious LETTER OF INTENT. Why on earth they ever imagined that Devaluation in the present conditions could occur without the concurrence, collusion and supervision of International Capitalism, they have yet to tell us, as also how they came to forget that Devaluation in itself amounted to an attack on the workers' living standards.

Since Devaluation the Left Wing of the Parliamentary L.P. "has been living in a Walt Disney dream world of ever-increasing fantasy", observed Hugh Noyes in THE TIMES, Dec. 22nd. One needs only to add that the gentlemen socialists Foot, Heffer, Mendleson and ilk live permanently in this world of day-dreaming evasion of the real issues in any situation. But dreamers, even determined dreamers, are sometimes quite rudely woken up. The sharpening situation between the working class and the Unions on the one hand and the Government on the other has taken them by the shoulders and is beginning to shake them. The shaking will become more violent. The drastic cuts in the Social Services, coming together with the possibility of big industrial conflicts will face them with the choice of going along with Wilson and continuing to acquiesce - or breaking with the policies of the last 3 years. They may not have the choice of acquiescing and protesting. The sharpness of the situation means that their half-serious opposition might inadvertently place them at the head of a serious movement. There is also a big pressure building up from Right and Centre MPs, to discipline the Tribunites. They fear to support the odious policies of Wilson, while the 'left' is free to ingratiate itself with the rank and file with their weak protests. The TIMES reported one former Minister as saying it might be necessary to expel up to forty Left MPs! Just possibly the TRIBUNE playboys will be forced to either fight or hide their heads. If they scream and shout a bit they could very well start a landslide on the head of Wilson's Government.

All in all 1968 will be a year of possibilities, in face of struggle, of gains for our politics. Objectively, big strides would be possible, if it were not for the state of the movement. But we can only begin from where we are. Marxists must become involved as closely as possible with the struggles as they develop: in the Unions, in the Labour Parties and also to a lesser extent in the Communist Party and YCL, where there is sure to be a reflection of the developments outside. 1968 will certainly be Crisis Year for British Capitalism. For us, it will be what we make of it.

"INTO THE WHIRLWIND"

Reviewed by Graeme Atkinson

It has long been an established fact that a river of blood separates Trotskyist politics from Stalinism. Anyone who is in doubt as to why this is so should read INTO THE WHIRLWIND. * This dramatic

record of three years spent by a communist in Stalin's jails and concentration camps sonveys some of the reasons for the irreconcilability of Trotskyism to Stalinism.

* Collins/Harvill. 45s.

Evgenia Ginsburg spent a total of 18

years in confinement in jails and labour camps. Luckily she survived to record in writing the drama of these years. The wife of a Central Committee member of the CPSU - not a Trotskyist, nor even a vague oppositionist - she was among the first to be arrested in 1937. For the three years before that, she had been persistently called for questioning, because she had known an academic who had been branded as "a Trotskyist".

That Ginsburg's politics are essentially Stalinist deepens the insight into the situation of the workers in the USSR during the Moscow Trials. More than this; we have revealed to us a veritable panorama, exposing the depths to which the frenzied Stalinist bureaucracy was prepared to go to silence and strangle independence of mind, let alone political opposition.

This is illustrated where one prisoner tells that she was imprisoned because the bureaucrats had "...exceeded the quota for Trotskyists but were short on Nationalists...". Once arrested, brutality comparable to that meted out by Hitler's fascist thugs was the rule rather than the exception. Hence, it is described how Klara, a German communist, "lay down on her bed, turned over on her stomach and pulled up her skirt. Her calves and buttocks were monstrously scarr-ed, as though wild beasts had clawed at her flesh..... 'Zis Gestapo' she jerked herself up and held out both hands: 'And zis - NKVD!'".

We are also told of Zina Abramavo, the wife of a fallen bureaucrat, who, after being interrogated in a Kazan prison lay "bloodstained" and "half-conscious" on the floor of her prison cell which, like cells in every other Soviet jail, was overcrowded because of the scale on which arrests were taking place. Fortunately for Ginsburg, she was interrogated before Stalin's lackeys were given permission to beat up prisoners.

The question which all those who stand beneath the banner of Marxism must ask, is why these events could occur. And for our answer it is futile to look, as the latter-day Stalinists and bourgeois historians do, solely to the personality of Stalin. Instead we must evaluate these

events in materialist fashion. By doing this we reach the inescapable fact that Stalin was a figurehead of a social group, a bureaucracy. This had arisen for a variety of reasons, but mainly because the Soviet working class, already decimated by a bitter Civil War, was a small minority of the population and was not successful in maintaining genuine Soviet power, especially after the tide of European revolution had ebbed.

The only politics capable of maintaining the revolutionary spirit were Leninist politics, the banner of which was carried after Lenin's death by Trotsky and the Left Opposition. It was these politics, the full expression of the resolution of the workers to resist them, which posed the biggest threat to the parasitic bureaucrats. If they were to survive as a social group, then they had to liquidate Bolshevism, morally and physically. As part of this campaign, massive "show" trials were organised and the leaders of the Bolshevik Party sentenced and executed for fantastic and fictional 'crimes'. Driven by fear and hatred of Leninism, as well as fear of the masses they oppressed, the Stalinists murdered not only communists and oppositionists, but millions of workers and peasants. All of these people suffered the torments and anguish described in Ginsburg's moving and dramatic account. Millions did not survive.

It is interesting to note where the leaders of the "Communist" Party of Great Britain stood on these events. These aspiring "leaders" of the working class stood four-square with the Stalinist murderers. Gollan, Rothstein, Dutt, Klugman and the bourgeois lawyer Pritt wallowed in the political and moral filth of the Moscow Trials, fully conscious of the fact that the leadership of the Bolshevik Party - men who had organised the greatest revolution in the history of mankind, who had built the Communist International and who had given revolutionary inspiration to the world's workers - was being systematically wiped out. Today these same gentlemen, now wallowing in Stalino-reformism, get themselves off the hook with a few hypocritical phrases and non-Marxist explanations for the terror they actively supported.



**“A
Gentle-
man’s
War” !**

Less and less in recent months have the propagandists of US imperialism put much effort into keeping up the hollow pretence that the war in Vietnam was being fought for the sake of the Vietnamese. These days they take little trouble to conceal the true nature of their aims in Asia. In a pre-election attempt to whip up chauvinistic fervour, the Johnson administration abruptly dropped the Knight-in-Shining-Armour Image which it had been carefully cultivating, and reverted to something much closer the mark of reality. In the third week of October three senior Government officials began to talk about the importance of maintaining the world 'balance of power'. Eugene Rostow "underlined the point that in embracing the doctrine of the balance of power the LBJ administration has, in effect, served notice on the world that it is prepared to strike down the spirit of popular revolution wherever it is

thought to constitute any kind of challenge to America's own feelings of assurance and security." (Anthony Howard OBSERVER, 21.10.67) The same week Theodore Sorensen wrote in the Saturday Review that he feared "American escalation will continue to be offset by more troops from the North and less help from the South..." (TIMES 17.10.67, our emphasis)

This doesn't mean, of course, that they have taken to telling the truth. The following, however, are a few random glimpses of Vietnamese realities, which have recently appeared in the Press. They require no comment - for they themselves serve to comment on each other.



Dr. Herbert Needleman, giving evidence to the Senate Refugee Sub-committee, "specified that in Quang Ngai, 80% of the civilian casualties are war wounded, at Quang Tri they represent 120 of the 200 cases requiring serious surgery a month, and at Danang, about 2,300 war casualties require surgery every month. He added that he had seen napalm burns in every surgical hospital he had visited. ... In 1961, one case of bubonic plague was reported, in 1965, 4,500 cases were reported, and during July of this year there were 90 cases in Quang Ngai Province alone." (TIMES 9.10.67)



"Food is as wholesome and plentiful as in any motel - pancakes and maple syrup for breakfast, chicken with sweetcorn at midday, hamburgers for dinner. ... Combat rations are the subject of many a wry joke, but there is no bully-beef-and-cocoa diet. Neat khaki tins contain ham and beans, apricots, the best stewed steak, crackers and processed cheese. With every set a tin opener is thoughtfully provided. ... Even sentiment has been systematised. While waiting for a transport aircraft a G.I. can pick a pre-drafted message from a list of 50, give a code number to the operator, and tell the folks at home: "Congratulations" or "Don't worry about me, I'll be home

soon". Troops are encouraged to tape-record Christmas messages for their families. They read the authorized message, army issue, into a microphone, and an NCO plays it back afterwards to make sure it has not been 'personalised'." (TIMES, 8.11.67)

☆

"Sometimes, when a Vietcong force was found, it would be chased by troops in "choppers", units being lifted and dumped here, there and everywhere, to confront the enemy as he attempted to escape. But often in this thick jungle, a whole enemy regiment will be "lost" within a few square miles. Then the word may go to Guam (and now to Thailand) and soon the unseen B-52s will obliterate one square mile of where the regiment might be." (Stewart Harris, Saigon, TIMES 10.5.67).

☆

The same reporter had talked to three young middle class Vietnamese in Saigon a few weeks earlier. They were not "communists", nor NLF supporters, but had little enthusiasm for the war "... 'Well, what have we got to defend? Liberty? There is none.'" And a little later - "What about the Vietcong? They said a lot of people shot by the Vietcong had been taking for themselves money given for the people by the Americans, in the villages, for example. ... What about the village elections? ... They voted because if they didn't the village chiefs would think them Vietcong and of course they were frightened of officials." (TIMES 17.4.67)

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"When asked if there had been cases in Vietnam where the effect of defoliants lasted longer than a single season, one high-level American agricultural expert here said he preferred not to answer the question." (Elizabeth Pond, Saigon 29.11.67 - CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR)

☆

"It has been asked whether Mr. Bunker can sleep at night. Of course he can. Go look at his house: the entire street is

barricaded and barred, you must receive authorisation to drive through it. There are searches." (HOA BINH, a Saigon paper, quoted TIMES 16.9.67. Ellsworth Bunker is US Ambassador in Saigon.)

C O R R U P T I O N

"Corruption abounds in South Vietnam's police force... Examples of underhand dealings among Vietnam's police are there for all to see..." "... according to one top police adviser, evidence exists of police corruption right up to the higher levels in some provinces" ... "From only 19,000 men in 1962, the number of police rose to 23,000 in 1964, 52,000 in 1965, 60,000 in 1966, and may reach the goal of 74,000 by the end of this year." (CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR 29.11.67).

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"There are about 50 civilian show troupes catering to the 1,000 or so service clubs in Vietnam, and most of them are fairly scruffy. One more or less typical group is headed by a skinny, middle-aged comedian from Texas who readily admits to being a mediocre entertainer. His act includes a breathless 18-year-old chanteuse from the Midwest, a sinuous Israeli go-go dancer and a tinny four-piece Filipino band. The act isn't very good, but, for want of anything better, the GIs eat it up, and the Texan grosses as much as \$500 on a single week-end night." (NEWS-WEEK 25.12.67 - an article exposing in detail the pay-off which US service club managers get for booking in a civilian show troupe.)

☆

"Now, most of the theatres have stopped and cinemas are irregular. Instead, the artists have split into small groups to give open-air performances at night. They find a small square and the audience gathers, bringing boxes and chairs. Music, dancing and patriotic plays are preferred." (Jøergen Petersen, GUARDIAN, 25.11.67, on life in Hanoi and Haiphong under the bombing.)

"About 1,500 tons of napalm is dropped in an average month. ... Igniting with a roar and a pillar of red flame and oily black smoke, napalm spatters and spreads into underground fortifications. Stories are told of enemy troops being suffocated by the sudden exhaustion of the oxygen required to feed the flames, but it is thought that they have died by gasping the overheated air." (TIMES, 9.12.67)

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"But we do live a gentleman's war out here. ... We sit down to dinner attended by stewards and we go to bed between sheets. ... There are so many dawn solutions to the war it makes us mad we're not going out for them. You could just start at the DMZ and move north, bombing everything. I think Haiphong should be annihilated. It's only one big warehouse now. There aren't such things as civilians over there. I've seen kids with rifles shooting at us."

Newman accepts pretty calmly that many people in America 'don't care much' about the war, though 'it wouldn't be a bad idea if Madison Avenue came up with a Hate-the-Vietcong campaign like some of those old anti-German films.'" (A US Navy bomber pilot on the USS Intrepid, talking to Mark Frankland. OBSERVER, 23.9.67).

☆

"Absentee landlords are still riding in with pacifying troops, not merely to grab back their lands but to extort back rents for the time they fled the Vietcong. ... Naturally, the Vietcong have an easier time distributing the land they seize by force than could any government that is beset by intense problems of title and tradition. ... Add to this that landlords still extort rents as high as 60 per cent of the product of a rice field, and it is not hard to see why peasants keep their arms. Vietnamese officials will concede all this, but yet insist that you cannot replace one injustice with another..." (Fred Emery, Saigon 10.3.67. TIMES).

☆

"In the base chapels or standing by

front-line altars, chaplains will be hard at work, endeavoring to rationalise - as they do in every war - the inconsistency between the soldier's task and the mood of the moment. Candlelight masses and sermons, staggered so that all men as they come off duty can have a chance to attend them, have been carefully arranged. ...

'What do I expect out of Christmas? Hell, man - nothin'. I'm purely givin' this year. Ahh'm deliverin' my presents early, too, so the truce don't interfere. Yep, goin' around callin' on all the Victor Charlies I can find with my little packages. My writin' on the outside says 'Merry Xmas' an' I just pull the pin and deliver.'" (A sergeant in the Special Forces, quoted in an article by Ian Ward, SUNDAY TELEGRAPH 24.12.67)

G E N O C I D E

"The province of Tay Ninh, which we traversed most often, is precisely the operational zone where in February and March of this year, US Headquarters launched "Operation Junction City", the biggest operation involving the widespread and systematic razing of the countryside.

Cited from American records, 45,000 men, 800 tanks, 1,200 bombers and helicopters were used in the operation after gigantic preparation of the ground and massive bombings by B-52s and spreading of defoliants.

The testimony which we brought back to add to the files of the Tribunal mostly concern the consequences of those military actions launched in a province exclusively composed of fields and forests, the only purpose of which was admitted to be for creating the notorious "cleared zones."

During the two months "Operation Junction City" lasted, the whole Tay Ninh province was particularly well combed by "search and destroy" teams. All the hamlets were razed, all the rice plantations poisoned by chemical products, samples of which we have ourselves brought back. The grain reserves were annihilated and the civilians discovered were de-

ported to concentration camp zones called by the Americans "pacification zones" "new life hamlets", to change the name of the "strategic hamlets" already notorious.

Many peasants we saw escaped from concentration camps, many others had fled from the advancing US troops or simply hid in the forests and escaped the tank columns.

Civilians are now forced to lie in hiding in the forests. They built miserable huts, well hidden in the wilderness. Each family has dug an underground shelter; they live like primitive men to avoid being located.

In fact, this so-called "white zone" or "free fire" zone is now declared by the Americans as totally "Vietcong" where all signs of life must be extinguished systematically.

By night and by day, during our stay, the constant fire of artillery was heard. From the military bases, particularly in our region of Traug Long and Tour Hai, the American artillery shoots at random to maintain a constant state of anxiety and insecurity.

The reconnaissance planes fly methodically over the whole zone in large concentric circles. As soon as some movement appears as a sign of human presence, as soon as a field appears to be cultivated, orders are given for a concentrated artillery attack.

The least sign of life located by the reconnaissance planes is immediately followed by an attack of fighter-bombers which fire rockets, drop fragmentation bombs, napalm and phosphorus bombs. ...

If we believe the reports of the leading cadres and officials, since the beginning of "Junction City" and the policy of attacks on "everything that moves" the average expended ordnance is two tons of projectiles per inhabitant and one killed or wounded in every eight persons.

Half of the population escaped the rakings or fled from regrouping centres.

About 10,000 persons live in the wilderness with the help of the NLF army, guerilla units and community services of the NLF.

In spite of the "cleared zones", the Front keeps the education and health service operating even in the most miserable hamlets, that is to say, four or five huts grouped in the jungle.

To assure their maintenance and provisioning, peasants are obliged to cultivate by night all the rice paddies and tiny kitchen gardens on the fringes of the forests. Otherwise, any field or rice patch slightly showing cultivation would be automatically destroyed by defoliants dropped from planes or helicopters. We saw different metallic drums dropped on rice paddies and then shot full of holes by the same planes in order to permit the chemical products to dissolve into the water of the rice field and to pollute and contaminate the produce.

It is therefore only by hiding and avoiding the reconnaissance planes and living practically underground that the people are able to survive what I won't hesitate to call Genocide. ... (Part of the introduction to the report of the SEVENTH ENQUIRY COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL at its Second Session, held at Copenhagen from November 20 to December 1st. The Tribunal found the United States Government guilty of a series of war crimes, including genocide, the use of weapons banned by international agreement, maltreatment and killing of prisoners, and violence against and forced movement of prisoners. From WORLD OUTLOOK).

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