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International

incorporating THE WEEK

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

MARXISTS AND LABOUR



SOLIDARITY

MOVEMENT WHICH WAY?

Workers' Control MUST = workers' power

by Alan Rooney

There can be little doubt that the workers' control campaign represents a growth point in the British socialist movement at the present time. Increasing numbers of rank and file workers are being drawn into the campaign. This is healthy: it is important that workers' control ideas should be in the forefront of any socialist strategy. However it is important for socialists to know where the campaign is going. The need for theoretical and programmatic clarification about workers' control is ever present.

INFLUENCE OR POWER?

In their PARTICIPATION OR CONTROL pamphlet, (1), Ken Coates and Tony Topham say: "Workers' control exists wherever trade union practices, shop stewards' sanctions and collective power constrain employers." I don't think it is a matter of a quibble over definitions, but I would say that the state of affairs the authors describe here is simply generalising about the possibility for WORKERS' INFLUENCE in capitalist society. The use of the phrase "workers' control" in this context is misleading because it suggests that the workers can have hegemonic power over employers in a capitalist society. The phrase WORKERS' INFLUENCE seems to be a more neutral and accurate description of that situation. What I understand by workers' control, i.e., workers' self-management, is impossible in a capitalist society - by definition.

As I said at the Coventry and Nottingham workers' control conferences, the Labour Party document on Industrial Democracy is basically reactionary. Obviously there are bits in it which can be used by workers and socialist (notably the "open the books" section); but basically the document is a "heading off" and not a socialist tract. It is essentially about humanising industrial relations in the existing structure of society. Its basic and fallacious assumption is in seeing the state as able and willing to hand over more power to the workers via the trade unions. Workers' control is about POWER, and the key weakness and misconception in the Labour Party document is that it misunderstands the nature of state power and power in society.

In contrast to workers' control demands, workers' participation "demands" do not fundamentally challenge the power-base of society, i.e., the ruling class. As Coates and Topham put it in their pamphlet: "The case for the positive advance of workers' control programmes now, is that the best form of defence is attack: that unless new positions of workers' control are won, over and against property rights, the defence will, at best, produce the old stale-mate of pure collective bargaining." Yes, the essential test is the strength of the attack on property rights.

ORGANISATION

Any campaign for workers' control must emphasise CLASS issues. It is useful that there is currently an output of literature on various aspects of workers' control; but workers' control conferences must not become a substitute for class struggle. It is vital that rigorous arguments on a workers' control programme are urgently worked on with the aim of producing a workers' theory always in our sights. The workers' control campaign must be developed as part of a socialist movement. Such a movement must continually recruit rank and file workers.

We cannot expect workers to simply pick up "a bit

of something on workers' control" and go away and achieve something. Workers' control is more than an idea. There are signs that bits of the ideas are getting through to some militant workers - but not in an organised way. And, of course, "resolutions to annual conference" whether Labour Party T.U.C. or trade union are of limited use here. Resolutions on "nationalisation and workers' control" are hardly worth more than the traditional straight "nationalisation" type. There is more hope in seeing engineering shop stewards campaigning on workers' control issues. But it is not realistic to expect shop stewards to become THE key political vanguard on workers' control. Ken Tarbuck and Chris Arthur argue, in their excellent pamphlet: "Workers' Control - what next?", (2) for the ORGANISATION of a socialist programme with workers' control as a central part, and that "the construction of" (a political) "party is a necessary condition of success." It must be a party "basing itself on class struggle". They are right to emphasise that this means a revolutionary party, not a sect or a pressure group.

Footnotes:

- (1) 1/6d; from Tony Topham, 1 Plantation Drive, Anlaby Park, Hull;
- (2) 6d; from K. Tarbuck, 56, Baswick Lane, Stafford

See also Bulletin No. 2 of the 1968 Nottingham workers' control conference for conflicting analyses of the Labour Party document by Terry Pitt; and Ken Coates and Tony Topham. We understand that this is out of print, but readers should send enquiries to Ken Coates, 19 Greenfield St., Dunkirk, Nottingham, as it is intended to reprint.

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent our editorial views.

introducing International

A new left-wing newspaper needs some justification; the observer on any big demonstration could be forgiven if he thought that every conceivable variety of view and need on the left was already catered for. However, the first thing we must say is that International is not really new: it represents the continuation and development of the ideas and campaigning objectives of THE WEEK. It is true that the style and content will be very different but this is a reflection of changes which have taken place in the British political climate rather than a change in the ideas of the team which brought out THE WEEK.

THE WEEK was brought out in the expectation that a mass left would arise in the Labour party once Labour was in power. It was designed to service and co-ordinate the left. Instead it had to take on a different function: that of outright opposition to Wilson's increasingly right wing policies; and a critique of those former "lefts" who refused to fight Wilson.

THE UNITED FRONT

Secondly, it needs to be said that in our opinion there is no existing British journal which combines a firm principled line on day - to - day objectives with the method of the united front. THE WEEK always stood firm, no matter how "unpopular" this might have been, on issues of principle. Started at the beginning of the year which saw the election of the first Labour Government for over 13 years, it had, unfortunately, to part company with many former established left - wing leaders who capitulated to Wilson. The fact that many of these people are now carrying out the dirtiest of Wilson's jobs justifies our stand, no matter how painful it was at the time.

We have, however, always stood for the united front. THE WEEK always sought to collaborate with any tendency on the left with which it had agreement on particular issues. This method is best expressed in the creation of non - exclusive organs of struggle on important and principled issues. The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the Workers' Control Campaign are cases in point.

We believe that these bodies have helped to establish a new mood in the British left, one in which people with very differing views can work together. Such a mood is vital if we are to reverse the tendency towards fragmentation and, instead, work for regroupment. INTERNATIONAL will continue along these lines both in active politics and political argumentation.

COMBATTING SECTARIANISM

Thirdly, and, in our opinion, most important, no existing journal is dealing with certain vital political questions in a style that "gets across" to rank and file militants. Such issues as Black Power, the Cuban Revolution, the concept of the united front, the method of using transitional demands, workers' control, and many others, are not dealt with in an objective manner, by and

large. (There are some worthy exceptions, but these journals are directed towards a different audience. We will continue to support these journals.) Unfortunately, most of the journals on the left proceed from factional considerations and adopt positions on these questions from a point of view of organisational sectarianism. To give just one example: just as Stalin decreed that Yugoslavia had become fascist overnight, after being a model for people's democracy, because of his differences with Tito, so certain very vocal sectarian groups have decided that Cuba is capitalist, against the overwhelming weight of evidence, because of their differences with other political groups. INTERNATIONAL will do its best to clear up the confusion these groups have caused.

Because it will appear monthly and concentrate upon fundamental ideas that underpin day-to-day activity - INTERNATIONAL will carry a different type of article from that appearing in THE WEEK. The latter's main function was that of an organiser and co-ordinator - a task now undertaken by other journals and organisations. Because of this, THE WEEK's contents were dominated by reports of past and coming activities, new campaigns and material useful for day-to-day agitation. INTERNATIONAL's contents will be dominated by articles dealing with the political theory which determines our attitude towards these day-to-day issues. It will, however, carry some of the old-style material.

INTERNATIONAL will not, however, be a theoretical magazine: space considerations and the task we have set ourselves precludes this. But we will, by our coverage and advertising of books, pamphlets and theoretical magazines provide the militant with the means by which he, or she, can probe more deeply into these questions.

POLEMICAL BUT NOT FACTIONAL

INTERNATIONAL will be far more polemical than THE WEEK. The latter journal usually "turned the other cheek" when accused of "Fabioite revisionism", "ultra-leftism", "selling out to Wilson" because we put forward the slogan of "Open the Books" and "adventurism." This new journal will, as the contents of the first issue demonstrate, polemicise fiercely against those who distort the method of marxist analysis in such a crude manner. But this does not mean that we have succumbed to sectarianism: it is vitally necessary to fight factionalism in the interests of building the united front.

The terrible crime of the sectarians is to ruin revolutionaries, especially young ones, by their crude simplistic and social-fascist approach. THE WEEK was ill-equipped to argue against sectarianism and its twin, opportunism*, and on occasion was forced to bring out special issues just for that purpose.

But this will be the by-product of the main function of INTERNATIONAL: the creation of a firm marxist core in the Labour movement. The whole experience of the left since the election of the

Labour Government in 1964 underscores the need for such a marxist core which is completely integrated into the Labour movement. Had such a core existed in 1964 - a grouping which neither ran away from the struggle at the decisive moment nor lacked the courage to make a stand - the evolution of the left under the Labour Government would have been an entirely different story. INTERNATIONAL will make every effort to remedy this lack.

HOW OUR READERS CAN HELP

This, then, is the task we have set ourselves. One which is determined by the vital interests of the British working class, for unless the present impasse is broken we could be in for a whole period of political reaction in this country. A firm mass left wing opposition to the policies of Wilson is vitally necessary, for experience has shown that this opposition will become disoriented unless it has a firm marxist core.

SOLIDARITY NOW!

A reply to some sectarians

In the special issue of THE WEEK* in which we argued against the various critics of the solidarity position there was an omission. We, of course, dealt fully with all the important forces in the anti-Vietnam war movement and we think that subsequent events have vindicated our arguments (in fact, many of our antagonists claim to have shifted their position now). However, one line of argument was not considered. Movements like those around the British MILITANT are not important in anti-Vietnam war activities, but they need to be answered because they use marxist terminology and claim to be the "true marxists".

Basically these comrades argue thus: all marxists must, of course, support the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution. But what is the best way to do this? Surely, by struggling against British capitalism and its representatives, notably, the Wilson Government. Activities like the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, because they divert forces away from the struggle against the wage freeze, etc., and because they are not understood by the workers don't help the Vietnamese people but can even be said to do their cause harm. A further argument that these comrades bring in is that THE WEEK was quite wrong to not make a critique of the Vietnamese leadership.

We shall leave aside our estimate of the extent to which these comrades do struggle against the Wilson Government; sufficient be it to mention that when we were engaged in a vicious struggle against Transport House inside the Nottingham Labour Party, the MILITANT, along with left-wing newspapers, remained silent and that privately supporters of that paper accused us of adventurism because we struggled too vigorously against Wilson before consolidating our base.

We ask our readers to assist us in our aims obviously the bigger INTERNATIONAL is, and the more frequently we are able to produce it, the more effective it will be. There are three keys to this: firstly, circulation; secondly, coverage of important questions (we will be happy to receive articles along the lines we have indicated); and, thirdly, as always, financial support.

THE WEEK, throughout its existence, had loyal support from its readers; we are confident that INTERNATIONAL will receive similar help.

* If anyone thinks that this is an overstatement note how the ultra-left sectarian Socialist Labour League and the opportunist "left" M.P.s reach an IDENTICAL view of Black Power. They both characterise it as black racialism or even black fascism, and regard it as equally reprehensible as white racism.

WHAT MARX DID

It is a truism to say that the best way to help the Vietnamese people would be to win worker's power in Britain. This profound argument, which can be used in all situations and at any time until we have actually achieved workers' power in Britain, is typical of the kind of sophistry that one expects from the S.P.G.B. and other such sects. It certainly was not the view of Marx that it was a diversion to campaign specifically in solidarity with struggles in other countries.

Throughout Marx's leadership of the First International, that body supported and organised in support of the working people of other lands. Nor was this activity confined to support of strikes or such events as the Paris Commune. The various national struggles of Europe were supported most vigorously. Marx polemicised most stridently with the MILITANTS of his day, especially on their attitude towards Ireland.

It is said that some of the people who support the MILITANT draw inspiration from the writings and theories of one Leon Trotsky. The latter had this to say in a speech at the Second World Congress of the Communist International;

".....the British Socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland, Egypt and India against the London plutocracy - such a socialist deserves to be branded with infamy, if not with a bullet, but in no case merits either a mandate or the confidence of the proletariat....." ("The First Five Years of the Comintern, Volume 1", page 125)

We wouldn't go quite so far as Trotsky on the question of the bullet but we think that these words embody a true socialist approach towards the struggles of the working people of other lands.

IS THE V.S.C. NECESSARY?

Having disposed of the myth that this view approximates in any way with that of the practice of marxists, let us take a closer look at the theory underlying it. First of all, it is based upon a distortion of the position of the people who are most active in such movements as the V.S.C.. It is a complete lie to say that these

people do not struggle against the wage freeze or against other aspects of the Government's policies. This argument is smuggled in to obscure the fact that in reality most of the supporters of the MILITANT, despite their lip service, do nothing to support the people of Vietnam. This is not the argument at all. The dispute pivots around the question of whether or not one wages a particular struggle over and above one's normal day-to-day activities within the British Labour movement.

The main argument for waging such a struggle with its own forms of organisation is that the Labour Party and trade unions have ceased, by and large, to be effective vehicles for such campaigns. Can we really expect the Labour Party, which cannot even be won for a programme of action for mild reforms, to be the means by which we show our solidarity with the Vietnamese people? Of course we cannot. Confining one's self to fighting within the Labour Party means limiting one's perspectives to the passing of resolutions which will be either rejected or ignored. It means telling the Vietnamese people that we can do nothing public to assist their struggle until we have won decisive influence in the Labour Party.

Taking the fight on to the streets through united front committees means that we can give encouragement to the Vietnamese people's struggle and that we can appeal directly to others to join the struggle. The effects of this method of working are quite well-known: when the vast majority of the youth of this country will not go near the Labour Party, thousands have been won for militant activity in support of the Vietnamese people.

Nor is this activity contrary to a campaign to win the Labour movement for the solidarity position. The very fact that the solidarity movement has established itself as a force on the political scene exerts a pressure on members of the Labour Party and, in particular, inspires the remaining left wingers in the party to continue with their struggle.

Furthermore, because the V.S.C. is led by people who understand clearly the need to influence the Labour movement, the thousands of young people drawn into solidarity action are now being directed towards that end.

In fact, working in this way is essential if we are to achieve workers' power in Britain. In the past there have been mighty movements in Britain on wages and other reformist demands. These movements have quickly dispersed because of the weakness of socialist consciousness within them. If we are to build a movement which will achieve workers' power it must overcome this problem. This will not be done by compromising with the reactionary ideas of backward workers. To not take up such questions as Vietnam "because the workers do not understand them" is a form of opportunism. It also hinders the development of socialist consciousness and has dire practical consequences: at the decisive moment socialist consciousness is vital to take the movement forward. The struggle for solidarity with the people of Vietnam is an important way to build socialist consciousness. It is part of the way we can link reformist demands with wider political

questions.

CRITICISING HO CHI MINH

To the charge that we have not subjected the leadership of the Vietnamese Revolution to a thorough going critique we plead guilty. Such an assessment is, of course, needed for the education of cadres. Those around THE WEEK write for, read and distribute other journals, whose main function is the education of cadres, which have made this kind of critique - so our consciences are clear.

However, it needs to be said that there is more to this argument. In politics priorities can often mean more than written programmes. We proceed from the priority that it is the duty of all socialists to assist a living revolution engaged in a life and death struggle with imperialism. If we have a small journal we are faced with making a choice of what to publish. This choice is based upon our priorities. It's the same with others: those who choose to concentrate on printing articles on what Ho Chi Minh did to the Indo-Chinese Trotskyists in the 1940's have decided that it is more important that their readers know about this question than it is for them to help the Vietnamese people. That is our choice.

The fate of the Vietnamese anti-stalinists is an important question for an evaluation of the Ho Chi Minh leadership and must be dealt with in the appropriate place. But today people are fighting with guns in their hands against U.S. imperialism. We believe that cadres will be best trained by taking part in the living struggle of solidarity with these people. Refusal to take part in that campaign or a luke-warm attitude towards it because of historical questions is sectarian and in many cases reflects capitulation in face of anti-communist propaganda.

The struggle of the Vietnamese people has inspired and re-generated the entire socialist and revolutionary movement all over the world. The fact that U.S. imperialism has been unable to defeat the Vietnamese people has profound revolutionary consequences for us all. Put another way, we can say that if the Vietnamese Revolution were defeated the prospects for world socialism, and this includes British socialism, will be very much weaker for a whole period. Thus by helping the Vietnamese people in their struggle we are also fighting to create better world conditions for the achievement of British socialism. The slogan "Workers of the World, Unite!" is self-interested as well as being morally correct.

We believe that this is the way one's priorities should be decided. This is the way we have decided ours and time will show (and, we think, has shown) who is the best fighter against British capitalism. We look forward to seeing our sectarian friends doing more than selling their papers and passing resolutions.

* VIETNAM AND THE LEFT - an answer to some critics - available from: THE WEEK, 8 Toynbee St., London E.1., costing 9d, post paid.

Martin Luther King's death - end of an era



BLACK POWER: THE ONLY WAY

The murder of Martin Luther King brought forth a reply from Black America which has stunned the white power structure. Towns from Washington to Kansas have experienced the type of uprising which is expected from only one or two towns at the peak of the "long hot summer". Never before have so many areas experienced this type of ferment simultaneously. And never before have so many uprisings been undertaken in such a conscious manner. Reporter after reporter was told: "We're not rioting, We're making a revolution!"

The result of all this has been to focus attention more firmly than ever on the concept of "Black Power" and those who advocate it. Stokely Carmichael himself reacted swiftly to King's murder by calling on Black Americans to arm themselves; although his call was given wide publicity in Europe, in the U.S.A. it was almost universally suppressed - eloquent testimony to the influence which Stokely now wields in the ghettos. For his part, Martin Luther King had prior to his murder shown signs of a more conciliatory attitude to the Black Power movement, admitting that it had certain positive features, although he retained his opposition to violence to the end.

The reaction of the British left to the growth of the Black Power movement has been generally hostile - "left" Labour M.P.s have joined hands with sectarians to echo the hysterical press charges of "black racialism" and even "black fascism". Moreover, the growth of Black Power organisations in this country, notably, the Universal Coloured People's Association, makes the attitude of British socialists one of practical importance and not just of theoretical nicety. Most of those on the left who oppose Black Power pose the question as "Socialism VERSUS Black Power".

This is a profoundly mistaken approach. The black people of the U.S.A., or Britain for that matter, cannot merely be considered as part of the working class who happen to be black - the situation is a great deal more complicated than that. The black people are distinguished from the white working class in a number of ways. First, black Americans are doubly exploited. They are exploited because they are working class and because they are black. Second, they have a quite distinct cultural background from white America. Third, they live in their own distinct communities, either rural shanty towns or the city ghettos.

A CLASS AND A PEOPLE

Because of these factors black Americans are at the same time a CLASS separate from the white working class, and a PEOPLE. They are conscious of their own identity, and they have their own distinct needs and interests. Historically there have been many occasions when a people also constituted a social class; this is especially true of pre-capitalist societies when conquering nations often turned whole subject races into labourers.

The existence of a small black bourgeoisie does not contradict this general judgement of the position of black Americans; its very smallness only serves to emphasise the position. Of course, it is true that in the long run the interests of black and white workers are identical: the overthrow of capitalism remains the essential precondition for the liberation of both. But in the short term we have to recognise that the interests of black and white workers are not necessarily identical.

The consciousness of black people is far ahead of that of the white workers. Have the black Americans to wait for the white workers before taking action? Some of the most vicious racist attacks come from white workers. Do we tell the black population not to defend themselves from these attacks on the grounds that poor whites are also workers? Clearly not. The black people of America must go ahead and build their own organisations of struggle.

BLACK AND WHITE UNITY

Although in the short term it is difficult to see much concrete co-operation between white and black coming about, in the long-term this need not be so. In the very process of trying to wrest gains from capitalism the Black Power movement can provide the white workers with vital lessons. When the white working class has built its own organisations of struggle, then the conditions for possible alliances will exist.

THE MURDER OF MARTIN LUTHER KING AND BLACK POWER

Much of the groundwork for future co-operation is already being undertaken with the recruitment of

black militants to socialist organisations, and the propaganda undertaken in favour of Black Power by some of the more advanced socialist groupings. Furthermore, a definite shift has taken place in the Black Power movement itself recently. This shift is towards increased understanding of and resolute opposition to imperialism in all its manifestations.

BLACK MUSLIMS

At the beginning of the upsurge of black nationalism in the early 1960's the Black Muslims were the only organisation in the field, and despite some eccentric ideas they recruited thousands. The development away from the ideas of the Muslims was heralded by the split between Elijah Mohammed and Malcolm X. From this split until his death, Malcolm's ideas underwent a series of changes. During the period prior to his death he made it quite clear that he regarded racism as a by-product of the system and not something which was instinctively present in "white devils".

The murder of Malcolm was a great blow to the black population and many who had recognised his greatness feared that the movement would be put back grievously. Imperialism, however, has yet to learn that the murder of men like Malcolm and Che merely creates many Malcolms and many Che's. The generation of leaders which has followed Malcolm has advanced the movement tremendously.

In light of all this I think that we need not be at all pessimistic about the future possibilities for a united front between black and white workers. But for the immediate future black Americans must build their own organisations to cope with problems which are theirs and theirs alone.

A TRANSITIONAL DEMAND

A final word on the demands of "Black Power". The most concrete and popular demands to come out of the movement are for "Black control of Black Communities". Like the demands of the workers' control movement such demands are TRANSITIONAL demands (It is ironic that many of those who spend a great deal of time talking about transitional demands run a mile when they actually come across one.)

Black Control of black communities, like workers' control, cannot be granted by capitalism over any significant area or period of time. If this demand were in fact granted it would create a situation of dual power - something completely intolerable from the point of view of the system. But although there is no chance of winning this demand under capitalism, it is a demand which is seen by vast numbers of black people to be just and one which is capable of mobilising them. Such demands open up the possibility of an offensive strategy by black Americans which will win some concessions, but only finally succeed by overthrowing the system. And that, after all, is what "Black Power" is all about.

by Phil Hall

I.L.P. adopts solidarity position

by John Downing

The Annual Conference of the Independent Labour Party, which took place at Morecambe over the Easter week-end, was a great success, with some lively and hard-hitting debates. The resolution on Vietnam, which called on the Party to declare its "Support for the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people and the N.L.F. against American aggression" caused some controversy.

Don Bateman, Bristol branch, said that we could not stand aside whilst the people of Vietnam were struggling for freedom. He pointed out that the N.L.F. had the support of the majority of the Vietnamese people, and that after the fighting it was to the people that they returned. Seven-eighths of the country was in the hands of the N.L.F.

Stan Iveson, Nelson branch, said that war could in no way be justified; that humanity must learn to live without war. Eric Preston, Beeston Branch, said that although the N.L.F. had committed atrocities as bad as the Americans, there was no doubt who was in the wrong. After giving a brief but detailed history of the struggle of the Vietnamese people over a period of many years, he declared that the Americans had no right to be in Vietnam. They had set up a puppet regime in order to justify their presence.

The motion was carried.

A resolution on Rhodesia was passed and reads as follows; "This conference, recognising that the present political situation in Southern Rhodesia has become much more dangerous with the direct intervention of South African forces, urges the Independent Labour Party to give critical support

for the African liberation struggle, and considers it the duty of a revolutionary Socialist party to give all possible aid to this fight for freedom from the reactionary settler Government."

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Marxists and

The first part of an article dealing with the Labour Party from a marxist point of view.

by PAT JORDAN

It is well-known on the left that THE WEEK was started by a group of people placing great emphasis on the need for marxists to be active in the Labour Party. When THE WEEK was started in 1964 this was an easily understood point of view: Labour was on the eve of being elected and the mass of organised workers looked upon the advent of a Labour Government as the way forward politically. Now after three-and-a-half years of Labour Government and the undeniable fact that big sections of the working class have become hostile or apathetic towards the Labour Government is there any reason to change this view?

First, it should be noted that the view that marxists should be active in the Labour Party was based upon an expectation that the Labour Government would seek to make British capitalism work rather than try to carry out a social transformation of the country. We did not, perhaps, expect the Wilson Government to go so far to the right so QUICKLY as it did but we had no reason to believe that it would pursue a socialist or even a left-reformist policy. Neither have we ever held out the prospect of marxists taking hold of the apparatus of the Labour Party without a deep-going and fundamental schism.

THE ROLE OF WILSONISM

We have always held the view that the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party are the representatives of the capitalist class within the Labour movement. Their most important social role is to get the working class to accept the burden of bolstering up capitalism when it is in trouble. Concretely, this means that the special function of the Wilson Government is to push through measures which are necessary for British capitalism to rationalise itself. It seeks to do this by using its influence on the trade unions to reduce working class resistance to these measures. The entire history of the British Labour Party and all other right-wing social democratic parties bears out this assessment.

Second, we must admit that one of our expectations has definitely not been borne out: namely that the election of a Labour Government making savage attacks on the working class would lead quickly to a mass left wing emerging within the Labour Party.

OPPORTUNIST AND SECTARIAN MISTAKES

The principal responsibility for this sad state of affairs lies, we believe, with two important sections of the left: those who have refused to fight (or even criticise, in some cases) the Wilson leadership; and those who pulled out of the struggle inside the Labour Party. TRIBUNE and the majority of the Parliamentary left are typical of the first tendency, and the Socialist Labour League of the second.

TRIBUNE and most of the Parliamentary left put their faith in those members of the Cabinet who were formerly leaders of the remnants of the Bevanite opposition. In most cases they sought to subordinate the fight in the Labour Party to the vagaries of policy struggles going on in the Cabinet. This precluded them from trying to get massive rank and file struggle against Wilson's policies. Even today, TRIBUNE opposes the slogan "Wilson Out" (because the alternative to Wilson is Jenkins, it says) and sometimes even poses the struggle in terms of supporting Wilson's team

against that of Jenkins and co. This is taking the theory of the lesser of two evils to its final and logical absurdity.

Their reward has been to see former leftists doing the dirtiest work for Wilson: Greenwood in the Colonial Office, Judith Hart in social security and now, most revealing of all, Barbara Castle in charge of the application of the wage freeze and incomes policy. In strict class terms (abstracting out subjective factors) one can say that these people have used their "left" reputations to carry out the most reactionary of Wilson's policies. Yet many in the TRIBUNE camp refuse to break their links with them.

It has been very difficult to organise an effective opposition within the Labour Party in conditions where left-wing rank-and-filers have seen their former leaders completely in harness with Wilson. A struggle against the Government's right wing policies - from the very beginning - by the people who were the acknowledged leaders of the left would have transformed the situation. Such a struggle would have, of necessity, included a special critique of the Greenwoods and Castles.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The role of the Communist Party in all this has been to re-inforce the worst features of the traditional left. In their desperate search for unity the Communist Party leaders, whilst making correct and valuable criticisms of the Wilson Government, have tried to form a bloc with the Tribunites and the Parliamentary left. Because "unity" to the Communist Party means, in essence, glossing over differences with the centre and, in some cases, the right (but never those on the C.P.'s left) they have refrained from making a fundamental criticism of TRIBUNE and the Parliamentary left. They have done this even on such glaring questions as the TRIBUNE MANIFESTO and the behaviour of those "left" M.P.s who supported Israel's war of aggression against the Arab countries. Is it any wonder, under these circum-

the Labour Party

stances, that the Communist Party has failed to make any important gains from the thousands of disillusioned Labour Party members?

The behaviour of the traditional left leaders did much to encourage the sectarians who left the Labour Party. But many of the people who led the walk out, being marxists of some vintage, should have known better. Some of them claim that the basic reason for them leaving the Labour Party was the expulsion of large numbers of Young Socialists from the Party. It is true that a considerable number of Young Socialists were expelled - supporters of THE WEEK were to the forefront in protesting against these expulsions - but much larger numbers left of their own accord. Had the KEEP LEFT Young Socialists received the correct education from their mentors in the S.L.L. their main campaign after the expulsions would have been a re-instatement fight. Instead they concentrated almost entirely upon building their organisation on a basis quite separate and distinct from the Labour Party.

This had quite serious results: at a time when the Wilson Government had started attacking the working class, and when the questioning within the broad ranks of Labour had commenced, 200 to 300 activists were pulled out of the Labour Party to concentrate on such revolutionary activities as organising teen-age marches, football matches (usually seven-aside because of lack of numbers), dances and selling KEEP LEFT.

warning for any others thinking of trying the same experiment.

But does all this mean that our attitude towards the Labour Party is exactly the same as it was in 1964?

TWO FUNDAMENTAL PREMISES

Before answering, we need to state the fundamental premises upon which we base our case. There are two main ones:

Firstly, we recognise that capitalism in Britain will not be destroyed until the workers have created a mass socialist party. In fact this is the aim of all our work. However, history has shown that in capitalist "democracies" such parties, on the rare occasions when they have been built, only arise out of crisis and schism in one of the existing traditional workers' parties. This is quite easy to explain on theoretical grounds: the basic reason being that the consciousness of large sections of the working class changes slowly and through experience rather than as the result of propaganda (although traumatic events, e.g., war and catastrophic slump, will very much speed the process).

Secondly, the particular structure of the British Labour movement, with affiliation of the trade unions to the Labour Party at all levels, has created a tenacious and multi-million-threaded bond between the organised working class and the



Wilson, Gardiner, Healey, Ross, Gunter, Peart.

THE SCARBOROUGH CONFERENCE

At the 1965 Scarborough Labour Party conference a handful of delegates supporting THE WEEK managed to polarise the conference on several key issues. Had there been 20, 30 or 40 delegates doing the same job, which was entirely within the capacity of the KEEP LEFT Young Socialists had they worked on the right lines, the whole situation would have been different and the basis for a big left could have been laid.

Just now the KEEP LEFT Young Socialists seem to have lost much of their initial impetus (the numbers on their recent weekend of demonstrations are eloquent testimony to this view) so they have the worst of both worlds. The experience of these sincere but misguided young comrades is a terrible

Labour Party. In a certain sense one can say that the Labour Party and the organised working class are virtually identical. Of course, the policies of the Wilson Government are placing a great strain upon this relationship but so far - apart from some marginal cases - there has been no large scale rupture of the links between the organised working class and the Labour Party.*

* It should be noted, however, that in some cases these "marginal" sectors can be of extreme importance and have considerable importance for marxists in determining their tactics. Typical examples of this are: Scottish and Welsh Nationalism, the lack of confidence in the Labour Party shown by the majority of immigrant workers and certain tendencies in technical unions to question the value of links with Labour. (to be concluded in the next issue)

On the eve of the VSC conference

On the 18th and 19th of May the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign will be holding its first national conference since its founding conference in June, 1966. If we review the events of the last two years, especially the growth of the support for the V.S.C., the particular importance of this conference becomes clear.

In these past two years the situation in Vietnam has changed markedly. The immense U.S. war effort has raised the level of U.S. troop commitment to well over half a million, accompanied by an impressive array of technical aids. We have seen this more than matched by the determined and heroic struggle of the National Liberation Front, and the resistance of the population of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the face of intense American bombing. The struggles of the Vietnamese culminated in the magnificent country-wide sweep of the Tet offensive, a military success which has radically altered the political climate in many countries.

This is true of Vietnam itself: striking savage blows at the morale of the American forces, and in the United States where it contributed to the final discrediting of Lyndon Johnson, whose assertions that military victory was possible, ring hollow now that the full striking power of the N.L.F. is apparent.

GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT

In Britain the success of Tet provided a valuable boost to the anti-war movement in general and to the March 17th demonstration in particular. All along, the movement in Britain has reflected in some way the nature and development of the war in Vietnam. The Vietnam war is a struggle which has intensified day by day and impressed itself on the consciousness of millions of people. It was possible for most people to learn to live under the shadow of nuclear weapons. The memory of Hiroshima fades into the past, but Vietnam is brought closer to each day, by the sheer scale of the suffering inflicted by American policy, and by the drama and heroism of the Vietnamese resistance.

This factor creates a wholly different climate in the protest movement. The mood has changed from concern at the dangerous possibilities to profound indignation at U.S. policy. There has also developed a willingness to act in support of the Vietnamese. This changing mood demands militant expression around a clear political line. For a movement to harness this change effectively, it must stand independent of all established political organisations. The only movement which has come within a mile of this is the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. A closer look at the development of V.S.C. soon reveals how it has been able to fulfil this role, and what are its strengths and its weaknesses.

THE FOUNDATION OF V.S.C.

The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign was formally established in June, 1966, at its founding conference, after a period of preparatory work by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and some left wing members of the Labour Party, who had carried on a struggle to alter Wilson's policy of servility to Washington (prominent among the latter was Ken Coates, who was subsequently expelled from the Labour Party for his efforts). With generous aid - financial and technical - from the B.R.P.F., the campaign set to work organising meetings, exhibitions, and participating in demonstrations; it also played an active role in the campaign around the War Crimes Tribunal and the Free Speech Campaign (an effort to get N.L.F. spokesmen into Britain

to speak at teach-ins). The early days were not without problems: at the founding conference nearly half the delegates walked out.

The walk out - led by the more sectarian of the supporters of the Chinese Communist Party, some of whom have come back into the campaign, others of whom now support Liu Shao Chi - was over the question of the four and five points. The splitters wanted the V.S.C. to incorporate these into its statement of aims. The V.S.C. position, adopted at the conference is that it supports the right of the Vietnamese to decide their own conditions for the ending of the war. This being the case, it would be wrong to adopt a particular position, for the Vietnamese may wish to change their minds. This flexible and principled line has been vindicated by recent events in the Vietnam War.

OCTOBER 22nd

However, as the campaign settled down to activity new supporters came forward. The turning point came with the October 22nd demonstration of last year. The V.S.C. had always striven for international co-ordination (especially with the American protest movement) and when it received an appeal from the National Mobilisation Committee for an activity on the week-end of October 21/22 it made a call for an Ad Hoc Committee to organise the event. The success of October 22nd and the involvement of many new people in the Ad Hoc Committee brought many new supporters and aroused the enthusiasm of thousands of activists.

The demonstration itself was a breakthrough in terms of both scale and militancy. This was possible because V.S.C. initiated the action on a principled political line whilst making determined efforts to ensure that existing protest groups were drawn into the organising of the demonstration.

A similar organisational method was adopted for the March 17th demonstration. It was at this point however that problems began to appear, arising from the fact that the political support for V.S.C. had far outstripped its organising capacity. During the March 17th campaign supporting groups mushroomed but their contact with the centre was minimal. V.S.C. had and still has the organisational form more suited to its earlier work as an educational organisation. This problem was compounded by the withdrawal of financial support by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. Politically, the March 17th protest was an enormous success, in spite of the distortions which appeared in the press, but organisationally there are lots of threads to be picked up.

THE TASKS OF THE CONFERENCE

This should be seen as the primary task of the conference. What is needed now is a network of local groups capable of initiating local activities between major demonstrations. This requires a centre of sufficient strength to provide the co-ordination and servicing such a network needs. This issue needs to be at the centre of the discussion at the next conference. The leading committees of the campaign need to reflect the new support the campaign has gained.

As regards specific activities both in the localities and at a national level, special consideration should be given to the question of mobilising support amongst trade unionists, and of exposing instances of British firms producing goods for the American war industry. The latter has been very well documented in a recent pamphlet which the V.S.C. is distributing* and this can pro-

vide a very useful focus for local activities.

A careful consideration of these issues can lay the basis for future activity aimed at building around the longer term solidarity movement in Britain. So far it has been possible only to provide a general framework for such activity. In addition with a stronger organisation and more representative committees it will be possible to give to demonstrators the protection that is necessary against various forms of harassment.

N.B. Anyone wishing to attend the conference should write to:

Mike Martin,
Secretary, V.S.C.,
8, Toynbee St.,
London E.1. (telephone BIS 9845)

* BRITAIN, AMERICA AND VIETNAM, available from 8, Toynbee St., London E.1, costing 2/9d post paid.

VIETNAM PERSPECTIVES

There are many conflicting interpretations of Johnson's so-called peace gesture and its significance for the movement in support of the Vietnamese people. To us it reveals that American policy in Vietnam was at a dead end and that the success of the Tet offensive had caused a crisis of policy in American ruling circles. Johnson's position as a candidate in the presidential elections was an obstacle to changing that policy. He had only been able to proceed by further and further escalation. He was entirely committed to a victory without compromise. He had become an international symbol of the brutality of American imperialism. In the United States he had become a factor discrediting the American political system and his candidature played into the hands of those opposed to the two-party system which serves U.S. capitalism so well. Johnson's withdrawal as a candidate thus gave the American ruling circles a greater degree of flexibility. They certainly need it from their point of view: one can speculate about U.S. aims and policies but one thing is absolutely certain: Johnson's policies had to be abandoned.

What options are open to the Americans? Total and unconditional withdrawal would mean much more than loss of face; it would demonstrate that it was possible for the policeman of world imperialism to be routed by a small peasant country. This, in turn, would encourage all national liberation movements throughout the world. It would, furthermore, completely undermine the morale and prestige of the chain of American puppets in Asia, which would have revolutionary consequences. To this extent, there is something in the so-called domino theory.

an editorial statement

FURTHER ESCALATION?

On the other extreme, further escalation after the Americans had "proved" the bad faith of Hanoi would lead to a huge upsurge of anti-American activity on every continent. After the expectations of peace had been aroused it is highly unlikely that even the most intense propaganda effort would persuade the American people that Hanoi was responsible for the breakdown.

Having said this, however, we cannot preclude this possibility. Today it is the policy of American imperialism to posture as being basically democratic; it therefore takes great care not to become too "isolated" from "public opinion" at home and abroad. This need not always be the case, however, and it is quite conceivable that the American ruling circles could decide that their wider interests demanded that they proceed regardless of this factor. If the only alternative was complete military defeat they could very well choose to invade the north and try to cut off the source of supplies for the National Liberation Army.

More important, as limiting factors on their ability to carry out a policy of further escalation are the military and economic difficulties that have arisen from Johnson's Vietnam policy. Wall Street had a boom when the news of the possibility of peace talks broke. All kinds of problems of a military character come to the fore. Some unkind people have suggested that the American forces would not be averse to having a breathing space to regroup and lick their wounds. The successive crises of the dollar and the U.S. balance of payments look like continuing (and, for that matter, getting worse) until America's involvement in Vietnam is at least scaled down.

Thus it seems most likely that the Americans will seek to bring about a solution to the Vietnam war which will not be a complete defeat for them but which enables them to substantially cut their commitment. This is a tall order but they have powerful friends.

THE RUSSIAN ROLE

It is quite clear that there are those in the Communist camp who would welcome a similar type

of solution. The continuation of the Vietnam war and, indeed, its continuous escalation has jeopardised the Russian leaders' policy of peaceful co-existence. They, too, would like a solution which would not be decisive: they have no wish to see the Vietnamese example being followed by liberation forces in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and elsewhere. *They would like to be free to scale down their military expenditure and develop trade relations with the West so that they could divert some resources to supplying more consumer goods to the Russian people. In this way they hope to head off the growing demands by the Russian people for a better life. Above all, they fear a fusion of the discontent of the intellectuals with that of the workers. Once such a fusion took place the whole fabric of the bureaucratic domination of Soviet life would be in jeopardy.

The Russian leaders, being the main suppliers of military aid to the Vietnamese, are in a strong position to put pressure upon Hanoi to be more "reasonable". Of course, they have been doing this for a number of years now, but the new factor in the situation is that they now can claim that the Americans are in the mood to make concessions. Having said all this, it is surely obvious that it will be very difficult for the Russian leaders to force the Vietnamese to climb down too drastically. One of the good by-products of the Sino/Soviet dispute is that it narrows down decisively the extent to which either the Russians or the Chinese can manoeuvre in their relation with capitalist powers.

AN AMERICAN DEFEAT

For the movement of solidarity with the Vietnamese people the opening of negotiations with the U.S. under present conditions must be welcomed. It represents a victory because it was the Americans who made the first move towards negotiations just after they had suffered severe military defeats. Partisans of the Vietnamese revolution have always argued that the question of negotiations, and the conditions for negotiations, is the affair of the Vietnamese people themselves. In any national liberation war it is up to the people doing the fighting to decide upon such questions. Only if it were abundantly clear that the Vietnamese leaders were trying to come to a compromise at the expense of, and against the will of, the Vietnamese people would we have the right to criticise. An example of this kind of situation was the way the Geneva Accords were arrived at. It is abundantly clear that this is not the case in Vietnam today.

CONTINUE THE SOLIDARITY FIGHT

If the opening of negotiations represents a continuation of the struggle of the Vietnamese people by diplomatic, as well as military, means; for the solidarity movement it means that its efforts should be intensified. As opposed to those who have called for negotiations and who have now got what they wanted (and who should logically shut up shop) the solidarity movement is needed now more than ever.

We need to mobilise to help the Vietnamese people to achieve the best possible conditions: namely, those which are nearest to the aims of the solidarity movement. A powerful and vigorous solidarity campaign is a powerful counter to those who would try to get the Vietnamese to compromise with Ameri-

can imperialism. And should the peace talks prove abortive the movement will be ready to swing into action immediately to counter whatever methods of struggle the Americans decide upon.

Everything we have said underlines the need to:
- involve the organised working class movement in the solidarity campaign; and

- expose to the fullest extent the disgusting British complicity in the war.

Both of these objectives can be furthered because of the new stage in the war. The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign is holding a conference on 18/19 of May. This will provide an important opportunity for getting to grips with these problems.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE S.D.S.

As readers will know the witch-hunt against the German socialist students has been emulated in this country by the DAILY MAIL and other newspapers. We understand, therefore, very well the need for solidarity that our German comrades feel. We know that various organisations plan actions and we will be pleased to put any reader in touch with them.



the Anti-Apartheid Movement

A LETTER FROM ANTI-APARTHEID

The Anti - Apartheid Movement is organising a mass rally in Trafalgar Square to take place on the afternoon of Sunday, June 23, which will be preceded by a march from Hyde Park. This rally is being held to commemorate the signing of the Freedom Charter on June 26, 1955, a day of deep significance for all who hold dear the cause of freedom for the people of South Africa.

Throughout white - dominated Southern Africa, Africans are fighting racial discrimination and minority rule. This rally is being held as a declaration of support for their struggle. We consider that recent developments - the fighting at present going on in Rhodesia - lend this occasion a particular importance. All those who are opposed to the racist doctrines prevailing in Southern Africa will have the opportunity of demonstrating their opposition and also their "Support for the African Freedom Fighters" - the theme of this rally.

We hope very much that you will help us by publicising this rally in INTERNATIONAL as much and as often as possible. We shall keep you informed of the details as they are confirmed, i.e., who the speakers are, the exact route of the march, etc. At this time publication of the date, the place and the theme would be of great assistance. Stickers and leaflets will be available from this office *within the next ten days. We trust you will also find it possible to publish feature articles on the struggle in Southern Africa in which mention of this rally can be made.

* Anti - Apartheid Movement, 89, Charlotte St., London W.1., telephone LAN 5311

Theory of Workers' Control

by Mike Martin

Most people who have followed the development of the workers' control campaign, based largely on the series of conferences sponsored by VOICE OF THE UNIONS, the Centre for Socialist Education, THE WEEK and other socialist journals and groups, will acknowledge that the latest in the series, the sixth, held in Nottingham on March 30/31, 1968, marked another step forward for the campaign. The conference attracted some 500 delegates and visitors, including trade unionists and students. Trade unionists turned out in much larger numbers than ever before, and it was clear that the Communist Party had begun to take a greater interest in the subject.

Several leading trade unionists and Labour Party activists played a prominent role in the conference but one of the criticisms of the conference - which the organisers themselves acknowledged - was that little time was left for the delegates to put their own views forward. This aside, there were many positive aspects to the discussion, for example Hugh Scanlon's speech which deserves a separate assessment.

It is now perhaps timely to consider what the next steps can be and what are the limitations of the movement as it stands. In so doing we must re-define the basic principles which draw socialists to this subject.

A feature of the conferences has always been the practice of dividing into a number of study groups which makes it possible to consider the problems faced by workers in particular industries, and to relate the theoretical concept of workers' control to the actual workings of the given industry.

The value of the workers' control movement lies in its potential for revitalising sections of the labour movement. Already it represents one of the largest gatherings of trade unionists outside the established political parties. To realise its full value however it is necessary to achieve much greater clarity on the ideas of workers' control and to relate them increasingly to experiences of millions of workers.

WHAT IS WORKERS' CONTROL?

It is necessary to define workers' control correctly. First of all a sharp distinction must be

made between control and participation. The former involves extensions of power by workers quite independently of management. The latter involves the integration of a section of the workers into institutions representing the interests of management. In present circumstances this is the most important distinction to be made. At a time when a Labour Government attacks workers organisations and simultaneously attempts to draw a section of the trade union movement into a position of carrying out its policy of rationalisation of industry, clarity about the difference between control and participation is paramount.

OPEN THE BOOKS!

A number of slogans have traditionally been regarded as being related to workers' control. Much has been made of the demand: "Open the Books!", and this certainly has a legitimate role to play in raising awareness about the workings of management. It can also increase the readiness of trade union organisations to challenge the right of management to manage unhindered by considerations other than their own profit.

Much more, central, however, in view of the drive towards rationalisation of industry and the introduction of new techniques at the expense of the existing labour force, is the demand for workers' control of hiring and firing, since the size of the labour force is a central consideration for the present-day capitalist. Mass sackings at A.E.I. and the decasualisation scheme on the docks have raised this issue most acutely. A related demand for workers faced with short-time and the threat of unemployment is that of "40 hours pay for 30 hours work" - a form of work-sharing which would not involve loss of pay.

DUAL POWER

These demands form a rising scale, each slogan posing the question of power on a higher level. Workers' control itself is an advanced stage when the question of state power is posed. It represents the highest point of organisation and control which can be achieved by the workers under capitalism, but can only be regarded as a temporary phase. Either the working class creates a political organisation capable of taking state power, or the situation degenerates in favour of the ruling class. In other words, it involves a situation of dual power, and it is necessary to go forward to a socialist system of workers' self-management in the framework of a centrally planned economy. Otherwise the workers' organisations will be seriously weakened, demoralised and quite incapable of putting up a serious defence of workers' interests - even on the level of straight economic issues.

Given a clear understanding of these issues, the workers' control movement can go forward and make an important contribution to the re-growth of the socialist movement - and socialist theory - in Britain.

"INTERNATIONAL" READERS' DISCUSSION GROUPS

There are a number of WEEK discussion groups up and down the country. These groups discuss a wide range of topics as well as having international speakers. Now INTERNATIONAL is out we plan to start several new ones. Any interested reader should contact us.

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF



MUCKRAKERS TO MARXISTS

by Julian Atkinson

It is a damaging and oft-levelled charge that the British Left is parochial and ill-informed about the international working class movement. It is certainly true that most of us have only hazy ideas about the history and theories of the North American left. The student, Black-Power and anti-war movements seem to us to have entered the political stage full-grown and without antecedents. In his book* Professor Bottomore has sketched in the history of radical thought in America which will enable us to place the present American left in perspective.

The book is based on a series of talks that T.B. Bottomore gave for the Canadian Broadcasting Company. He has not concentrated on political and social movements, but rather on the connection between intellectual dissent and theories of society, and the work of thinkers who elaborated critical theories of society.

MUCKRAKERS

His first subjects are the muckrakers: those journalists who at the turn of the century devoted themselves to sensational exposures of the ills of American society. The high point of muckraking was reached with the publication of "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair, which dealt with the exploitation of workers by the meat-packing trusts. The American public was shocked - not by the misery but by the description of unhygienic conditions in the meat industry and the Pure Food and Drug Act was passed by Congress.

In the 20's and the 30's the marxists became force in the American left. Dos Passos and James T. Farrell wrote proletarian novels while Sidney Hook and Edmund Wilson initiated the development of an American-oriented marxism - a development that never occurred.

American radical thought is traced through the slough of McCarthyism to the present renaissance of left-wing theory and activity. Professor Bottomore's book is well-written and is an introduction to the North American left. It is not a definitive account and his appreciation of rival theoretical tendencies can be faulted, but as a beginning it is very welcome.

* CRITICS OF SOCIETY by T.B. Bottomore, Allen & Unwin, 25/

MARXISM Vs THE S.L.L. by Peter Rice

Most of our readers will be already acquainted with the more humorous side of the S.L.L.'s activities, which are common knowledge in British left circles. This pamphlet* takes them to task on some of their "theoretical" blunders. Anyone who has not the sheer persistence to plough through

the turgid repetitiveness of S.L.L. propaganda should thank the author, Bob Purdie, for his painstaking summary and discussion of the postures adopted, and congratulate him on the success of his uninviting task.

What does emerge quite clearly is the method of the "Banda School of Falsification", in which isolated sentences and phrases are lifted out of the writings of political opponents to make a caricature in amalgam-style, which the enlightened commentator then proceeds to refute. Marxists know of course, who first brought this method to perfection.

Anyone noting the "contradictions" (page four) in the position of the S.L.L. has to take account of the fact, of course, that the "Clapham International Command" mechanically constructs its dogma by reversing and negating the positions of the rest of the marxist movement. Nor should we be surprised that the S.L.L. comes out solidly in favour of the Red Guards; a more accurate assessment would be too complex to appeal to the KEEP LEFT Young Socialists whose ideological sophistication has provided an inexhaustible supply of witty tales for the British Labour movement. All is sacrificed to the desire to put forward a clear-cut slogan, no matter what the factual base of it may be.

What emerges in the question of Cuba is a deliberate refusal to face facts, but in the case of "Black Power" there is an obvious turning against the marxist position of support for oppressed minorities. We may say categorically that it was an unfortunate thing for the world revolution, and for the S.L.L., that Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia; readers of this pamphlet will see, however, why we separate the reactions of the two.

Finally, all those who follow V.S.C. activities should buy this document as a good supplementary explanation for the absence of the banners of the S.L.L. and KEEP LEFT Young Socialists in the march 17th demonstration in Grosvenor Square.

* "A Marxist Debates the Socialist Labour League: On Cuba; China; Che Guevara; O.L.A.S.; Black Power; and the S.W.P.", available Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1., 1/9d, Post paid.

READERS' LETTERS

The editorial team of INTERNATIONAL will welcome letters on any of the subjects in this issue (or for that matter, any related topics). To assist publication, letters should be related to specific subjects and not more than 500 words in length (shorter letters would be even better).

IN THE LPYS ANY FUTURE?

by Tony Southall

The National Conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists reflected both the malaise of the party from the actions of the Wilson Government and the search for alternatives which the actions of the Government have produced. Numerically, the conference was the smallest ever: 150 delegates approximately. This represented under $\frac{1}{3}$ of the 538 branches the National Committee claimed in its annual report. Reports the size of the conference adequately reflected the low level of Young Socialist activity areas. Notwithstanding this, the level of the speakers was high. The resolutions passed at conference could provide a firm basis for discussion within the Labour movement of an alternative programme to the Government.

Major motions were passed on the economy. Conference expressed its opposition to the solution of the economic crisis of capitalism through anti-working class measures. It noted in particular the rise in prices, increased rents and rates, cuts in social services and the effects of the 'squeeze' on wages, mortgages, etc. The National Committee was instructed to initiate a campaign for the nationalisation, under workers' control, of the big monopolies controlling the economy. The second motion, after analysing the Government's "retreat from the most minimal reformist programme", called for support for workers struggling "against restraint, higher rents and for an improvement in living standards and social services." A call was also made for a campaign against unemployment.

The debate on the N.E.C. discussion document on the social services centred around the large amount of evidence which has accumulated about the extent of poverty in Britain and the adequacy of the Government's response to this. The outcome was a composite motion calling for a social service programme based upon a massive increase in benefits with a minimum based on the cost of living, an end to the wage stop, a £15 minimum wage, work or full maintenance, a free health service, nationalised building programme and workers' and pupil's control of education.

In the debate on education the main controversy arose over the phrase in the main composite motion which called for the "introduction of democratically elected workers' representatives on the governing bodies of local and national educational administration." This motion was ultimately accepted. It was unfortunate that the Beeston and Stapleford resolution giving support to some of the main demands of the most advanced sections of the student movement had fallen.

In the trade union debate conference declared itself wholeheartedly opposed to any legislation penalising trade unionists or workers from taking any action against their employers. It was noticeable that this was the poorest of the debates, and unfortunate that no mention was made in this context of any of the ideas associated with the workers' control campaign.

The high point of the weekend's debate was that on Vietnam. The major resolution, passed by 81 votes to 74, was a composite over 300 words in length, embodying the following points: "full support to the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution and the N.L.F."; a campaign to be organised for the provision of "medical, moral and material aid" to them; a demand for the withdrawal of all foreign troops; instructions to the Government to implement party policy to dissociating from American aggression and to admit N.L.F. representatives to Britain; support for the American "draft dodgers"; a declaration that "Young Socialist branches should give help to branches of the Vietnam Solidarity

Campaign". The resolution ended by quoting Ho Chi Minh's advice to Western socialists: "The best help you can give to the Vietnamese Revolution is to make a revolution in your own country".

On the N.C.'s organisational report the delegates noted the intention to proceed with the production of yet another official Y.S. paper. On this occasion it is to have an editorial board appointed by the National Committee. It should be noted, however, that the N.C. remains a non-elected body and that the paper is to be subject to censorship by the National Youth Officer. Dissatisfaction with the organisation of the Y.S. was reflected by a large part of the report being referred back when votes were taken.

On the face of it the 1968 Conference would appear to have been marked by a series of victories for the left. But the question which hung over the whole conference and which recurred in nearly every debate was: what future has the Y.S.? The small number of articulate delegates who broadly supported Government policy, along with the majority of the National Committee, apparently gave it little hope. At times it was hard to believe that the chairman was at all concerned about the proceedings or the decisions taken - as if he realised that the bureaucracy could easily ignore them. Others blamed the alleged fanaticism and sectarianism of the left for the small numbers.

Amongst the left two major strands of opinion emerged and their conflict was articulated in debate after debate. On the one hand, some supporters of REBEL/LABOUR WORKER proclaimed the death of the Young Socialists saying that members should turn outwards to tenants' organisations, industrial struggles, etc., and ignore the Labour Party. Supporters of MILITANT on the other hand gave it as their opinion that this was in many ways the best conference for years. Their spokesmen exuded the greatest optimism about the future which should lie in the Y.S. fighting for the programme contained in conference resolutions through their Labour Party Ward and Management Committees.

The truth lies somewhere in between and it was a tragedy that there were so few delegates able to articulate it. Those who called for the Y.S. to intensify their struggle in the Labour Party gave the impression that they had failed to notice the current decline in activity of that organisation. In particular, they seemed unable to appreciate its unattractiveness to youth. When it was pointed out that the energies of many young people were now going into such activities as the March 17th demonstration in Grosvenor Square, the latter was dismissed as a peripheral event on the political scene. But the proponents of withdrawal from the Labour Party commit the mistake of seeing the current decline as an inexorable trend. Notwithstanding the actions of the Government, nothing has happened in the last three years to enable us to say that the Labour Party has suddenly ceased to be the only mass working class party in Britain.

The future of the L.P.Y.S. in 1968 is by no means clear. It is safe to say, however, that if either of the above lines of action are followed to their logical conclusion next year's conference will be even smaller than this. Those of us in the Y.S. should seek in the coming months to build our branches on the broad basis of the policies decided at conference and seek every opportunity to advance those policies within the Labour Party and trade union movement. But we must also be conscious of the need to build a bridge to the masses of radical youth who are currently unwilling to commit themselves to consistent political struggle. Instead of carping criticism we should offer constructive support. Y.S. branches must participate in V.S.C., student activity, etc., to the full. In this way we can perform the absolutely essential task of bringing our overall political strategy to bear on the consciousness of the most active layers of youth and ultimately of bringing the immense enthusiasm currently being generated in demonstrations and on the campuses to bear on the vital political struggle in the Labour movement.

Notes from the press

TAKEOVER BILL IS DOUBLE LAST YEAR'S ALREADY

The great bid boom that has been roaring away this year has already pushed the takeover bill up to more than twice the total for the whole of last year.

So far, it has reached a massive £2,113 million - and that doesn't include the minibids and mopping up operations. If they are included the total would come out nearer the £2,200 million mark. Last year, the takeover tally topped the £1,000 million mark.

Many of the biggest link-ups this year have been genuine mergers, like the £400 million British Motor Holdings-Leyland affair.

But the biggest of them all was the three-way banking get-together between Barclays, Lloyds and Martins, involving a little matter of £580 million.

The most active company in the takeover business has been the textile giant, Courtaulds headed by Sir Frank Kearton. Between January 1 and March 5, when the group had to submit to a ban on bids unless they were cleared by the Board of Trade,

it took over no fewer than eight companies.

(From the EVENING STANDARD city column,

£152 MILLION "WAR PROFIT" FOR TANKER OWNERS
Tanker owners made a massive \$365m. profit in the four months following - and because of - last year's Arab-Israel war, according to a study by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (O.P.E.C.).



The study was based on an examination of a and short-term charters in the four-month period from June to September. While only approximate figures, admittedly from a partisan source, the figures indicate a repetition of the post-Suez situation of

The main beneficiaries then, as apparently last year, were oil companies with large fleets - BP with its heavy dependence on Middle East oil, was probably an exception - and the big shipowners. However, the fortunate owner of only one 60,000 ton tanker would stand to make, according to O.P.E.C.'s calculations, between £230,000 and £300,000 every trip from the Gulf.

(From the April issue of MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC SURVEY)

TAKE YOUR PICK! (our emphasis throughout)

.....But afterwards they broke away, taking hundreds more with them, and headed along the Strand and Chancery Lane for the DAILY MIRROR building. The chanting 1,500 mob....

(From DAILY MAIL, April 16)

.....Tariq Ali, emotional and eloquent, as he addressed his 1,000 followers outside the DAILY MIRROR yesterday.

(From DAILY MIRROR, April 16)

More than 2,000 students last night fought with police outside a London newspaper office.

(From DAILY SKETCH, April 16)

A force of 800 police yesterday held at bay a crowd of 1,000 demonstrating outside the Holborn offices of the Springer group of German newspapers.

(From DAILY TELEGRAPH, April 16)

West Berlin's student demonstrations spread to London today as more than 2,000 youthful marchers

(ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT of April 15)

After joining the main rally in Trafalgar Square, Mr. Tariq Ali took his mob, now swollen to about 1,000 people to the DAILY MIRROR building in Holborn Circus.

(From SUN, April 16; this newspaper showed a photograph of the demonstration and described it being the Martin Luther King memorial march.)

A crowd of about 1,000 advanced on the offices..... Halted by the 500 police surrounding the building

(From THE TIMES, April 16)