

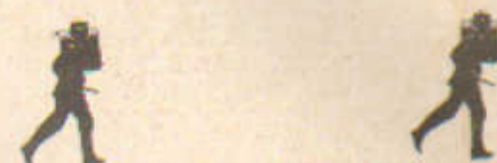
The Red Mole



THE LABOUR PARTY

Robin Blackburn

Ireland.. Withdraw all British troops now!



The repressive role of the British troops in Ireland becomes daily more obvious. Having posed as the protectors of the Catholics, they are now busy putting the boot in the Catholic population. Irish republicans are being hounded in Ireland and England. Two are at present in jail in Manchester. In the last couple of months Scottish regiments with a reputation for being soft on Orangism have been moved into Ireland for the first time. The belief of some Northern Irish in British neutrality suffered some heavy blows in August as a result of the BBC coverage of the events in the North. As the bullets begin to fly, some practical lessons in neutrality will be on their way. The only uncertain factor in the calculations of British imperialism will be the strength of resistance of the Irish Catholics themselves. They have realised what forty years of political passivity have brought them. They will not be in a mood to easily forget or go back on the events of last summer. British imperialism is out to teach the them a lesson, however. It must be the task of revolutionaries to help ensure that is the imperialists that learn the lesson instead.

CRITICAL SUPPORT

Some comrades wanted to give critical support to the invasion by British troops in the summer. It was said that British troops would help to prevent a pogrom in Belfast. They would give revolutionaries and republicans a chance to arm the people. There was even some common ground between imperialism and the Left. It was in the interests of imperialism that the fascist structure of the North be dismantled and something more akin to social democratic

Britain be established there. Hence since we as revolutionaries would prefer to operate in a social democracy rather than in a fascist state, ergo we have common interests with imperialism. The comparison could be drawn with a United Front against Nazism in Germany. What this vision of the world misses out is the possibility of independent action by the working class.

DIVIDE AND RULE

We should remember that it is British imperialism that has structured the situation in Northern Ireland which makes pogroms possible. It quite consciously practises "divide and rule" and will continue to do so as it has done in numerous other parts of its Empire. To put one's trust in British troops to prevent a pogrom then is to exchange the threat of pogrom today for the greater likelihood of one tomorrow. Only one force can protect the Northern Catholics, and that is their own self-organisation. Revolutionaries must support every movement which encourages that self-organisation. They must oppose every development which impedes the growth of political consciousness on the part of the Northern Irish. British troops militate against any developments in this direction. As far as revolutionaries in Britain are concerned, it's our function to demand that Ireland should have self-determination. We must have no confidence whatsoever in the agents of imperialism to help the Irish people. We must demand that all British troops immediately leave Ireland.

1922 VICTORY

The 1922 Free State was a far cry from a Workers' Republic. However, limited victory that it was, it still represents a victory against imperialism. The Southern Irish bourgeoisie remembered the pressure of the workers and the small farmers at its back. It did not want to be pushed too far so it sold out for a limited victory. In 1932 it began the struggle for capitalism in one country, and, of course, has failed in this attempt. It is now jettisoning what residual claims it has to being the representative of Irish independence. It is moving towards an accommodation with Britain within a federal Ireland or perhaps the Common Market. It is becoming a totally independent client bourgeoisie. British imperialism has not of course been impervious to these developments in the South. A federal Ireland would indeed imply a restructuring of the North. It is not the task of revolutionaries, however, to tail imperialism and to dovetail their politics to fit in with its requirements. Many mistakes have been made by an easy equation of the North and South as equally bad, in an attempt to adjust theory to the consciousness of the Northern worker. The tasks of revolutionaries must be to defend what is left of the gains of the Civil War.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The fate of the Irish revolutions depends on how successfully the Irish working class can resist the attempts on the part of the Southern bourgeoisie to sell out its limited national

independence. It is to the theory of Permanent Revolution that we must look for an understanding of the developments in Ireland over the last 50 years. The bourgeoisie could not accomplish a total national liberation at the time of the Civil War. It is now capitulating further. The only force that can successfully achieve a real and lasting national independence for Ireland is the working class. Liberation for the North cannot be seen except in the context of a general republican movement throughout the country. The dual oppression suffered by the Northern Catholics put them in the vanguard of that movement. The fate of the Irish revolution in the immediate future will depend on the ability of Irish revolutionary groupings to capture the leadership of the republican movement and to indivisibly weld together that movement with the struggle in the North.

OUR TASKS

The task for revolutionaries in Britain is to oppose British imperialism, to demand that the troops be withdrawn and to demand self-determination for Ireland. As revolutionaries in an imperialist oppressor country we should at all times remember that we can offer solidarity to the Irish but that we are dealing with an oppressed nation which has to find its own liberation.

Only by the most principled internationalism can we be of assistance to our Irish comrades. The record of some sections of the English left has been a poor one so far as the failure to construct a mass-based solidarity movement demonstrates.

Teachers..We're all Trade Unionists now

Eastbourne. April '70. A late Georgian-Victorian town: statues and monuments abounding to the dead of the Victorian imperialist ventures; a pier and a bandstand, grey lace and tea. The stock settlers are the retired/retiring petit-bourgeois with dogs: and this week the teachers.

Decision to Join TUC

It is obviously an important year for the NUT: its centenary; the first year of successful strike action to back up a pay demand; and the year when they stop bugging about and join the TUC. To be sure the top echelons of the NUT have not rushed into it to embrace the British working class: had they thought that the effect of TUC affiliation would be one of proletarianising their members, they would be a little less eager to get in. But it's a start: they will be identified a little more with the working class movement and at local level there is the possibility of much more contact and action. There was, of course, a solid minority opposed to affiliation—162,000 for; 74,000 against: but this in part reflects the very conservative make-up of the conference.

Undemocratic Nature

Possibly the undemocratic nature of any trade-union conference is accepted by most, but it was a terrific shock to see the serried ranks of teacher representatives! The average delegate is about 45-50 (over 50% of NUT members are under 35); he/she is a head or deputy head. Possibly 12% of the delegates were women, in a union where there are over 50% women members, and most of the delegates had been to Conference for the

unrepresentative section of teachers are delegates due to their holding union positions of secretary/president on local committees or area committees, and it is evident that it is these type of teachers who are represented by the Executive Committee of the NUT (that notoriously democratic bunch who are all heads or deputies!)

And at the conference the E.C. of the union had it all their own way. The E.C. presented their documents and the conference gave them the go-ahead. Not one resolution or amendment opposed by the E.C. was passed: not one!

The two most important issues for teachers are pay and class-size. The E.C. submitted papers on both, and both accepted the positions of the local authorities, i.e. the employers. The salaries memorandum accepted the employers' demand for salary restructuring. In the past few months the fight for an Interim Award was based on a flat-rate increase of £135 for all teachers—to go onto the Basic Scale. Now the E.C., instead of continuing this fight for all teachers, say they would like to increase the Basic Scale, but equally important is the need to rationalise above-scale payments and produce more enticing plums of responsibility, posts, etc. Any gains made in the last few months were made through solidarity of all teachers: if there are to be demands made for above-scale payments for the chosen few—this solidarity will not operate. Most teachers recognise the absolute essential of a satisfactory basic scale—the E.C. policy will be cheaper for the employers, not a large increase for all, but a little for all and a lot for a few.

was built up in the last few weeks in the rank and file, they must be involved in the discussions and consequently the decisions being taken. One amendment was a demand to refer back the document to a Special Conference in May: giving local associations a month to discuss the implications of the document! But the E.C. and the C.P. strongly opposed this move, on the grounds that we could not leave the conference with no salaries policy. The C.P. reiterated this as well—anything is better than nothing! No discussion—unfortunate, but... and the C.P.'s alternative was "Back Maxie!" M. Morris, well-known C.P. head of a large comprehensive, Executive member, was to move an amendment so that the policy's introduction would have the words "all increased money should go to the Basic Scale...until a satisfactory settlement on these issues has been achieved". The E.C. was to decide "satisfaction". (This vicious attack on the E.C. was to be the banner that led the Left. No question of increasing consciousness in the local associations by a campaign mounted against the salaries document: instead a "powerful" insertion!) And for this the C.P. opposed the reference back. Even Maxie's amendment was defeated, and then the scrabbling around continued until he successfully pushed through a castrated couple of sentences which stated: "Conference announces its intent to press the union's claim with the utmost determination, including, if necessary, by the withdrawal of labour"

We are left with a salaries document—which is just what the employers want—and a meaningless C.P. motion which is only to gain maximum newspaper space

20-minute waffle: platitudinous state statements; the only thing of consequence a demand for the return to a cosy consensus education system—"forget the industrial militancy", "come back to the classroom", "all is forgiven", "let's work hand in hand..."

—to the horror of the treasurer and finance committee, a question and statement made against NUT stock-holdings in Anglo-Rhodesian companies, and the treasurer getting flustered and worried; and talk of "principle is all very well but..." and "you won't change Rhodesian policy, you know."

—a demand for teacher representation in various committees—so toothless that it can only suck!

—and the last speech before the bouquets attacked the Government's watchdog, the proposed Teachers General Council: a Rank and File speaker made a vicious attack on the proposals and won a large amount of support from the floor.

The fight that is taking place in areas throughout England is not going to be aided or hindered by this little lot. The teachers have found their feet, they know how to fight, and the issues that are coming to the front like class size, conditions of school buildings, control or participation within the decision-making processes will become important amongst the rank and file. Journals like Rank and File will play an increasingly important part in the fight in the local associations; and it will be around this paper that supporters' groups are being formed to work in the union. What we must work for is for the time when it is worthwhile attending the conference—when democracy hits the NUT and the

HULL TRAWLERS: THE NEW MILITANCY

On Friday February 13th, following six months' intense negotiations between the Hull Trawlers Owners Association and the TGWU, on behalf of the men, with no progress to record, the union called an official strike.

Two years ago, trawlermen were a non-union area of industry. Now they are demanding full union membership on board all Hull trawlers; the right to have a shop-steward on board each ship; and a pay rise.

How has this total reversal of the situation come about? To answer this question it is necessary to examine the situation of a trawlerman.

BASIC PAY	Sidetrawlers: £14 16 0 per week. Sterntrawlers: £15 10 4 per week.
BONUS	Based on catch (not guaranteed): up to £6 13 6.
HOURS	7-day week: average 95 hours (in bad conditions, often work more than 18 hours per day).
OUTLAY	Until recently, each man provided his own "gear"—clothes for Arctic conditions, even his mattress.

CONDITIONS

- Virtually all fishing carried out in Arctic waters, often 30 degrees below zero, where to touch metal is to lose one's skin, where the potentially incapacitating dangers of frost-bite are very real, where ice so easily forms on the superstructure—making the ship unstable—where the seas can dwarf any but the largest trawler.
- Breakfast, six days a week is fried fish; only on a Sunday will the men see such "luxury" as eggs and tomatoes. For a three-week voyage, the men get just six cans of beer.
- Only since last year and at the discretion of the skipper, the men are allowed 1/2 hr. for supper. (Food is only slightly better on the newer, bigger, stern-trawlers, the freezerers.)
- No contact with the Union is allowed while at sea, should the men have any grievance—the skippers do not allow it.
- The skipper is law, judge, and executioner at sea. Some earn as much as £10,000 p.a.—yet with the increasing number of larger ships, many of them face redundancy.

Trawlers have the highest accident/death rate in the whole of British industry—witness the three trawlers that went down last year, with a loss of 59 lives—St. Romanus, Kirk Cleveland and Kingston Paridoe. They went down in Arctic seas because of the weight of ice that formed on their superstructure: this made them so unstable that in the heavy seas they just rolled over. While the old trawlers continue to give the owners a good return on their capital, they will not be replaced with more sea-worthy vessels. (Shipping trading profits as a whole in 1969 rose by 32.9%, while average other profits in industry rose by 18.9%).

The trawlermen have only about a week ashore before again sailing for the fishing grounds. Without full unionisation of the industry, the hands that are taken on by each trawler are subject to the personal whim of each skipper and owner. Any man pressing for an improvement in wages and conditions on board will be viewed by the owners as trouble-makers, and be therefore subject to victimisation. Shop-stewards on board each ship would be able to ensure that none of the gains made so far are infringed.

The men demanded £20 a week basic wage; the owners waited until the strike had been called, then offered £19 0 4, which the men rejected. Their other demands, about which the owners have refused to talk, are: 100% union membership aboard the trawlers, negotiations on shipboard shop-stewards, and negotiations on time in port and shipboard conditions. Incidentally it is worth noting that the inadequate sum offered only covered time at sea and not time in port. They would, therefore, be paid at two wage rates.

ACCIDENT RATE

For their basic wage the trawlermen have to work "18 hours a day for 10 or 12 days every three-week trip. This is in weather that most of us don't know about, and will never experience. The weather does not count, it is catching fish, gutting it, heading it, washing it, stowing it away, that is what counts. All this on a deck that never stays in the same position, with ice and water pouring over you." So bad are the conditions that it is no surprise to find that the accident rate, 72% above the national average, makes it the most dangerous industry in the country.

The demands of the men are modest, and their experience of industrial disputes is limited; it is the first official dispute they have been

taken from the pages of labour history. The state of the industry, the attitude of the owners and the conditions which reflect those attitudes have more in common with the coal industry at the turn of the century than a twentieth-century based industry. Just as the miners had to call upon workers in other industries for assistance, so too is the nature of fishing.

ROLE OF THE POLICE

From the very onset of the dispute the police have been employed in a very partisan role, which they appear to have enjoyed. Not satisfied with "protecting dock property" by mounting a continuous counter-picket, they have also assisted in the recruitment and transportation of blacklegs. (The number of man-hours involved is beyond imagination). The use of police and police vehicles is a common sight transporting the scabs on to the docks. (It is also interesting to note that the Hull trawlermen have taken to referring to the "friendly" British bobby as "pig"—the graffiti on warehouse walls bears eloquent testimony to this fact).

Following several confrontations with the police, something like fifty people have been arrested and charged. Obstruction, loitering, and behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace are the most common charges. One man chased by a police car along the pavement was charged with obstruction! Men, their wives, and even children are not beyond the long arm of the law. On the evening of 17 March a fourteen-year-old youth was arrested.

The use of the law has not been restricted to the vulgar physical performance of the gorillas in blue. Or of the provocative acts of their plain-clothes branch, who dress like Burtons dummies and smell like an advert for Old Spice. Amongst the trawlermen and students they stood out like carnations in a farmyard.

INJUNCTIONS

When the bobbies and other workers came out in sympathy, the owners responded with injunctions against the unions involved, the GMWU and the NUR. In court Mr. Campbell, the owners' legal front, said that the sympathetic action was "really making it difficult." "The last thing an employer wishes to do is to sue workmen for vast sums of money. The workmen cannot find £320,000, so one is compelled to seek the assistance of the courts..." "There is no question of the court interfering in trade union relations, or in a labour dispute between employers and employees." The function of a court is "to preserve the status quo."

The students at the University and at the colleges of Commerce and Education proved that if ever they are called upon they will respond. Spokesmen of the men addressed packed meetings of students at each place. Their message was simple, but to the point and effective. "The men are on strike, they need assistance and some expertise. The students can help, if they will?" The students replied in a practical positive manner, with assistance at the picket, the production of posters for a march through the town, and producing a strike bulletin with the approval of the men. Less help was forthcoming from their Labour MPs who refused to comment. (Come the General Election we will see what they say).

Following the use of injunctions the sympathetic strikes were called off and the fish caught by the blacked trawlers could be marketed. Consequently the strikers created and became caught in conditions which the strike brought about. A false scarcity of fish inflated the price of the catch, and the owners are prepared for a short term loss to defeat the men. In these circumstances wages of £80 a week are not uncommon. In addition to which the unemployment is the highest since 1939, with 7,439 out of work. In a vastly over-subscribed register of 1800 fishermen with the above wages and employment prospects, black-legs are not hard to find.

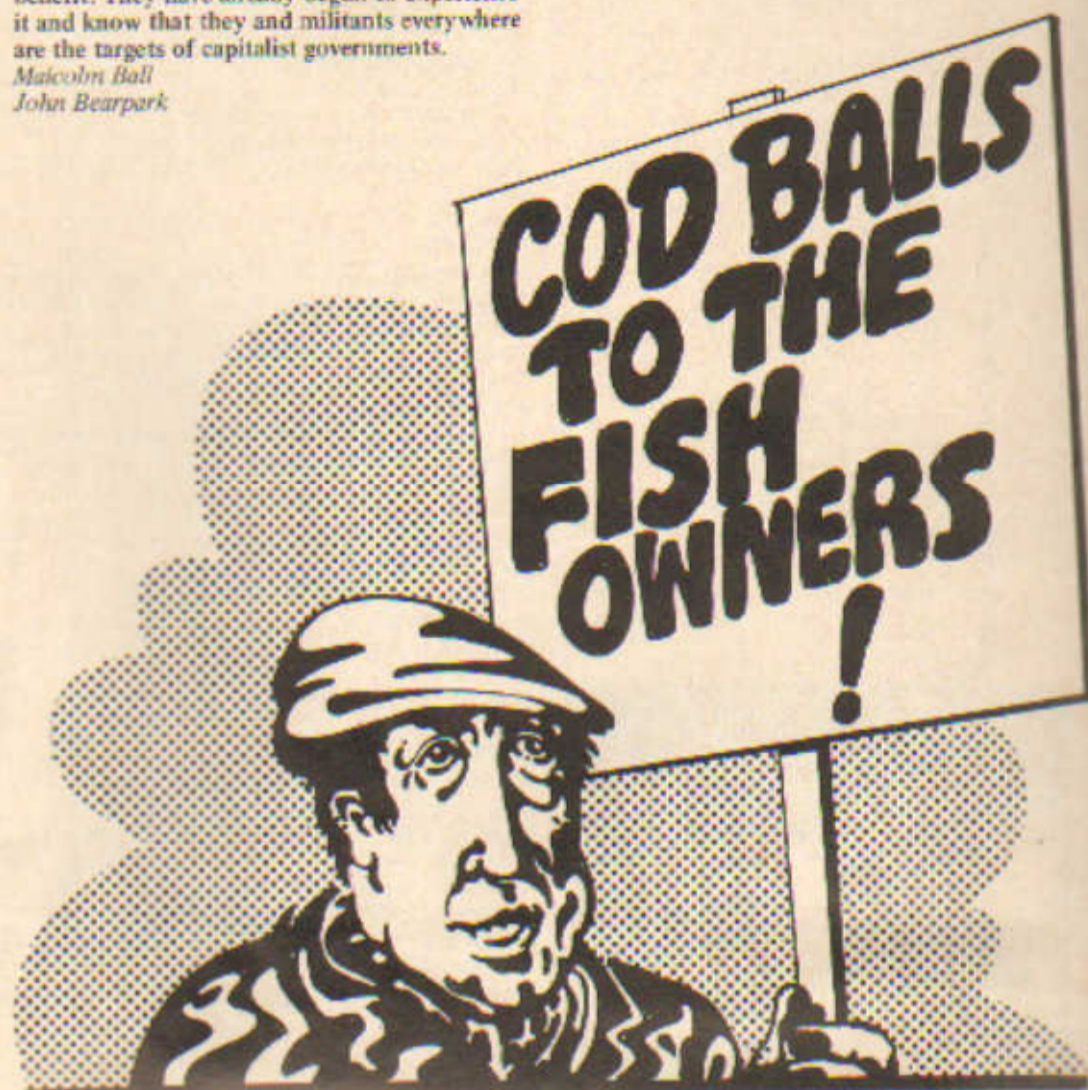
In conclusion can it be said that because students and fishermen are "the two most despised sections of society" they can find a common level of activity? When men have a critique of the police which recognises the role of the state, then they are going to know their limitations and logistic weaknesses. In this situation it is logical that students with skills and time, and above all a definite anti-capitalist perspective should be called upon to help.

NEW MILITANCY

It is not a coincidence that an upturn in the level of militancy and combativeness of workers should follow on the heels of student combativity. Students have shown their capacity for defending themselves, an example willingly imitated by a frustrated, leaderless

young (their average age would be below 30) and it is clear that they are not only rapidly losing faith in the degenerated apparatus of the Labour Party, but are beginning to consciously see the socialist students as their allies in struggle. Finally, let no one try to fool the Hull trawlermen about law and order being to their benefit. They have already begun to experience it and know that they and militants everywhere are the targets of capitalist governments.

Malcolm Ball
John Bearpark



Profile: Hugh Scanlon

As the 1970 AEF Annual Conference draws nearer, so the position of Bro. Scanlon and his hangers-on becomes less secure.

Scanlon's abandonment of the women engineering workers at the last AEF Conference, and the betrayal of the Swansea Ford workers last month, caused surprise and dismay amongst many shop stewards and rank-and-file workers.

Marxists, however, were not surprised. Indeed, we were saying that Scanlon would betray the militant workers back in November 1967, when he was being presented to the engineering workers as a "Saviour" by an extremely unholly, and very shaky, alliance of Labour "Lefts", Workers Control Institute supporters, and Stalinists. The atmosphere of the Nov. '67 elections was added to by Fleet Street's descriptions of Scanlon as a "hard man of the left", a "boss hater" and so on. It was on the basis of Scanlon being a "hard man" and someone who would defend them against the attacks of the Labour Government, that the engineering workers elected him as President. They elected Scanlon to fight the Labour Government, and this is precisely what he could not do.

For all his big left talk of socialist societies, industrial democracy, workers control, etc., Scanlon is dedicated to the preservation and continuation of a Labour Government. The fact that Wilson, Castle, Jenkins and the like are in control of that Government seems irrelevant, indeed, he says of the Wilson Government that it "...has the capacity to build the type of society we would wish to see and is worthy of our continued support." It is only by realising, therefore, that Scanlon is nothing more than a Social Democrat, and that he and Wilson are just different ends of the same stick, that we will be able to understand his apparent changes of face.

If we look back to 1967 after his election, we can see how Scanlon immediately adopted a militant posture, coming out against the TUC's voluntary incomes policy, saying that it was "...totally unacceptable that we surrender our autonomy and independence of action."

Eighteen months later, at a meeting of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions, he was facing the other way, extolling the virtues of the TUC's "Programme for Action", and being reminded by Eddie Marsden of the Constructional Engineers Union that this "...merely transferred the right to intervene in unofficial disputes from the Government to the TUC."

problems of capitalism in Britain can best be handled by Trade Unionists like himself. This, in essence, is the gulf between Scanlon and Wilson. It is not a question of posing Socialism as an alternative to the crises of capitalism. It is a question of what is the best way of solving these crises. Wilson sees the problems being overcome by destroying the rights of the workers to defend themselves and by attacking their living standards. Scanlon's answer, on the other hand, is to make British management more "efficient". Indeed, he told the AEF-sponsored MPs in 1968 "that the AEF executive would not be obstructive as regards mergers and rationalisation." (*The Times*, 12th May, 1968).

On the question of the "In Place of Strife" document, Scanlon makes his position even clearer. After all the shouting and posturing, he asks:

"Does the Government believe that...the bill (In Place of Strife) will be a vote-catcher in the next general election and offset the justified resentment of the electorate at our economic mess brought about by the Government's stubborn refusal to listen to the advice of their truest friends?" (*The Times*, 22nd April, 1969).

In other words, the balance of payments difficulties are directly attributable to the fact that Wilson will not listen to the advice of Messrs. Scanlon, Feather & Co.

It is no surprise then, that as the general election approaches, so Scanlon begins to show that he is not prepared for any embarrassing industrial disputes to interfere with Labour's chances of clinging to power. After all, what are true friends for?

And what of the people who support Scanlon? Certain elements in the Workers Control Institute, the "Tribunites", and the bureaucrats of the Communist Party, are all politically bankrupt, it is obvious. That they still have around them large numbers of good militants is a situation that must be remedied.

A serious effort must be made by revolutionary workers in the engineering industry to intervene and explain to these militants the weaknesses and shortcomings of such organisations. It must be explained that these organisations are incapable of providing any sort of alternative to the Wilsons and Scanlons. Such an alternative in the engineering industry cannot be built overnight, but must come as a result of carrying out struggles in the AEF for socialist policies and revolutionary ideas.

CITY MOLE

"Art" today in England is big business, and it is a business which has little to do with any spiritual or aesthetic merits which might be attributed to the objects which constitute the trade.

In both America and France, there are crippling sale-room taxes, which can rise to as much as 20% of the price paid for every object passing through an auction house.

In England, there are no direct sale-room taxes whatsoever; London has consequently become the centre of the international art market, the hub of the great hassle which is a microcosm of the whole capitalist structure.

Between 1951 and mid-1969 the cost of living in the UK multiplied a little over two times. During the same period, UK share prices multiplied four times, and those of the USA about the same.

Old Master paintings multiplied 7½ times; British pictures, 10 times; Impressionists, 18 times, and Modern Paintings, a shattering 23½ times.

Art Barons

Such facts naturally attracted to the art market the money of the big investors; banks, pension funds, and financial institutions, who immediately realised that there was in art a joy-ride equivalent to the rampant property speculation of the '50s.

An increasing number of investment trusts are allocating a growing slice of their funds to direct speculation in works of art, which they approach exactly as they would share certificates, or any other capital investment with vast appreciation potential.

Once they have secured their collection through the sale-room or through the dealers, it is usually vaulted and hoarded till the market is right for resale.

Bank of Jersey

Parallel with this big-scale investment, the little man is invited to participate in the same charade just as far as his purse will permit. The Bank of Jersey has recently appointed a full-time art adviser, "to give clients a complete investment service", and he is undoubtedly the first of a new breed of art bankers. Speak to him, and if you are a client, he will "tip" the most likely modern artists to make money in the future, referring to International prizes and big retrospective exhibitions, as "form" in just the same way a racing tipster will pick out the big races and successes of the horses he fancies.

From all this, one would suspect that the dealers and auctioneers had little to complain of: turnover and profits are soaring in every category.

However, "Art" differs from any other commodity trade in so far as every work handled is unique.

Tax Dodge

Once he has sold his stock the dealer cannot simply replenish it by re-ordering. This means that in the old picture market, there is an ever-diminishing number of major works coming up for sale. The tax law in America is such that enormous advantages accrue to those who donate their pictures to the museums. This still applies, even after the restrictions imposed on this practice in 1968. Similarly, in England, the national collections are intent on capturing the most important pictures every time they come up in the auction rooms.

Once a picture has been secured for a season, it never comes onto the market again.

Funk Artists

At the other end of the market, the trade in modern pictures, more and more work that is being produced is "unsaleable". It is too large, or like the environmentalists, the Funk artists, the autodestructive painters, it rejects the concept of art as a precious object, and cannot be traded in the same way with the same appreciation potential as the flat surface painting, the permanent sculpture or the "objet d'art" which provide the life-blood of the main selling galleries as well as of Sotheby's and Christie's.

The "pool" of available art is diminishing, and it from this one simple fact that they mystique, mystery, and humdrum claptrap of art dealers really arises.

Contradictions

The great revolutionary artists of the past who made their protest against the market system, are now among the most hotly sought after of all. Duchamp's famous urinal, which must surely have seemed to his contemporaries to be entirely without commercial value, was turned into a lucrative edition of six, and undoubtedly if the original was sold at Sotheby's tomorrow it would fetch a fortune. Similarly, Picabia's collages, deliberate attempts to create valueless art, change hands today at several thousand each.

West End Art

Some of the biggest West End galleries, Wildenstein and Colnaghi's in particular—depend enormously on "stock" which has been built up over the years.

Once it has been sold, they will have little left. Firms like Agnews used to depend on buying back from one generation to sell to the next. Though they probably have more would-be buyers than ever, they have an ever-diminishing number of quality works to sell.

Censorship

Understandably, the dealers do not like this mentioned too often. Almost every attempt to explain the real situation in the art market has been suppressed. Wright's book, *The Art Game*, published four years ago, was reduced to one third of its size on legal advice before publication. John Russell Taylor's *The Art Dealers*, which appeared briefly for a fortnight last year, was rapidly withdrawn, and even a superficial account of the gallery world, *The Art Scene*, published by Barry Stuart-Penrose earlier this year, resulted in the author receiving a series of threatening phone calls from a West End dealer whom he had allegedly "exposed".

Commodities

The average old picture dealer has become a commodity retailer in a field where 100% is the basic, starting profit margin.

If you wish to see how a dealer functions, go into the Cooling Galleries in New Bond Street, pick up their catalogue and have a look at their 1970 selection.

Flicking at random down their list, No. 45 in their catalogue, by William Shayer, a mediocre Victorian landscape painter—typical of the artists who have been inflated since there is nothing else to sell—is priced at £700; Cooling's bought it in March 1969 for £360 at Sotheby's.

No. 93, a similar hideous piece of Victorian "genre" painting entitled "The Gossips", also by Shayer, is priced at £725. Cooling's bought it in February 1969 for £320 at Sotheby's. An inferior Leader painting (yet another Victorian landscaper) of Worcestershire Common was bought last year at Christie's for £473; Cooling's are asking £1,000.

There is nothing exceptional in this. In fact the mark-up is on the low side.

Non-Cool

Cooling's are simply stupid enough to print the prices in the catalogue, and one can trace back the pictures in sale-room records.

For the run-of-the-mill picture trader, "art" is simply a lucrative commodity; in the prevailing climate he only has to buy at auction, mark up the price and resell. He is not interested in any other implication of his business.

"Guardians of Taste"

The powerful galleries, like Marlborough, however, have to defend their reputations as "guardians of taste". Marlborough is loathed by many of its fellow galleries, since it is organised on a world-wide scale, as an efficient business machine. It tempts successful artists away from the smaller galleries with fat contracts, and wheels and deals in art just like any City institution deals in financial stock. It handles artists whose reputations are ready-made. Moore, Sutherland, Hepworth, Bacon, Piper, Chadwick and Armitage are among the famous British artists whom it lured from smaller dealers once they became successful.

At least there is a certain honesty about the gallery; it is in the business for the money and makes it.

The present structure of the art market is inevitable in a capitalist society.

Alternative

Alternatives initiated by artists have always failed: the famous Stockwell Group of sculptors formed their own commune, rejecting the gallery system, and sold direct to the public; as soon as one of their members was offered a show in Kasmin's Bond Street gallery he accepted, rejecting the Group's anti-dealer manifesto.

The reason is that visual art objects are ineluctably linked with the capitalist consumer society of which they form a part. The successful artist is dependent on the bourgeoisie for his income, and he does not begrudge his dealer's two-way exploitation of the situation.

The unsuccessful artist merely wants a bigger slice of the cake for himself; he is not really interested in changing the system on which he knows he is dependent.

Effectively, this indissoluble link means that the visual arts will never be able to play a meaningful role in the revolution, as long as artists, through dealers, energetically look to the financial establishment for patronage.

Tilson selling his "revolutionary icons", showing Ho, Che, Martin Luther King and the front pages of underground newspapers, in the plush Marlborough gallery is an effective confirmation of this. The only interest an objective artist has in the revolution is the fact that he can package fragments of it, like any other commodity, and retail them through his dealer to an investment-hungry bourgeoisie. Percy Ingrams



RED CIRCLE/RED MOLE CONTACTS

If you live in or near any of the areas listed below, you can contact these people for any queries about The Red Mole and for information on distributing the paper and sending in local reports. In a number of these areas (asterisked) functioning Red Circles already exist. Others will be added to the list in the course of the next couple of weeks. If there is no Red Circle in your area at present, write to us here at 182 Pentonville Road, London N1.

- *BIRMINGHAM: Gerald Hitman, 28 Brighton Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham 12.
- *CARDIFF: Alastair McNiven, 5 Major Road, Canton, Cardiff.
- *COVENTRY: John Presland, Routes Hall D16, University of Warwick, Coventry.
- *DERBY: John Hewitt, c/o The Red Mole, 182 Pentonville Road, London N1. & Bruce Bebbington, 41 Leopold Street, Derby, DE1 2HE.
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Letter from Mexico

26 March 1970
Leclunberri Prison of
Mexico City

Dear Tariq Ali and comrades
of THE RED MOLE:

We have just received the first copy of the RED MOLE, and consider it to be not only an improvement over the old *EL MARCH*, but a step closer to its revolutionary goal than the old *EL MARCH* was capable of. It is a newspaper of combat! To be sure, THE RED MOLE has our fullest solidarity and support. And you can let it be known that a Red Circle also exists in Leclunberri Prison!

Political Prisoners of
"La Cruz" 21
VERACRUZ-1

Rafael Echegarria
Julio Torres
Alfonso Barrera
Alfonso Barrera
Manuel...
Manoel...
Rafael...
Fabiano...
Zafarino...
Salvador Zarco
Victor...
Julio...
Nicolas...
J. Antonio...
Benny

with the article 'The Red Menace'...
...the Labour Party—a
...which has bedevilled the revolutionary
...movement since its existence. Our pages will be
...open to all comrades wishing to discuss the
...question.

The impending General Election confronts us with the necessity of carrying out a sober and scientific analysis of the Labour Party and the Labour Government of the last six years in order to decide the character of our intervention in the Election campaign. It forces us to give a clear answer to the somewhat bizarre question staring at us from the billboards: "When it comes down to it aren't Labour's ideals yours as well?" It forces us to decide whether, as Marxists and Leninists, we can again support the Labour Party for whatever reason and with whatever reservations. As Lenin always insisted, the living soul of Marxism is the concrete analysis of a concrete situation. The central argument of this article is that after the recent extended experience of Labour Government it would be absolutely incorrect for us to offer any kind of support to Harold Wilson or the Party he leads. I will assume that no Marxist can believe in passively abstaining from politics, especially during an election period when the political consciousness of the masses is stimulated. I will therefore conclude that the only principled course for revolutionary socialists during the coming election will be an active campaign to discredit both of Britain's large capitalist parties. In this campaign we should certainly pull none of our punches. We should disrupt the campaigns of the bourgeois parties and their leading spokesmen using all the imaginative and direct methods which the last few years have taught us.

BOURGEOIS NATURE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

Let us begin by establishing the essential nature of the Labour Party as a prelude to analysing its position after six years in office. Since its existence the Labour Party has always been the chief instrument for organising the loyalty of the British working class to "its own" bourgeois State. The reforms promised by the Labour Party are the bait on the hook. As a rider to this formulation we may add that the existence of a Labour "left" has been the instrument for securing the underlying loyalty of advanced workers to the Labour Party. For the Labour "left" to play this role it has been necessary for it to have always adopted a posture of "dissent" and "protest" with all the defeatist, minoritarian ideology which this implies. The Labour leadership on the other hand has prided itself on its practicality and eagerness to become Her Majesty's Government.

Lenin wrote about the Labour Party as follows: "Comrade MacLean called the Labour Party the Political Organisation of the Trade Union movement, and later repeated the statement when he said that the Labour Party is 'the political expression of the workers organised in trade unions'. I have met the same view several times in the paper of the British Socialist Party. It is erroneous and is partly the cause of the opposition, fully justified in some measure, from the British revolutionary workers. Indeed, the concepts 'political department of the Trade Unions' or 'political expression' of the Trade Union movement are erroneous. Of course, most of the Labour Party members are working men. However, whether or not a party is really a political party of the workers does not depend solely upon the membership of workers but also upon the men that lead it, and the content of its actions and its political tactics. Only this latter determines whether we really have before us a political party of the proletariat. Regarded from this, the only correct view, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois Party because although made up of workers it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie. It is an organisation which exists to systematically dupe the workers with the aid of the British Noskes and Scheidemanns." (Speech to the Second Congress of the Third International).

Lenin's Reasons

It should be emphasised that Lenin was advancing this analysis at a time when illusions about the class character of the Labour Party would have been most easy to make, especially in someone commenting from afar. After all, the Labour Party had just adopted Clause Four of its constitution, it had not yet been exposed by participating in Government, the record of many of its leaders during the war was at least a shade better than that of continental Social Democratic leaders and it had endorsed at least some sort of effective campaign against British intervention in the Soviet Republic. Why then did Lenin so unhesitatingly class the Labour leaders with the murderers of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht? Simply because he had a clear view of the irredeemably bourgeois character of its leadership and concept of politics: above all because they were wholeheartedly wedded to Parliamentarism. This single fact gave Lenin a devastating insight into the nature of the Party despite all its rhetoric and despite its comparative "innocence" up to that point. Lenin knew that underlying loyalty to the representative institutions of the ruling class must mean, at any decisive point, a commitment to the whole bourgeois model of civilisation. Thus to say that the Labour Party is "organically linked to the working class" is thoroughly confused and confusing, just as much so as any of the formulas which Lenin attacks.

Organic Link or Cash Nexus?

The Labour Party is *organically* linked only to the political institutions of the British ruling class. Historically it has always been an electoral machine and nothing else, and today it is an increasingly decrepit one. The Labour Party is

of course, linked to the Trade Unions, but the essence of this link is a thoroughly bourgeois one: nothing other than the cash nexus. In fact, in the past the amorphous, undifferentiated unity of the labour "movement" concealed the fact that working class identification with the Trade Unions was prior to any identification with the Labour Party. Indeed one concept we must examine very critically is that of a "movement" abstracted from the organisations which actually comprise it. The Trade Unions also should not be idealised. They bear the birthmarks of the period in British history which produced them: a period of colossal defeat for the first political movement of British workers (Chartism) and of unparalleled global ascendancy for the world's first full-fledged imperialism. However, British Trade Unions emerged under the tutelage of the labour aristocracy and its profoundly economic, Lib-Lab ideology. It is not surprising that the genuinely class-conscious current within the unions has always been an oppositional minority. Today, more clearly perhaps than ever before, we can see that the Labour Party does not have an organic link with the working class—rather it has a cash link with the Trade Union bureaucrats.

Because the Trade Unions set up the Labour Party in the first place it is sometimes argued that some special proletarian virtue attaches to it. Actually just the reverse is the case. The fact that British social democracy was established by the Trade Unions, rather than the other way round as on the continent, has always implied a special extra limitation of the class significance of the Labour Party. In Britain the Trade Unions have been the primary repository of the consciousness of the working class, including its false consciousness.

Labour Parliamentarism

The Labour Party has been only the Parliamentary representative of the Labour "movement". The whole life and activity of the Labour Party has always been fixated on one goal and one goal only: participation in the national or local institutions of the bourgeois state. The Labour Party does not represent working class politics within the bourgeois assemblies, any more than did the Liberal Party in the nineteenth century or does the modern Democratic Party in the United States. What distinguishes it from these parties is that it represents, in a remarkably pure form, bourgeois politics within the working class. After seventy years the Labour Party cannot any longer be regarded as the first faltering sign of proletarian political consciousness. A truly socialist consciousness cannot evolve gradually or spontaneously from this Labourist consciousness: it can only come about through a sharp, sudden, break. The Labour Party represents the working class only "corporatively", that is to say only within capitalism and above all only within the framework of the political institutions of the bourgeoisie. One might even say from this point of view that the apparently "trivial" fact that the Labour Party has never stood for the abolition of the Monarchy is much more revealing of its class nature than the apparently more weighty social transformation promised in Clause Four. However, this is by no means all that can be said about Labour's reformism.

Bourgeois "Policies" or Bourgeois Party?

Some comrades talk of the "bourgeois policies" of the recent Labour Government. Such a formulation is quite inadequate and unscientific. The Labour Party is a capitalist Party because of its essential structure, its integration within bourgeois democracy, its entire political practice, not just because of the policies of a particular Labour Government. Even in those periods when it appeared to believe in the reformist goals it proclaimed, it was, as we have seen, no less a capitalist Party. Indeed, one of the most "left" programmes it has even campaigned on, that of 1945, corresponded exactly to the period when it rendered its maximum service to the British ruling class. At a time when this class was weakened and discredited by the memory of the Depression and of appeasement, the socialist aspirations of the masses were channelled by the Labour Party into the safe waters of Parliamentary politics. The reforms offered by the Labour Party then, as now, were of course largely fraudulent and illusory. The masses were not asked themselves to participate in bringing these reforms about but were invited to receive them from the benevolent hands of the legislators and civil servants. But even to the extent that the Labour Party did offer real reforms the consequence was to cement more firmly working class loyalty to the bourgeois state. Historically within capitalism reforms of the system have by no means always been achieved by those who regarded themselves as reformists (think for example of Bismarck or Napoleon III). In Britain the most effective reforms have actually emerged from the Liberal Party: Lloyd George, but even more Keynes and Beveridge. However, as we shall see, it has been vital for the image of the Labour Party that it did successfully establish itself as the Party of reforms *par excellence*. Moreover its very *raison d'être* was that, come what may, it would defend the Trade Union movement; as

we all know it was set up as a direct consequence of the Taff Vale judgment which it later helped to reverse. Against this background an analysis of the Labour Government of 1964-70 reveals the development of a new situation.

Labour Imperialism

The Wilson Government has been rightly called the most reactionary Government in Britain since the end of the Second World War. It has been deeply complicit with imperialist war and invasion throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. It has provided the United States with diplomatic cover, military advisors, a police detachment and CS gas to aid imperialist slaughter in Vietnam. Guyana was handed over without a fuss to the CIA and there was not even a murmur about the brutal US military intervention in the Dominican Republic. In the circumstances this silence was understandable since British troops were being systematically used to defend British imperial interests by this Labour Government. During this time British troops have fought in, or been sent to, the Congo, the Caribbean, Malaysia, Aden and the slave shirkdoms of South Arabia. And of course British troops have been sent to Northern Ireland, though not to Southern Rhodesia. At home the Government has completely capitulated to the racist lobby on immigration. The list could be extended almost indefinitely but I would instead like to pay special attention to those actions of the Labour Government which directly affect its relation to the working class.

1945 Labour Government

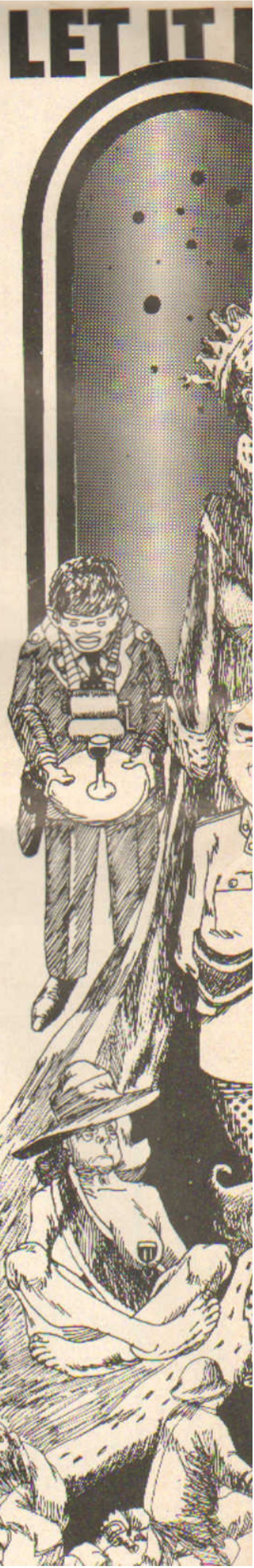
In 1945 the Labour Party formed a Government on its own for the first time. From any socialist point of view the reactionary character of this government hardly needs stressing. From the point of view of the mass of Labour supporters its record was not so clear, as was shown by the fact that Labour got more votes in 1951 than it had in 1945. The aftermath of the war provided favourable circumstances for reforming the operation of the capitalist system. From the point of view of Labour supporters it was this Government which appeared to be the first British government to commit itself to full-employment, to have dramatically improved working conditions in the newly "nationalised" industries and to have begun the introduction of adequate universal health and education provision. Of course many of the Labour policies would have been adopted by any other bourgeois government of the time (full-employment, the implementation of the Butler Education Act and nationalisation of the bankrupt public services would all have been pursued by a Conservative Government). But the impression made on large numbers of British workers was that under difficult circumstances the Labour Party had at least some concrete achievements to its credit.

Labour Capitalism

The Wilson Government is an altogether different affair. It has consciously and consistently re-introduced unemployment as an instrument of economic policy. It has allowed the social services to continue to decay. The general impact of its policies has been regressive: that is to say the rich have got richer and the poor poorer. And it has conducted a systematic campaign against militant trade unionism, including the notorious attempt to introduce penal clauses in its Trade Union bill. All this has clearly had a major impact on working class attitudes to the Labour Party. By 1964 the intensity of proletarian support for Labour was already weakened: the years of Conservative rule had shown them to be not so different from Labour; there was something like full employment most of the time and the welfare state had not been dismantled outright. Even so working class commitment to Labour was still strong enough at the first year of Labour Government for strikes to fall to a record low point for the '60s and of course the Labour Party was resoundingly returned to office in the General Election of 1966.

De-Proletarianisation

The turning point for Labour relations with the working class came in the following months with the Seamen's Strike and the emergency measures in August. The direct attack on the living standards of the masses, growing



LEED

Labour and the General Election

Robin Blackburn



unemployment and Wilson's vicious assault of the Seaman's Strike began working-class disenchantment with Labour. By 1967 Labour's traditional electoral support was staying away from the polls in large numbers in local elections and by-elections. On a more fundamental level the number of strikes began a steep climb to reach a figure higher in 1969 than in any year since the General Strike. From this time on there was also a considerable growth in the incidence and scope of extra-Parliamentary agitation: the large and militant Vietnam demonstrations, the increasingly militant shop-stewards movement, the Squatters movement, tenants' strikes, university occupations, the Civil Rights agitation in Northern Ireland and so forth. Cumulatively these developments mean that the Labour Party is losing its capacity to channel and contain social antagonism within British capitalism. Above all its ability to mesmerise the working class is significantly reduced. The Labour leadership itself has, of course, for a long time sought to present a "classless" image, it has claimed to represent the "nation" as a whole. At the base of the Labour Party there has been a vertical decline in the numbers and activity of Party workers. Every Labour Party member one speaks to reports the low morale in Party branches and in many areas membership of the Party now comprises 99% unashamed opportunists (local councillors, prospective candidates, trade union bureaucrats and the like) and 1% entrants. At the higher reaches of the Party there has been a growing separation of the FLP from the Trade Union movement. In a small way the "de-proletarianisation" of the Labour leadership itself is a sign of this. In the past the Labour Party has always had one or two major leaders with a definite working-class background: Bevin, Morrison, Bevan, etc. The present Labour Cabinet started off with Cousins, George Brown, Gunter and a number of others who continued this tradition. Today they have entirely disappeared and very often they have left the Government not over any policy issue but simply because they did not feel they fitted in with the style of the middle-class, Oxonian technocrats who surround Wilson. Coincident with this a new breed of Labour millionaires has emerged (Lever, Maxwell, Sainsbury, Rothschild, Bernstein, Weinstock, etc).

The significance of such an analysis of Labour in government since 1964 is not that it "proves" the bourgeois nature of the Labour Party to us: we should surely have known that before. But this experience has undeniably further weakened the hold of the Labour Party over the British working class and it is this fact that is of capital importance to any Marxist evaluation of this Party and the coming election. Another important feature of the experience of the Labour Government is that it has discredited not just the Labour Party but also the Labour Left. After all Wilson was himself a hero of the Left, he has surrounded himself with former leaders of the Labour Left and even those Left MPs who have managed to stay clear of the Government have been revealed as impotent if not unprincipled; it should be remembered that at one time they were in a position to determine the fate of the government.

THE DEATH OF REFORMISM

We may conclude that the traditional function of Labourism has been gravely weakened. Labour can no longer pose so convincingly as the champion of reforms, it can no longer claim to be the sure defender of proletarian corporate class interests within capitalism and it no longer contains a strong and clear "socialist" left capable of rallying advanced members of the working class. The reasons for all this relate not so much to a change in the Labour Party as to a change in the objective possibilities present within a declining British imperialism. There simply isn't so much room for manoeuvre given the harsh constraints imposed by the international bankers. It is this drying up of the objective scope for reforms that has fatally undermined Labour's traditional role.

Significantly the Labour Party can only claim credit for reforms which present no economic cost to British capitalism: namely the "liberal" reforms affecting the law on abortion, homosexuality, etc. These reforms clearly appeal to the middle-class constituency which the Labour leaders are eager to woo. One may further point out that the implementation of these reforms is largely vitiated by the "democratic" manner in which they have been

introduced. As the masses were not won over to these reforms or in any way involved in their introduction and implementation, they will remain highly precarious and can be removed from the statute book by only a very small change in the political climate. And in so far as they remain simply on that statute book (and not integral to social relations) such reforms are just as much pseudo-liberal reforms as the reforms of the post-war Labour Government were pseudo-socialist: thus no amount of Race Relations legislation can even significantly reduce racial discrimination so long as it is only a face-saving alibi for the professional politicians. We should not be surprised that the main victims of such legislation have in fact been the militant black groups and not any sector of white society.

Who Will Vote Labour and Why

Even when everything has been taken into account, one thing remains certain: more than half the British working class will vote Labour at the next election and more than a third will vote Conservative. This is not a new pattern. What is new is that increasing numbers of these workers will realise that they are voting for the bourgeois party of their choice. All the evidence suggests that the decision of which Party to vote for will be determined less by class loyalty of any kind and more by a calculation of which Party can run British capitalism better. In such a situation it would be absurd for socialists to muddy their propaganda and activities during the election campaign by commitment to any of the bourgeois parties. Instead they should concern themselves above all with building the nucleus of a genuinely revolutionary current. The new fluidity of the political situation does not mean that millions of workers can be won over to a socialist position: after all such a position is only represented by tiny groups of whose mere existence the masses are largely ignorant. Our aim in the campaign should be to do two things: (1) Make it known as widely and vividly as possible that we reject Wilson as much as we reject Heath. (2) Urge the most advanced workers and youth to organise for the coming period of more intense class struggle with no illusions about the Labour Party.

Of course, such a position would be irresponsible if we really believed that a Conservative Government would be, in some fundamental respect, different from a Labour one. Indeed it is very significant that in order to justify support of the Labour Party in the election, some groups, which supposedly base their politics on a scientific theory of society, have seriously talked of a Conservative victory paving the way for Fascism in Britain. Alternatively we have been offered the strange concept of the imminent danger of a "Tory counter-revolution" and we have even been warned about the dangers of a "Bonapartist" threat to British bourgeois democracy! Such aberrant formulations become very difficult to avoid if one starts off from such a fundamental error as support for the Wilson clique. Now it is of course true that late capitalism contains powerful authoritarian trends within it, but we should expect these to express themselves regardless of which Party wins the Election. There is certainly no reason to expect the British bourgeoisie to exchange tame bourgeois politicians of the Wilson/Heath variety for the perilous experimentation of a Hitler or a Bonaparte. Such solutions are only reluctantly resorted to by a ruling class which confronts both a strong revolutionary bid for power and a really profound economic and social crisis of the sort Germany experienced after the First World War and during the Depression. Whatever the nature of the crisis of British capitalism, and it is real enough, it certainly does not contain these two features, and in particular not a powerful revolutionary movement.

What Would A Tory Victory Mean?

There are of course more sober objections to a Conservative victory. Would it not herald a vicious attack on the Trade Unions, the right to strike, etc. Certainly this is possible, just as it would be under a new Labour Government. But the important point is that the only sure defence of working class organisation is the capacity of the class itself to mobilise. It must be emphasised that it would be very dangerous to in any way encourage the view that a central issue in the class struggle of this sort depends not on the class consciousness and combativity of the proletariat, but on the presence of Harold Wilson in 10 Downing Street. In a curious way Conservative politicians are often more aware of the truth of this than many socialists. They will certainly think twice before provoking a situation which would readily appear one of open class conflict just as they have usually done in the past. And if the dire straits of British capitalism do force them into this, then this is a battle that has to be fought: it is certainly not one from which revolutionary socialists should shrink. In order that such a contingency be prepared for, we must be most careful to make it crystal clear that the defence of the working class and its rights of organisation in no way depend on the opportunists who lead the Labour Party.

Labour and the Student Movement

Much the same considerations apply to the problems confronting the student movement. The Labour Government, and in particular the

Cabinet and Education Ministry, have the closest ties with the most reactionary university authorities in this country. There was abundant evidence for this in the captured minutes of the LSE Governors' meetings. For example it is known that Lord Goodman has been asked to consider legislation making occupations of university premises illegal. Even without this direct evidence the notorious speech by Edward Short about the "academic thugs" and the knighting of Walter Adams and Frederick Seeborn have made the situation clear enough. Indeed, British students do not seem to realise that the repression of their movement which has occurred under a Labour Government exceeds that to be found in countries where the movement has actually been stronger than it has here. For example the students' movements in France, Italy and Germany have not been met by the use of dismissals on the scale which we have witnessed against our movement here. The worst cases, Hornsey and Guildford, are ones over which the Education Ministry has a fairly direct control and it is difficult to find parallels to the actions of these authorities elsewhere in Europe. Anyone who has had experience of the instinctive authoritarianism of petty bureaucrats in the Labour movement should not be surprised by any of this.

The Concept of "Marginal" Defeat

Can we really say, as some comrades do, that a Conservative victory would be a defeat, even a "marginal" defeat, for the working class? The answer to this can be put in the form of another question: would not the triumphant return of Wilson after his record of government also be at least a "marginal" defeat for the class? As Marxists it should not be too difficult for us to reconcile ourselves to the fact that bourgeois elections do not offer the working class the chance of "victory" whatever happens. Indeed so long as the masses see no alternative to such elections then they are almost certain to involve some sort of "defeat". In any case we must rid ourselves of the delusion that our support is likely to make any difference to the immediate outcome of this election. Our intervention in the election can prepare for something more important than just another election: we can build a political force which will have qualitatively more weight in the class struggle of the 1970s than we now possess.

The Rope and the Hanged Man

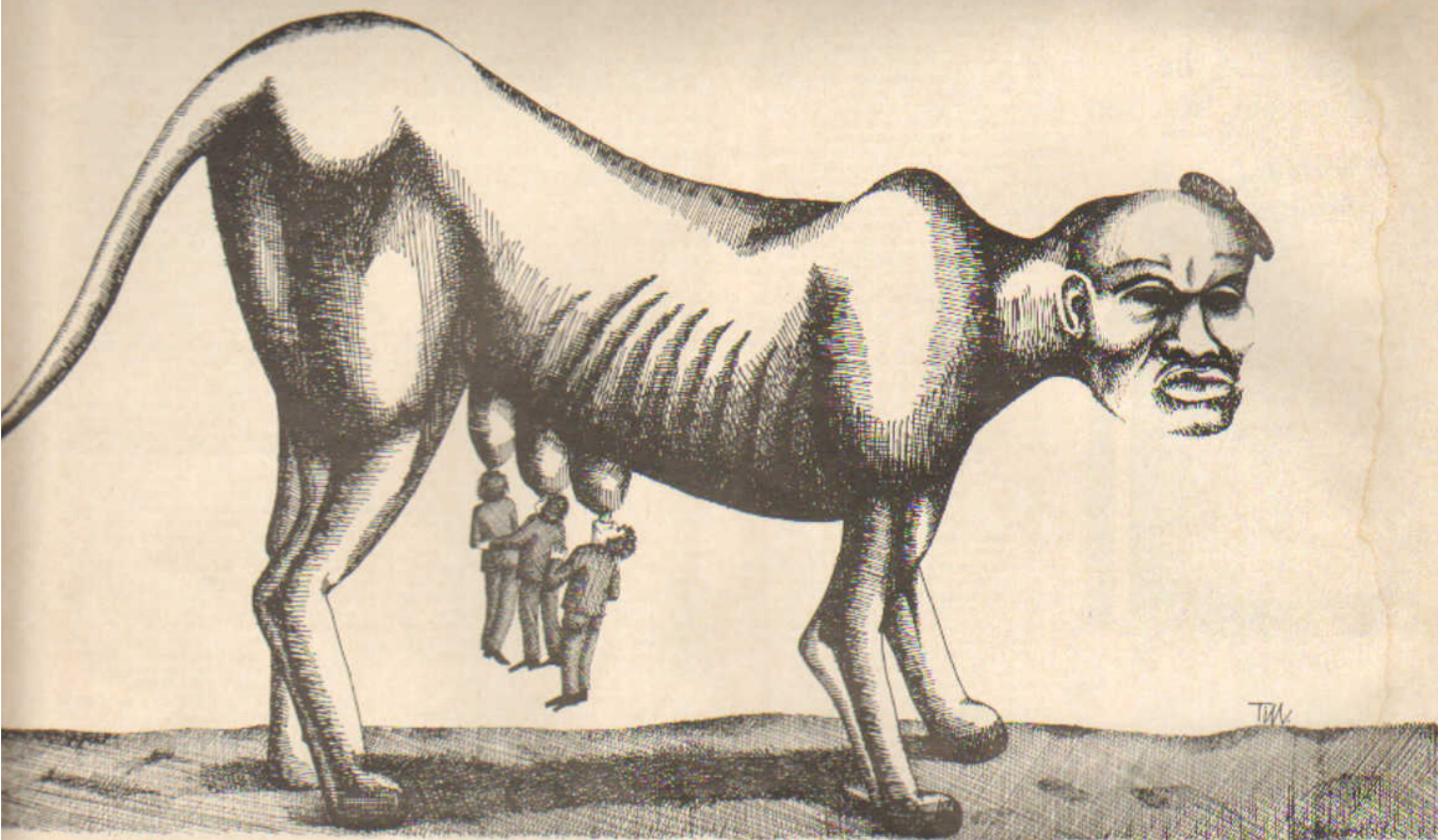
This brings us to the well-known formula that revolutionaries should support the Labour Party like the rope supports the hanged man. I have already argued that the Labour Party is no longer the sort of social democratic Party towards which such a policy was appropriate. But even if this were not the case I do not think that any revolutionary group in Britain can claim that its support would be a "rope" strong enough to hang the Labour Party. The value of this formula of Lenin's is that it reminds us vividly of the spirit which animated his attitude to the Labour Party even when he argued in favour of Communists affiliating to it (while retaining all independence of organisation and propaganda). But Lenin never encouraged boasting, bluster or rhetoric: and that is all it would be if we equated our support with an execution order. The time may come when this could be so but it has certainly not yet arrived. Today this tactic puts a noose round our necks, not Harold Wilson's.

For the time being we must concentrate on the more realistic tasks of exposing as effectively as we can the Labour Party to the mass of working people while at the same time acting as a pole of attraction and organisation for all those who have already seen through Labourism (and we should not underestimate the number of the latter). This is particularly important in view of the fact that the Labour Party may indeed be defeated in the election (even if the entire Left shouts in unison what an important thing it is to have a Labour Government at the top of its tiny little voice). Labour in opposition would again have an opportunity to represent itself as a champion of the people: we should use the present favourable conditions for dispelling this myth.

Labour and the Revolutionary Left

For decades now every section of the British Left which proclaims itself Marxist has been in favour of some sort of support for the Labour Party at election time. Even now most groups cling to this line, each adding their own tortuous interpretation. So today we have "Marxists" talking of "Voting Labour without Illusions" when voting Labour is in itself the biggest illusion of them all. We hear slogans like "Make the Left MPs fight" when they have already demonstrated a thousand times that they will not, cannot, fight because they are simply the miserable tail of fog-end reformism. We are told to vote Labour to keep out the Tories whereas politically the Labour Party is just as much an instrument of the ruling class as the Tories have ever been.

Does the strategy implied by this article neglect the opportunities for propaganda that participation in a bourgeois election affords? On the contrary, it frees our hands for propaganda and actions which we could never get across if we support Labour in however devious a fashion. We can start to think of all the ways we can attack the two capitalist parties at all places where the election campaign is conducted and perhaps a few places where it isn't—in meetings, in factories, in schools, in universities and on the streets. We can offer support to any candidate who genuinely stands to the left of the Labour Party: indeed we can seek such candidates commitments to vote against the Labour Government on any issue of principle. At any rate this article does not set out to answer all possible questions which will confront us. Its aim is to open discussion, not to close it. It is written with the conviction that support for the Labour Party has for too long been a closed question resting on an *abuse* to answer.



both RYM I and RYM II the blacks
 a central significance analogous to
 colonial peoples. What they provide,
 at least what they provided last June,
 something external to support, some-
 thing for whites to subordinate
 themselves to. If as Weatherman argued,
 whites can make the revolution alone,
 as it makes as much sense to support
 the blacks as to attempt to build a mass
 revolutionary movement among whites—
 indeed, if urban guerrilla warfare were
 the order of the day for blacks, as
 Weatherman asserted, then it would
 make more sense. Blacks can make the
 revolution alone, according to Weather-
 man, because of their "centralness to
 the system" economically and "geo-
 graphical", as well as because of the
 high level of unity among blacks. But the
 black work force is not essential to the
 survival of American corporate capital,
 Weatherman insists. Because it is
 predominantly unskilled and semi-
 skilled the black work force as presently
 constituted is less and less relevant. Even
 in agriculture, blacks are being replaced
 by machinery. Unemployment among
 blacks is steadily rising. Indeed, the
 increasing marginality of the black work
 force is what has led many blacks to an
 "active fear of genocide. A work force
 essential to the survival" of any system
 need not fear genocide, whatever else it
 may suffer. Further, the level of unity
 among blacks may or may not increase.
 The entrance of significant numbers of
 blacks into highly skilled and better paid
 jobs raises the possibility of growing
 racial disparity between ghetto and
 "middle class" blacks.
 How profound Weatherman's
 adherence to its line on blacks was can
 be measured by the events that occurred
 the weeks after the summer 1969 SDS
 convention. At the convention the
 opposite view of blacks, expressed by
 Madeline Dohm and Mark Rudd went
 something like this: blacks are the
 vanguard of the revolution, as they have
 been of radical forces in the United
 States throughout its history. There is
 no and never has been a liberal black
 movement because in fact the black
 movement has always been led by
 working class blacks. White workers and
 white middle class are racist and
 corrupted by white skin privilege.
 Therefore, organising a mass movement
 among whites is not only a
 waste of time, but objectively racist,
 as it is organised around a programme
 of combatting racism. The order of the
 day for SDS, said Mark Rudd, is "two,
 one, many John Browns."
 As for RYM I and RYM II had called

upon the Panthers, but had given little
 more than verbal support in return. Their
 opportunity to pick up their end of the
 obligation presented itself only four
 weeks later at the Panther Conference
 for a United Front Against Fascism in
 Oakland. There, the "vanguard" declined
 to assume the role assigned to it by
 Weatherman; instead of calling for urban
 guerrilla warfare it called for a united
 front on the left in defence of the Black
 Panther Party, a sensible proposal from
 the Party's point of view, but one that
 undermined almost the entire rationale
 of both RYM I and RYM II. As a result
 neither RYM group agreed to the task
 assigned by the Panthers.
 For the Panthers, alliance with whites
 had been a major step in the direction of
 becoming a serious revolutionary move-
 ment. It was precisely because the
 Panthers never believed that they could
 fight and win a revolution on their own
 that they had repudiated cultural
 nationalism. Serious revolutionary
 politics meant building a coalition of
 revolutionary movements, securing allies
 of substance. The credibility of the
 Panthers in the black community
 depended in part on their ability to
 demonstrate that masses of whites were
 also committed to revolutionising
 American society. Both in theory and in
 practice RYM undercut this attempt to
 build a diverse movement.
 Weatherman by assigning to the
 movement a position subordinate to the
 black "vanguard"—by limiting white
 activity to support of black initiatives—
 reestablished, however fleetingly, the
 parasitism of ghetto organising on a more
 obvious basis. Trying at least to take
 advantage of that parasitism to mobilise
 defence against police repression, the
 Panthers called upon RYM and other
 white movement groups to engage in
 activity for community control of the
 police. Weatherman quickly reversed
 itself and made it clear that it would be
 parasitic only if the Panthers behaved
 according to RYM's original prescription.
 Soon afterwards Bobby Seale and David
 Hilliard denounced RYM I. Kiss ass
 was over and kick ass was coming up.
 Subordination to the Panthers,
 however superficial and temporary was
 an escape from white America—and
 therefore from revolution. In that sense
 it was a return to the pattern of civil
 rightsism. The difference was that in the
 first instance when whites were excluded
 from the black movement and forced to
 begin to look into their own
 communities, among their own people,
 for a movement and an understanding of

war provided them with the means to do
 so. This time, however, RYM simply
 backed off when the Panthers pursued
 their own programme, leaving
 Weatherman no place to go but from bad
 to worse: if the blacks refused to play
 urban guerrilla warfare, Weatherman
 would—and it would kick the ass of
 anyone who stood in the way. First came
 plans for October 8 and the great "jail
 break" (abandoned in Chicago because
 of a shortage of troops), then came dress
 rehearsals in Detroit and Pittsburgh.
 Curiously, with the Panthers out of the
 picture, it was the rage of the Weather-
 man women—their alternative to the
 Women's liberation movement—that
 Weatherman harnessed in its guerrilla
 attacks on the high schools. These
 attacks achieved what RYM I desired:
 they forced people to take sides. But this
 time it was the rest of the movement as
 well as the general public who took sides
 against Weatherman. What followed in
 Chicago was 200 beleaguered
 Weathermen and women running wild
 through the streets, demonstrating their
 fury but little else.
 But although we shall probably hear
 little more of Weatherman, the ideas that
 informed its actions and precipitated its
 downfall are still in the air. For all its
 poverty as a revolutionary force,
 Weatherman was nevertheless the first
 new left group within SDS to attempt to
 derive a long-term strategy of revolution
 from current movement perceptions of
 American capitalism. That attempt
 necessarily resulted in a strange
 conglomeration of insights—the result of
 some eight years of haphazard action
 and thought—framed in a model of
 revolution borrowed from revolutionary
 nationalist struggles abroad and
 inappropriate to advanced corporate
 capitalism at the centre of the empire.
 An important insight, distorted
 though it was, lay in the concept of
 white skin privilege—a concept that
 implicitly admitted that the ruling class
 holds its power by ideological hegemony,
 by imposing its view of man as consumer.
 The despair of Weatherman and of others
 who share its views follows from
 accepting that definition of man.
 Weatherman's view of the role of
 militancy was similarly distorted. As a
 tactic, militancy has served the
 movement well, first in dramatising
 opposition to the war and thereby
 destroying the appearance of consensus
 behind which the corporations conceal
 the meaning of their policies, second in
 struggling for concrete demands whose
 realisation will advance the movement.

individuals, in specific and limited
 contexts, from passivity to action—as in
 Stop The Draft Week. But such militancy
 is tactical, not strategic. Militancy can
 serve as a strategy only where state
 power is held primarily by force, rather
 than by ideological means. Then it can
 force people to choose between an
 already understood oppression and
 revolution. Elevated to a strategy in the
 United States, militancy can only
 reinforce the left's worst image of itself
 as a band of isolated desperadoes.
 Weatherman tried to do the
 impossible. Recognising the difference in
 the state of consciousness of Americans
 and Vietnamese, RYM I nevertheless
 sought to make America into Vietnam.
 Their odd theory of imperialism and of
 the "world struggle" (in which there is
 no such thing as "adventurism"), is at
 best an attempt to render consistent a
 strategy and an understanding of the
 United States that are inconsistent on
 their face.
 The scarlet hues of Weatherman
 sinking in the west raise the question:
 what next? The groups waiting in the
 wings to assume the leadership of SDS
 have little more to offer. Both RYM II,
 especially its most active part, the
 Revolutionary Union, and the
 International Socialists now aspire to
 replace the falling leaders, while other
 groups are forming and developing. But
 no group now on the scene can reunite
 the movement. Weatherman, with its
 rigidly ideological mystifications has
 brought to an end the anti-theoretical
 phase of the new left. A coda will follow
 in which it is likely that the RU will
 swing a steadily diminishing number of
 followers back into a more orthodox
 Maoism. In reaction to that, perhaps, the
 IS will have a turn—although it seems
 unlikely that many people can still be
 found to follow an organisation that has
 spent so much of its time waiting for new
 new revolutions to condemn. The
 prospects for SDS are therefore dim.
 That is not necessarily a tragedy, since
 the movement has at every point
 managed to transcend the limitations of
 its organised sects. Until now it has done
 so intuitively, but to rise above the level
 of its accomplishments to date will
 require a theory that does more than
 reflect current practice. What is required
 is a theory that can understand such
 practice in the context of our historical
 situation and by grasping the possibilities
 inherent in that situation, move towards
 their realisation.

Pathet Lao in action

LAOS: Population/2 million; Per capita income/ £26; U.S. Aid (1955-59)/ \$190,281,000; Puppet government leader/Prince Souvanna Phouma; Name of Liberation Army/Pathet Lao.

The coup in Cambodia which overthrew Prince Sihanouk and installed in his place a pro-imperialist government headed by General Lon Nol symbolises the present conjuncture in Indo-China. The American ruling class is witnessing the effects of the Vietnamese struggle in the rest of Indo-China and is being confronted with the logic of the permanent revolution. The main reason for the take-over in Cambodia was the escalation of the military offensive in Laos by the Pathet Lao and the knowledge that this would have drastic effects in Cambodia. A primary reason could well have been the seizure of the American munitions ship by two soldiers who declared their solidarity with the American SDS and the Asian people. However, it is the Pathet Lao offensive which threatens imperialism the most at the present moment.

Pathet Lao—Background

Like the Viet Minh, the Laotian revolutionaries built their army (Lao Issara) during the second World War, and after the war ended they declared their independence. French imperialism (in collusion with the class-collaborationist French CP) refused to recognise this independence, and aided by the United States it succeeded in re-establishing control in Laos. In March 1951 the Laotian and Vietnamese revolutionaries met in the jungles of Vietnam (the area has still not been specified) and an

agreement was reached to continue the struggle. It was some of the victories won by the Laotians with the help of the Vietnamese inside Laos that was decisive in defeating the French armies in Indo-China. It is also worth noting that the battle of Dienbienphu was fought mainly to prevent Viet Minh help from reaching the Laotians.

Geneva Betrayals—1954

The Geneva Agreements of 1954 are usually remembered in relation to Vietnam and the betrayal of the Vietnamese revolutionaries by the representatives of both Peking and Moscow. There seems to be little doubt that had the Viet Minh not capitulated to pressure from Moscow in 1954 and accepted the compromise settlement, we might have seen a liberated Saigon in 1955 and no Vietnam War today. However, what is usually forgotten is the fact that the Geneva Agreements covered Indo-China as a whole and neither the Russians nor the Chinese exerted sufficient pressure to get the Pathet Lao recognised as conference participants. Instead the Conference accepted the view of the puppet regime which declared in much the same way as the Ky/Thieu regime does today that:

"...the military operations in Laos are the work of Viet Minh troops, that is to say troops foreign to the country by race, tradition and ideology. We maintain that the so-called 'free government' has been fabricated lock, stock and barrel by the foreign invaders."

As a result the voice of the Pathet Lao was not heard at the conference. Instead the Geneva Agreements specified that the Pathet Lao would have to relinquish their control of certain areas:

"Thus, in return for a promise of nation-wide elections in which the Pathet-Lao would take part like any other political party, the Pathet-Lao forces agreed to withdraw from their old resistance bases in the centre and the south and concentrate in the two northern provinces... This was a hard decision, but it was accepted." (Burchett, *Mekong Upstream*, p. 243).

However, there is one important fact which must be grasped about the Pathet Lao: while they accepted the decision to withdraw from certain base areas and while they even accepted the decision to participate in bourgeois elections, they never disbanded their army and maintained its independence. This then was the decisive factor which was to make any real consolidation of the mercenary-imperialist regime in Laos impossible.

U.S. Aggression in Laos

For the last fifteen years the United States has been actively participating in controlling the anti-Pathet Lao forces in Laos. At times quite blatantly as in the Eisenhower-Dulles period when they backed the extreme right-wing elements in the army and encouraged the latter to strike at both the "neutralist" Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao. At other times they have changed with the times. The liberal rhetoric of the Kennedy administration was extended also to its new frontiers in Asia and from now on the U.S. openly backed the "neutralists" against the Pathet Lao. After serious clashes in 1960-61 the Soviet Union once again collaborated with imperialism and forced the Pathet Lao to attend a new Geneva Conference in 1962. Here a neutralist government including the Pathet Lao was agreed on and the latter succumbed to Soviet pressure, but once again while they made concessions on the superstructural level they refused to disband their independent liberation army or to concede any of their base areas. It was clear that Souvanna Phouma was tied hand and foot to American policy and the Pathet Lao were quite clearly not pleased with the continued supply of Soviet arms to Phouma. The Sino-Soviet rift brought various differences out into the open and under pressure from the Chinese, the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese, the Russians were finally forced to stop all aid to the pro-imperialist government. Since that time Souvanna Phouma declared his pro-American views to the public and the United States took control in name as well as in fact of all military operations in Laos. The notorious American equivalent of the S.S., the Special Forces, were sent to Laos as "advisers" and together with mercenaries from Thailand they began to re-train the Laotian army. Unofficial estimates published in certain American magazines indicate that the United States has dropped as many bombs on liberated areas in Laos as they have on North Vietnam and even the State Department has now begun to admit that some of their planes were shot down by the Pathet Lao.

Despite the intervention of the United States in the civil war in Laos, it has become obvious that they have been unable to preserve the status quo. The recent offensive of the Pathet Lao was completely successful and reports published in *Le Monde* suggested that certain elements in the military leadership at the Pentagon were advocating "abandoning" Laos and concentrating on Thailand. The Pathet

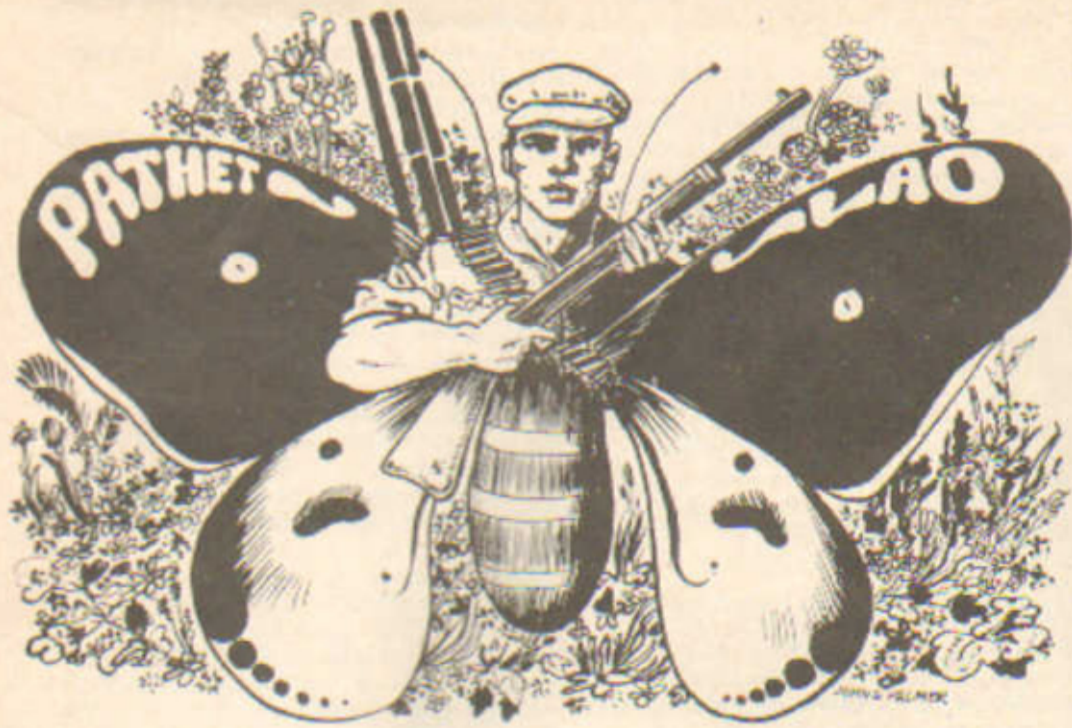
Lao victory at Sam Thong (most vital American supply base in Laos) is only the beginning of an offensive which will soon embrace the whole of Indo-China.

Structure of Pathet Lao

It should be understood that the appearance of organisations like the Pathet Lao often conceals the reality underneath. The same is true of the National Liberation Front in Southern Vietnam and the Patriotic Front in Thailand. The Laotian People's Party (Laotian equivalent of Communist Party) forms the hard core of the Pathet Lao and directs its operations. Though it often uses theoretical weapons from the Stalinist arsenal in its propaganda, when it comes to concrete action it refuses to subordinate its aims to appease the comprador bourgeoisie. Mechanistic Marxists often use the programme of organisations like the Pathet Lao to dismiss them out of hand. There can be no doubt that these programmes are usually extremely liberal. For instance, Point 1 of the programme of the Pathet Lao declares without equivocation that its tasks are to: "Broadly unite all social strata, nationalities, religious communities, political parties, mass organisations, all patriotic forces and people who stand for peace and democracy, and approve of the struggle against the American imperialists to build a peaceful, independent, neutral, democratic, unified and prosperous Lao. To respect the throne." (Political Programme of the Neo Lao Haksat, 1968).

Despite this extraordinary approach in the epoch of decaying capitalism, the actions of the Pathet Lao and the social nature of the liberated areas contradict all this propaganda because they demonstrate that the struggle is part of the permanent revolutionary process. The Pathet Lao are not fighting for a government of the bourgeoisie. They are fighting against it and when they win they will remove Laos from the capitalist world-market, smash the bourgeois state, defeat the imperialist armies and establish a new regime of a socialist nature. This process is called social revolution and every social revolution today strikes a blow at the heart of imperialism and exacerbates the contradictions inside the metropolitan countries. Revolutionaries in these countries must therefore give clear and unequivocal support to the social revolutionary forces in the colonial and semi-colonial world.

G. Camillo



VIETNAM DEMO VICTORY TO THE NLF

26 April 1970

Speakers Corner 2pm

Theses on anti-semitism Zionism and Palestine

1. Semitism is a racist ideology, directed against the Jews. It must be fought by attacking the social, economic, political and psychological roots of racism in society. There is nothing fatalistic, inevitable or mysterious about racism, of which anti-Semitism is only one variety. The gypsies—who continue to be subjected in our country to humiliating and harassing rule—were likewise exterminated en masse by the Nazis. Today we are witnesses to a renewal of racism in Western Europe, particularly acute with regard to foreign workers (attempts to divide the working class in addition to vestiges of colonialism). To combat racism effectively means to smash the social structures which give rise to it (e.g. in Cuba the fullest cultural and religious liberty exists for the Jewish community in addition to the complete disappearance of the former racial discrimination against the Black people).

2. Anti-Zionism is the struggle against the Zionist movement, a current born in the 19th century, which proposed to regroup the Jews in Palestine for the purpose of establishing there a mono-ethnic Jewish State to the detriment of the indigenous Palestinian population. In practice, Zionism meant the expulsion or the putting to flight of the majority of the Palestinian people, reduced to refugee status. This policy still continues today (expulsions and encouragements to leave meted out to the West Bank population in June 1967) as is shown by the following quote from J. Weitz, director of the Jewish Agency's colonisation department for Israel: "The only possible solution consists in creating one Palestine, without Arabs... and there is no other way except to transfer all the Arabs to the neighbouring countries, to remove them all from here. Not a single village, not a single tribe should be left, and the transfers should be directed towards Syria and Iraq." The struggle against the structures and policies of Israel is therefore an anti-colonialist struggle aiming to restore the national rights of the Palestinians in their homeland.

3. Every colonialism is before everything else racism. The struggle against Zionist colonialism is therefore the logical corollary of the struggle against anti-Semitism. That is what the numerous militants of Jewish origin who, inside or outside Israel, and prompted either by revolutionary convictions or quite simply by humanitarian or religious sentiments, refuse to be accomplices of the Zionist venture and are solidarising themselves with the oppressed Palestinian people's fight for national emancipation, have come to understand. Militants from *Matspen*—a leftist, anti-Zionist organisation in Israel—have marched through the streets chanting "We are all Palestinian Arabs". About a hundred intellectuals signed a manifesto last year in which one could read: "Any people which oppresses another necessarily loses its own liberty, Jewish citizen! Remember the courageous gentiles who stood at our side at the time of our distress. Will you stand aside, will you keep silent before the misfortune which has struck the fraternal Arab people?"

4. Zionism and the state of Israel have nothing to do with the Jewish religion or Judaism in general. Besides, orthodox Jewry, particularly its Palestinian component, has for a long time been fiercely hostile to Zionism, as is the Jerusalem "Natura Karta" movement to this very day. It is deeply regrettable that large numbers of Jewish communal leaders, both spiritual and secular, agree to sanction with their moral authority Israel's racist and colonialist policies, thus prostituting the faith of Moses to imperialism.

5. Not only does Israel oppress the Palestinian Arabs but, moreover, it in no way contributes to the disappearance of anti-Jewish racism. First of all, anti-Semitism has nothing to do with the existence or non-existence of a Jewish state (just as the existence of a powerful People's China is not enough to protect the Chinese community in Indonesia from persecution by local reaction). But there is more to come: by deceptively posing as the representatives of world Jewry—while six-sevenths of the Jewish people live outside Israel—and by spreading among international public opinion the thesis of the unconditional solidarity of Jews the world over with Israel, the Zionist leaders in fact encourage anti-Semitism. This is especially true of the Arab countries where each Israeli military victory has given the reactionary forces an opportunity to lay the blame at the feet of the indigenous Jewish communities, which are thus compromised in spite of themselves by the Hebrew state's imperialist policy.

6. Israel was not born of the Hitlerite persecutions. The bases of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine were cast during the last quarter of the 19th century (the first wave of immigrants landing in 1882). In any case, Palestine would never have been able to welcome the six million Jews exterminated by the Nazi regime. Moreover, the Palestinian Jewish community was not saved from genocide thanks to its presence in the Holy Land, but—in the same way as American and British Jewries—

solely because Hitler's unfortunately failed to conquer the Middle East. Those truly responsible for the genocide were the Western "democracies" who systematically refused to open their gates to the victims of fascism. As for the Zionist chiefs, they have never hesitated to treat with anti-Semitic leaders in order to attain their objectives (Herzl's discussions with Von Plehve, Tsarist Russia's pogrom organiser; Jabotinsky's collaboration with Petlioura, the hangman of the Jews; the contacts between "revisionist" Zionists and Mussolini and Pilsudsky; the "Haavara" agreements between the Zionist organisation and the Third Reich for the evacuation of German-Jewish property).

7. It is equally necessary to refute the grotesque myth of the Jews' alleged historical rights in Palestine. Already, previous to the Roman conquest of Judea (70 AD) three-quarters of the Jewish population were living outside Palestine. As for the indigenous Jewish community, it was gradually absorbed by the neighbouring peoples such as the Philistines, the Phoenicians and other small tribes of the Ancient East, in the course of the following centuries, which means that in actual fact the Palestinians of today are, paradoxically, to a certain extent (a great deal of cross-breeding with other communities has taken place) the descendants of the Ancient Hebrews! Besides, if the Jews have rights over Palestine, why shouldn't the Arabs have rights over Spain or Sicily, formerly integral parts of the Islamic Empire?

8. The resistance of the Palestinians to colonisation (including that of the Levantine Jews who, moreover, took part in the Syrian-Palestinian Congress of 1919) asserted itself right from the beginning of the Zionist projects, especially after 1906. It found expression in the harassment of Jewish colonies by the fellahin, who had been driven out of their lands, and the 1920-21 riots which were, besides, part of the general rising of the Arab world (Syria, Iraq, Egypt) against Franco-British domination. It revealed itself again in the 1929 disturbances and, above all, throughout the '30s in the form of strikes and street demonstrations against the Zionist policy of Great Britain. It reached its highest point in 1936-39—a six-month general strike followed by a widespread country revolt—crushed in blood by British forces, strongly aided by the Zionist militias (cf. Prof. Y. Bauer in *New Outlook*: "The Arab revolt of the years 1936-39 was the last attempt on the part of the Arab people of Palestine to forcibly prevent the Jews from entering the country... The conditions for the 1948 victory were created during the Arab revolt.") Not less than the passing of one generation was necessary for the Palestinian people to recover from this terrible bloodbath (the dead could be counted in thousands). That is why Palestinian opposition on the morrow of the Second World War remained sporadic and became widespread only in and after 1965.

9. If the Zionist movement succeeded in taking root in Palestine, it was thanks to the support, to begin with, of the Ottoman authorities and, then, of the British (Balfour Declaration, 1917) and, finally, of the Americans, since 1947 (with, for some time, the backing of the Soviet Union). The Israeli community therefore took form in the wake of a colonial process which had forcibly displaced the indigenous population: "Without steel helmets and gunfire, we would be unable to plant one tree or build one house"—Moshe Dayan. But one cannot hold the present-day Jewish inhabitants of the state of Israel responsible for the crimes of their Zionist leaders or to seek to penalise them on that account. The destruction of the colonial structures of the Zionist state does not mean either expulsion or oppression for the Israeli Jews who, in the Palestine of tomorrow, which one must hope to see reborn within the framework of the reunification of the Arab world, hitherto Balkanised by the colonial powers, ought to be able to freely determine their national destiny in fraternal alliance with the Arabs, in general, and particularly with the Palestinian revolutionary forces.

10. There is no Israeli miracle! Having profited for many years by the support of British colonialism, the Zionist leaders turned their crushing technical and military superiority to account in order to force a division of Palestine, of which they only constituted a third of the population (partition plan adopted by UN, 29th November 1947). Well before the proclamation of the state of Israel (15th May 1948), the Zionist armed forces already occupied a large part of the territory which the UN had allotted to the Palestinian Arabs (occupation of Tiberias, Beisan, Safed, Acre and Jaffa on and after April 13th). It should be added in passing that the UN resolution was taken without consulting the Palestinians and in spite of their categorical opposition to the partition of the country. And if Israel has managed to keep going since then, it is thanks to an influx of foreign capital equivalent in 1968 to 10% of the aggregate foreign aid granted to all under-developed countries, that is to say, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants in 1969, twenty times more than



any other "third world" state. One of the objectives of this permanent reinflation of the West's Middle Eastern shop-window is to try and smooth over the contradictions setting against each other the social classes and the unfavourable Sephardi Jews, on the one hand, and the relatively privileged Ashkenazi Jews (of western origin) on the other, within Israel.

11. Israel is no "peaceable little state". Starting from 1947 and 1948, the terrorist raids of its armed forces drove the Palestinian population from its towns and villages. It has never ceased to oppose by force the return of the refugees uprooted from their homes, not hesitating to multiply the number of bloody "punitive" expeditions against neighbouring countries in order to compel the Arab regimes, not without success, to themselves assume the role of "policing" the refugees. Furthermore, in 1956, it participated in the Franco-British colonial expedition against Egypt so as to punish Nasser for nationalising the Suez Canal, asserting on that occasion its expansionist impulses. In 1967, it succeeded in convincing world opinion that it was waging a defensive war, whereas we know today that "the military deployment of the Egyptians in Sinai on the eve of the war was of a defensive nature" (Levi Eshkol), that Nasser was "bluffing" and had no intention of attacking Israel (General Rabin, *Le Monde*) and that Generals Dayan and Yasser deliberately organised a campaign of intoxication in order to force the cabinet to declare war and without doubt also to accept a so-called "National Unity" coalition with the extreme right.

12. The opposition of the Arab masses to the Zionist state—a pressure which reverberates on their governments—has therefore nothing in common with any kind of anti-Jewish prejudice. It is simply a reflex of defence and of solidarity with an oppressed fraternal people, accentuated by Israel's warmongering and its openly admitted expansionism since June 1967. This hostility is further justified by Israeli foreign policy, systematically hostile to the Arab revolution (e.g. the British RAF's flight over Israel after the Iraqi revolution of 1958, the support given to France during the war in Algeria). These examples prove that Israel fancies itself as the "gendarme" of the West even when its own interests are in no way at stake. Besides, the Middle East knew no anti-Jewish current before the birth of the Zionist movement, which is all the more remarkable given the colonial powers' long-standing stirring

up of denominational and ethnic rivalries in a region.

13. Israel is not fighting alone. It is copiously propped up with arms, stocks and money—the nerve of war—by the US, West Germany, Britain and France (the alleged French embargo did not prevent de Gaulle from authorising the firm Turbomeca to build a factory for the construction of jet planes in Israel). Even if at times the Great Powers express their ill-humour with regard to certain of Israel's initiatives which threaten to jeopardise the totality of their interests in the region (by undermining "stability") they stand by the Zionist structures of the Jewish state.

14. Israel is not a small, weak and defenceless country. It is on the contrary the foremost military power in the area, capable of lining up in periods of total mobilisation as many soldiers as the three leading adjacent countries, possessing more "tank men" and pilots than all the Arab countries together, endowed with a mighty aeronautics industry (Israel Aircraft Industries employ 8,000 wage-earners) and capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons (the Dimona reactor). Its military superiority over its neighbours is as the three Israeli-Arab wars have shown, literally crushing.

15. Since 1967, Israel has been a colonial power in the full sense of the term through its occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai peninsula. The struggle of the civilian populations in the occupied territories is a struggle, and a normal and rightful one, against foreign invaders who, moreover, are exploiting the manpower and resources of those areas, setting up an economic administration intended to favour the Israeli economy and a political administration which brutally liquidates all inclinations towards national assertion (dispersal with tanks of school children's demonstrations in Nablus, firing on crowds of women outside concentration camps for suspects in Gaza, etc.). The "multi-millionaires" Conferences which are following one another reveal that this exploitative venture is receiving the blessing of international big business.

16. Israel is not a "socialist" country: on the contrary, it is capitalism's most steadfast support in the Middle East (cf. Rabin's

statement on the Syrian regime being the enemy 6-13 Sept. 1967). Its economy is dominated by the big capitalist groups and 10% of Israelis arrogate to themselves a portion of the national revenue equal to that of the 50% who form the base of the social pyramid.

The kibbutzim—collectivist colonies which account for only 3% of the population—are not the communist oases depicted by a simplistic type of propaganda. Narrowly dependent on the banking sector (for credit), their economy rests on the exploitation of paid labour and often on Arab manpower, a tendency which has become more marked since 1967. These cultivating collectives play a key role in the defence and occupation of the conquered territories, which is illustrated by the dozens of kibbutzim planted in the occupied territories (under military supervision).

Neither is the "Histadrut" trade union the working class success that it is usually described as. Organised in the '20s to fight against the employment of Arab labour, it is a nationalist organisation, aiming at the complete integration of the workers into the capitalist system. Furthermore, it is the biggest employer in the country. The "Histadrut" struggles relentlessly against all forms of autonomous organisation on the part of the working class and all the important strikes have been organised against it, and have seen themselves sabotaged. It supports the planned anti-strike legislation and regularly concludes agreements for keeping down the wages with the bosses.

17. Israel is not a democratic state: it is a racist (and clerical) state based on the expulsion of the native population, the institutionalisation of the right to "return" of every Jew (while this is refused to the Palestinian refugees) and the oppression of the Arab minority which remained in the country. The Arabs are subjected to an exceptional colonial law (the Defence Emergency Regulations of 1945, inherited from the British colonial power and reinforced since, which permits the military authorities to expel or confine any citizen, and to resort to administrative imprisonment and confiscation of property; and the proconsuls of the Israeli army do not deny themselves these "suspects' houses", the tortures, etc...). When these colonial rulings were applied to the Palestinian Jews, on the morrow of the Second World War, Shapira, Israel's present-day Minister of Justice, observed that "even in Nazi Germany there were no laws of this kind".

18. Israel does not want "peace"—except if one means by that the recognition of its conquests, of the expulsion of the Palestinians and of its racist and colonialist system. In other words, this "peace" is identical with the "pacification" which all oppressors seek after. It has been nothing to do with pacifism and springs from a "fait accompli" policy.

19. Zionism and the structures of the state of Israel offer no future to the Jewish population of Israel except one of war. Finding a solution for the Hebrew-speaking inhabitants of Palestine, who have the right to national self-determination, means securing their integration into an Arab world rid of the exploitation of man by man. It is only by blending with this struggle for a common future in a reunified, socialist Middle East, freed from the effects of imperialist domination, that the Israeli community, like all the Middle East's non-Arab minorities (Kurds, South Sudanese, etc...) will be able to establish a fraternal alliance with the Arab peoples, starting with the Palestinians who are henceforth offering it co-existence in a bi-national secular and democratic state.

20. The Palestinian cause is thus that of a just anti-colonialist struggle, a part and parcel of the great struggle of the Arab world against imperialism and of the world-wide struggle against imperialism, headed by the United States. The Palestinian awakening means that one more battalion of the down-trodden of this earth is on its feet, arms in hand, and ready to forge for itself the goal of "Free Man". We are in full solidarity with this struggle for it heralds a new dawn for the Arab world, of which it is, at present, the vanguard, and thus, all things considered, part of the great cause for the emancipation of all mankind.

21. The dynamic of the Palestinian revolution is calling into question all reactionary, bourgeois and pseudo-progressive structures in the Middle East. It threatens all the anti-popular regimes (hence the multiple attempts to limit it and even to suppress it). By its very logic, it relentlessly unmask the collusion of the forces in power with imperialism, thus calling into question not only the colonialist structures of Israel but also those of the Arab world. Moreover, even now a Marxist wing of the Palestinian movement is openly declaring its desire to carry this struggle through to the end that is to say, to Socialist Revolution.
Nathan Weinstock

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Whats what

APRIL 11th: STOPP (Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment): 10.30 a.m. at Everyman Cinema (Hampstead), prize-winning film KES, directed by Kenneth Loach—an eye-opening comment on English education. Free admission for members + one friend. Full membership £1. Students 10/. Apply for tickets immediately: Secretary, 13 Lawn Road, N.W.3.

APRIL 15th: Meeting to set up an Ad Hoc committee to organise a demonstration against Powell's ticket-only meeting in Wembley on 18th May. Alperion Park Hotel, Ealing Road, Alperion, (Alperion tube). 7.30 p.m.

APRIL 17th: Film "The First Teacher" about the difficulties of an ex-Red Army soldier trying to teach the values of the Russian revolution in a backward central Asian village in 1923. 8 p.m., Camden Studios, Camden Street, N.W.1. Admission 3/-, membership 2/6. Angry Arts Society, 263 0613.

APRIL 22nd: Lenin Centenary Meeting. Speaker: Ernest Mandel. 7.30 p.m., Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C1. International Marxist Group.

APRIL 24th: Rank and File meeting. Michael Daine about the book "Education for Democracy". Conway Hall, 7.30 p.m. All welcome.

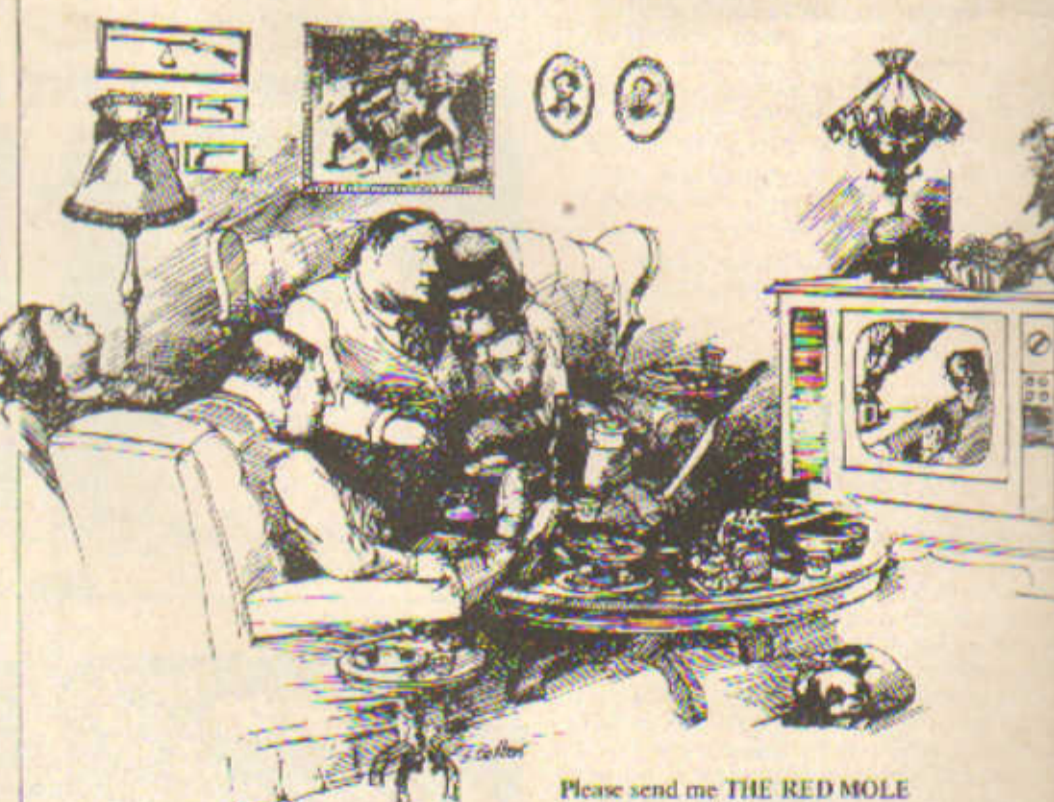
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MOLEHILL



THE MOLE'S FORTRESS

[By P. O'Rourke]

JOHN MACLEAN AND SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

Congratulations to the John MacLean Society on their first publication, *John MacLean and Scottish Independence*.

In the context of a growing working-class following for the Scottish National Party, the Society was founded in 1968 to "commemorate the life, educational work, leadership and sacrificial effort for the workers of Scotland and the world, of John MacLean; to encourage appropriate research; to publish his writings, lectures and speeches; and to relate his teachings to the circumstances of today". That is, to look for the S.N.P. upsurge to reawaken interest in MacLean can only reflect the very low level of the Scottish left over the last twenty-odd years.

The pamphlet consists of poems on MacLean by Sidney Goodair Smith, John Kincaid and Hugh MacDiarmid, a short biographical piece from John Fyfe and an article by Nan MacLean, Wilson on John MacLean and Scottish Independence, which provides the meat of the pamphlet. In the latter contribution, the train of MacLean's attitude to the national question is traced, making the point that it was only when the situation pointed to the likelihood of total revolution in Scotland before the English Revolution that MacLean raised the slogan of a "Scottish Workers Republic". In early 1925 the Scottish Workers Republican Party was formed under his leadership and it contested the Municipal Elections in Glasgow that year on a revolutionary programme. The extracts quoted from election addresses at this period should belie once and for all the Communist Party slanders that MacLean's periods in jail had affected his mind largely and that he had lost his international perspectives. An aspect left largely undiscussed is the question of MacLean's attitude to organisation—should the Scottish revolutionary parties have followed the successful Bolshevik example? This question and the whole experience of "Red Clydeside" must be examined seriously by the revolutionary movement today, for the way that the revolutionary masses were in a few years channelled into the parliamentary road of social democracy is the key to the making of the revolution in Britain in the present period.

The pamphlet is in fact an appetiser, and a valuable one, to a debate of vital importance in Scotland and throughout Britain.

*Available from Mrs. Nan Milton, Atholl Cottage, Westfield, near Bathgate, West Lothian, 2/- + postage.

With the elections approaching we can expect to hear a lot about Britain's economic position. The Labour Government will say—as they are doing at the moment—that we are well on the way to solving "our" problems. We are in substantial Balance of Payments Surplus and our vast debts to international bankers and the International Monetary Fund are rapidly being paid off. What then happened to the "Crisis of British Capitalism" that the Left Wing has always talked about?

The answer is, of course, that it is still there—if anything, things are getting worse. As far as the present surplus on the Balance of Payments is concerned, we have only to ask whether we have solved the Balance of Payments problem when we have record unemployment levels—the Government will only be able to say that they have truly "solved" the problems when they have a Balance of Payments Surplus and full employment. In fact nothing has been done to make this possible. Unemployment works to help the Balance of Payments by reducing people's incomes, and thus forcing them to curtail their spending—people out of work buy less of everything, including less imported goods. Unemployment has another rationale, as Marx pointed out a long time ago,

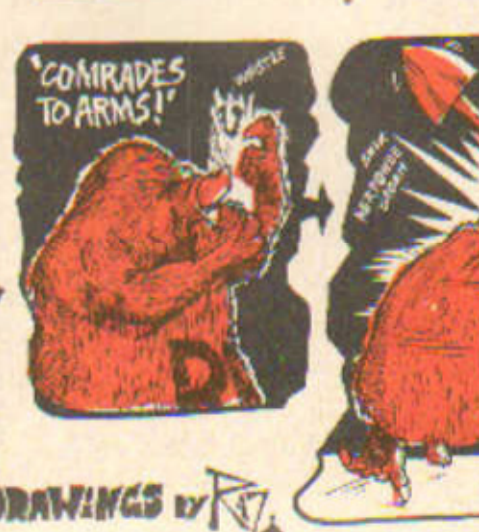
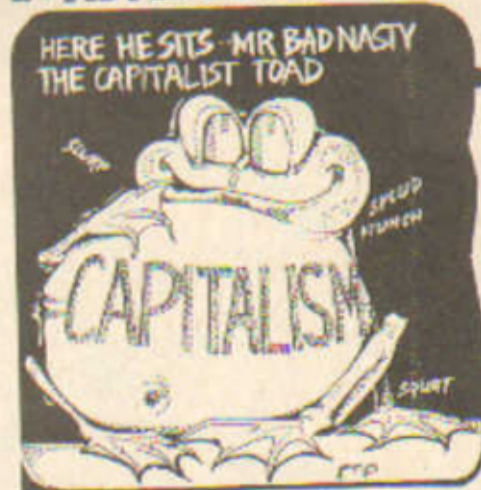
economists have established empirically that the higher the level of unemployment, the lower the rate of increase of the workers' wages. Wages are "costs" to the employers. The higher are their costs, the lower are their profits and the less able are they to compete in a fiercely competitive international economy. Put simply, unemployment helps the employers keep down the workers' wages and this in turn enables them to be more competitive in export

Comrades will have read in the bourgeois press about the trial and conviction at Leeds Assizes of two Irish Republicans, Eamonn Smullen and Gerry Docherty. What is not filtering through is the fact that this is the first time any one has been convicted in a British court on the evidence of a tape-recording. The frame-up nature of this trial is underlined by the fact that this recording is of extremely poor quality, and is the only real evidence the fuzzi have produced.

The savage sentences handed out are a direct political act: Docherty is the President of Clann na h-Eirann, the British wing of the Republican movement. And Smullen, whose only contribution to the tape is "Good Morning", is a life-long Republican. His eight year sentence was imposed on the strength of a dossier on his activities supplied by the Green Tory government in Dublin.

Smullen and Docherty represent the oldest continuous struggle against British imperialism. They are accused of trying to foment violence by buying arms, when it is British imperialism which has been slaughtering the Irish for centuries, or setting up the sectarian Northern Irish state to set them to slaughter each other. It is Britain which is guilty of violence, not these two "Fellows of Ireland". Revolutionaries must not stint their support for the campaign for the release of these men: contact Donal Murphy, 61 Doris Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham 11, or Sean O'Clonnaith, Sinn Fein H.Q., 50 Gardiner Place, Ath Cliath 1, Ireland.

I. ADVENTURES OF THE RED MOLE



DRAWINGS BY RZ

marks. What has been alarming bourgeois economists for some time now is that it seems to take more and more unemployment to maintain the present rate of wage increase. This tendency has been observable for several years now—and only recently a group of economists from the International Monetary Fund warned against the sharp rate of increase of wages—this despite the record unemployment levels. Recent reports in the Financial Press also suggest that the chief concern of the Treasury is with wages. As a result there has been a revival of interest and renewed talk about an Incomes Policy.

In addition to all this the IMF study said that the Balance of Payments Surplus was no small part due to growth in world trade. In other words, expansionary economic conditions in foreign markets has been increasing foreign demand for Britain's exports. Should conditions abroad turn less favourable, then the surplus might quite rapidly disappear. In fact this is a fairly likely occurrence: for instance, the American economy, which is an important market for British exports, is heading towards recession despite the efforts of the US monetary authorities.

What the Government will do in the election year is, of course, not at all certain. It is possible that the Budget will include some tax cuts, and the Government will try to reduce unemployment to curry favour with the electorate. On the other hand, as some financial editors have pointed out, the Government does seem almost paranoically set on its course. What is clear, however, is that in the long run the crisis of British capitalism is far from over. We can either expect higher and higher unemployment levels and/or (most likely "and") attacks on the trade unions and the labour movement—possibly attempts to revive the Incomes Policy. Against this, socialists must clearly counterpose their solutions, explaining what is happening in very concrete terms to the labour movement as a whole.

Every week we receive fresh evidence of growing repressive hysteria on the part of the Israeli state: attempts have been made to withdraw the passports of left-wing Israelis abroad; at the same time as a campaign was launched against the restriction on travel of Soviet Jews, the Israeli state was preventing some of its own citizens from travelling abroad (one such case being Jabraq, the Palestinian Marxist who is now under house arrest). Amnesty International's timid report of torture in Israeli prisons has begun the work of demystifying the "humanitarian" supporters of Israel. We have received the following additional information: on March 30th of this year, two Israeli citizens began an indefinite hunger strike. One, Sabri Jaryis, lawyer and author of *Les Arabs en Israel* (Maspero, Paris, 1969) had been under house arrest since 1967; three months ago he was served with administrative detention and has been imprisoned without trial or charges against him ever since. The other, Fawzi Al-asmir, the well-known poet and journalist, was imprisoned nine months ago. No charges have been brought against him. Both men are demanding to be charged and brought to court or released immediately.

Since the attempted assassination of Archbishop Makarios on 8th March and the shooting of Georghadjis a week later, Cyprus has been a hotbed of rumours. Yet, the British mass media has assiduously avoided any speculations as to the significance of recent events.

Although no official announcement has been made by the Cyprus Government, it now appears certain that Georghadjis was behind the attempt on the Archbishop's life. Relations between the two men had been very strained ever since Georghadjis' forced resignation from the cabinet in November 1968. Since then, Georghadjis' followers both at home and abroad never concealed their desire to be rid of the Archbishop and to instal Clerides in power (with the ex-Minister of Defence close at hand). There are also strong suspicions that once in control, Clerides would have looked to the US for protection. NATOisation of the island, as the solution to the Cyprus Problem, appeared to be in the offing.

This whole plot went awry when the would-be assassins, seeing Makarios' helicopter plummeting down, assumed that they had succeeded in their assignment and neglected to take the most elementary precaution, like disposing of their weapons.

Up until this point the story seems plausible (although admittedly there are unanswered questions as to the role of various foreign governments). However, from the time of Georghadjis' abortive attempt to flee to Beirut, to his subsequent death and the present unerring silence, one must rely on hearsay evidence and conflicting rumours.

While the British press seems to have favoured the theory that Georghadjis was shot by "Greek officers", there is another theory afloat that he was shot down by his own men. It is said that the men arrested after the attempt on Makarios had implicated Georghadjis. Fearing that the ex-EOKS leader would talk when arrested, it was decided to finish him off before the police took him into custody.

What is certain at the moment is that the reports so far emanating from the island are incomplete and often contradictory. The most interesting development is Clerides' reaction: he has been frantically denouncing Georghadjis in an effort to absolve himself from any blame. Whether he will come out of this whole affair with his image intact remains to be seen.

Our contacts in Cyprus tell us that it is widely believed that the assassination of Makarios was jointly planned by the CIA and West German and Greek intelligence forces. The former because they want NATO bases in Cyprus which Makarios has been consistently opposing, and the latter because they favour Cyprus' union with Greece. The one person who could have confirmed these stories—Georghadjis—is himself dead, executed by those who were frightened that he knew too much.