

International
incorporating THE WEEK

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

1/6

**INTERVIEW
WITH BANNED
jcr LEADER**



**Black Power and
Vietnam -
the same enemy
-U.S. IMPERIALISM**

Letters

MARKISM AND LABOUR - A COMMENT

I am writing to you in order to comment on the second part of Pat Jordan's article on Marxists and the Labour Party. The basic precepts from which he argues are sound but I think that his conclusions are wrong.

Obviously it is the duty of a marxist to fight for the victory of the proletariat in the final class struggle. How can they do this from inside a reformist party, which has recently passed anti-working class legislation, dictated to them by such pillars of capitalism as Wall St. and the gnomes of Zurich?

I agree there is a sizeable minority of Labour MPs who want proper socialism, especially the TRIBUNE group. The present parliamentary system dictates to them that they should become ineffective and hypocritical by subordinating themselves to the party whips. It is also this parliamentary system which forces marxists to contemplate joining this anti-working class party.

The prospect of a strong Powellite Government comes about because Labour has deserted its socialist principles. Even a marxist stands little chance of getting into Parliament on the Labour ticket because anyone in that party has to bear the brunt of Labour's mistakes.

The coalition of the left needs careful consideration as to whether to be reformist or revolutionary, but one thing is sure, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" must be its target. Personally I think no marxist can do this with the present constitution and that the best way would be a revolution, such as in France, of militants leading workers.

B.T. Robinson
(London)

XXXXXXXXXX

AN INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE FOR VIETNAM

One can sympathise with but not support comrade Hall's letter in issue number 2 of INTERNATIONAL.

The article reproduced from LA GAUCHE on the question of Soviet aid backs up the contention of INTERNATIONAL No. 1 that the Soviet Union is, in essence doing not so much more than making the record. If there were no appreciable Soviet aid to Vietnam, Kossygin and Co. would not be in a position to exert any political pressure at all on Hanoi. Neither would they be able to posture on the international plane as a genuine revolutionary force. For a complex of reasons it is still important for them - despite their general class collaborationist policy - to be able to claim to be following the marxist road. It is obvious that once they drop this posture that it will be very difficult for them to continue to influence communist parties and the national liberation movements.

The idea of an international brigade for Vietnam is attractive but has a number of drawbacks. The first being the simple fact that the Vietnamese haven't called for one. Secondly, Europeans, as the Americans would no doubt testify, would not

be very suitable for the terrain and climate. In conclusion one has to note that this would not by any means meet the point of comrade Hall's argument. Surely, the brigade would have to be armed and who would arm it? If one argues that the Americans will attack the Soviet Union if it sends massive help to the Vietnamese, one must concede that the Americans would attack the Soviet Union if they faced defeat from a Russian-armed international brigade.

The argument gets back to this: what is the best way of fighting imperialism? By coming to agreement with it, by damping down the struggle in exchange for promises? Or by fighting resolutely and trying to defeat imperialism and its agents in every country of the world?

Experience indicates that if one backs down in face of imperialism it becomes more aggressive and demanding. On the other hand if one stands up to it, imperialism can be made to back down. If comrade Hall was right the Koreans would have been quite wrong to have seized the Pueblo spy ship. I think it can be demonstrated that the incident demonstrated the exact opposite.

The final guarantee against war and an attack on the Soviet Union is the overthrow of imperialism and a world-wide system of workers' states. Anything which hinders that objective makes war more likely. The best way to struggle for peace is by struggling for the destruction of capitalism.

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Vietnam - the struggle goes on

The negotiations in Paris drag on - principally because the Vietnamese are quite unwilling to make concessions, despite the combined pressure of the Americans and the Russians. At time of writing, there seems little chance of them changing their line in the near future.

In Vietnam itself, there has been an impressive increase in the number of American casualties and Saigon has been turned into a daily battlefield. Serious bourgeois commentators are admitting that the fresh forces which took up the struggle against the Saigon regime after the Tet offensive are a serious embarrassment to the Americans. (See in particular THE ECONOMIST.)

Those whose line has been to "Support U Thant" should think about his recent statements in which he has denounced the N.L.F.'s "barbarism" for attacking the towns.

It is clearer than ever that the only realistic perspective for an end to the war is for the Americans to withdraw. The balance of forces is such that no one can doubt for one minute that this would result in a victory for the national liberation forces.

It is in this context that we consider two events - the solidarity campaign being run by the Y.C.L. and its allies, and the announcement by the V.S.C. of its proposed autumn offensive.

So far as we are concerned we are extremely pleased that the Y.C.L. has changed its position on the struggle against the war in Vietnam. Only a few months ago people were expelled from that organisation for espousing what is now official policy. We have some doubts about the methods of this campaign and feel that it would be better for the Y.C.L. leadership to join with the V.S.C. in its type of activity. However, we must recognise this as a step forward. We would suggest to any member of the Y.C.L. who might read this paper that he should struggle within that organisation for two things: (1) for the Y.C.L. to join in the Ad Hoc Committee which the V.S.C. has called for to mobilise for the Autumn offensive; and (2) a putting straight of the record in the Communist press of the attacks which were made against the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign prior to the March 17th demonstration. In passing our Y.C.L. friends could, perhaps, enquire from King Street as to how it is that the adult party still sticks to support for the "negotiations" and "stop the bombing" lines. If it correct for Y.C.L. to take the solidarity line, it is correct for the party to do this as well.

We understand that the V.S.C. is now discussing the exact form of the autumn offensive. There are many who are quite understandably frustrated by the prospect of further repeats of the Grosvenor Square confrontation. There are some who, in their desire to "link issues" wish the demonstration target to be some British capitalist institution. We hope these issues are thoroughly gone over. They reflect quite profound political points of view.

For our part we favour MASS MOBILISATION AROUND A SIMPLY UNDERSTOOD ISSUE. The autumn offensive is

envisaged as being a massive affair. It should not be confused with the commando type demonstration which was all the vogue some years ago.

The declared aim of the demonstration must be simple and direct. It must be in solidarity with the people of Vietnam and not be envisaged as the start of the British revolution. (to put the record straight, we are in favour of the start of that revolution as soon as possible!)

It must be around a militant policy of support for the Vietnamese people against American imperialism. It should, of course, have as a secondary target, the exposure of the British Government's role. But this is not best done by blurring the issue into a general anti-Wilson Government demonstration. We are in favour of that type of demonstration but it is not the job of V.S.C. to organise it.

For those who want to avoid a repetition of the March 17th and October 22nd events, we would suggest that if the aim of the demonstration is to bring much larger numbers of people, things can scarcely be the same. If 50,000, 75,000 or 100,000 assemble around some easily identifiable symbol of American imperialism, the whole area will be brought to a standstill.

For those who want to have a more vigorous aim than a mere demonstration, we would point out that there will be many organisations on the demonstration. If one of those organisations with a more rounded out and precise function than V.S.C. was to pose a more militant and decisive target, it would be up to demonstrators to decide what they wanted to do.

The V.S.C. must stick to its role as being a united front organisation on a very militant line which seeks to mobilise mass support for that line. It cannot be a substitute for a revolutionary party - it wouldn't fit the bill and, anyway, its most successful function as a mass mobiliser, its sole reason for fame, would be damaged.

We urge all our readers to respond to the call by the V.S.C. to organise Ad Hoc Committees in every town, every college and university to make the autumn mobilisation the biggest anti-imperialist demonstration Britain has ever seen.



U.S. SOCIALIST POSES

Ernie Tate and John London

The visit of Paul Boutelle, the Socialist Workers Party's vice-presidential candidate, to Britain helped to pose the question of Black Power on a wide scale. He helped to clear up some of the misconceptions and, in some cases, pure ignorance which has hindered a proper socialist appreciation of the question.

He concluded his two-week speaking tour with a rally in Hyde Park on June 9th at the speakers' corner, where many immigrant organisations hold regular meetings. The mainly Black audience of several hundred heard Boutelle describe the conditions that face the Black population of the U.S. He also outlined a history of the liberation struggle over the past 400 years and explained the role Black nationalism had played in that struggle.

"The United States is today the main enemy of all mankind," he said. "Not only does it show it in Vietnam where it carries on a criminal war but it shows it in its policies toward Black Americans." It is a racist country, he said, "just as England is a racist country - I've been travelling this country for the past two weeks talking and listening to Black people, and I don't see much difference."

THE SAME ENEMY

To loud applause, he told the crowd: "You've got the same problems we've got. It's the same rotten system. We've got the same enemy. British imperialism is the front-man for American imperialism - the junior partner. It's not as strong as it once was. Once they used to say that the sun always shone on some part of the empire - now the sun has difficulty finding it!"

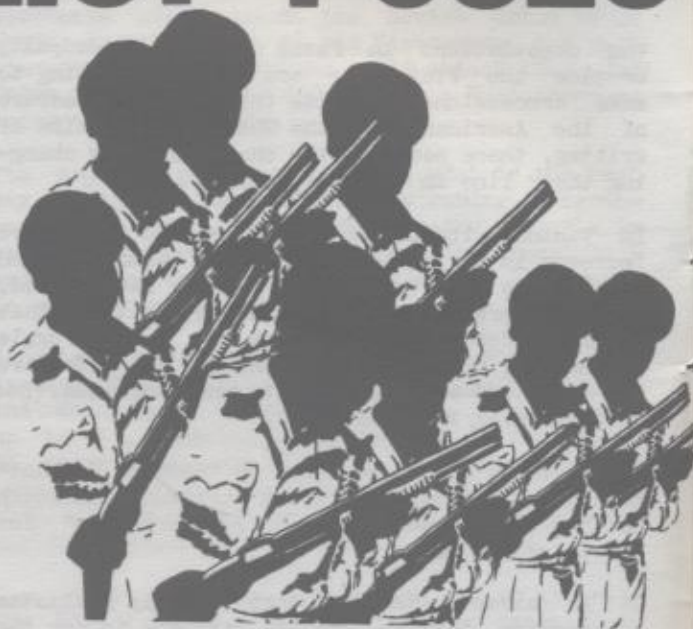
"When you struggle against racism in this country you are helping us in America, because you are fighting against one of America's main allies."

He drew roars of approval from the audience when he referred to the case of Michael X, who had been one of the first people arrested under the race relations act passed by the Labour Government. "I understand they put our brother Michael X, otherwise known as Michael Abdul Malik, in jail for saying that 'white people were monkeys, devils and bastards.' Well, if white people did not behave like monkeys, devils and bastards, then we wouldn't have to call them that."

Speaking of the election campaign in the United States, he said he was sorry Robert Kennedy was assassinated. "I really mean it", he stated as his audience laughed. "Assassination and individual acts of terrorism don't solve anything. In fact they are used as a pretext by the ruling class to take action against its opponents. It's the system that has to be destroyed. I'm especially sorry because Kennedy was not allowed to be exposed as a phoney for all to see, as I'm sure would have happened very quickly after his election."

BLACK POWER IN THE U.S.

The audience, amongst whom were most of the leaders of the Black Power militants in London, were especially interested to hear Boutelle's comments



on the Black Power movement in the United States. Although the Black Power tendency was still, in most areas, a minority in the Black community as a whole, it was the most important development in America, he stated. There are a wide range of different tendencies in it from extreme nationalists and cultural groups to S.N.C.C. and the Black Panthers whom he identified with, he said. But the movement as a whole, he went on, "is basically a growing and healthy movement." He informed the audience that the large majority of Black people in America still voted for the Republicans and Democrats.

To counter this, he stated, "we in the S.W.P. advocate the formation of an independent Black political party - its part of our campaign."

Boutelle's visit was most timely, coming at a time when there is greater receptivity to Black Power ideas in the Black community as a result of the recent upsurge of racism in Britain. As a result of the lack of a left alternative to Wilson appearing in the Labour movement, big sectors of the organised working class have become frustrated at a time when their living standards have declined. This is the basic explanation for the support Powell received from the dockers and Smithfield porters. Black people are quickly losing any illusions they may have had in the ability of the traditional parties in Britain to solve their problems or to counter the discrimination they suffer in education, housing, jobs, etc. The creation of the Black Alliance movement is a sign that the Black immigrants have learnt the lesson that they need to unite and come together to form organisations capable of fighting on a militant programme.

Although conditions are very different from the United States - the non-white population there is a much higher proportion of the population and is much more homogeneous than in Britain - there is an increasing interest in the ideas of Black Power and the experience of Black people in the U.S. Many leaders of the Black Power tendency in this country are very anxious to see if they can apply the experiences of their Black brothers to local conditions.

BLACK POWER *in* BRITAIN

BLACK POWER IN MARXIST TERMS

Boutelle's visit came some months after the visit of Stokely Carmichael which had a big impact in the Black community. However, Boutelle was the first Black Power spokesman from the United States who has attempted to define Black Power in marxist terms. At the same time he related Black Power to the traditional radical left.

Boutelle's speaking tour took him to the main industrial centres: Birmingham, Sheffield, Glasgow, Nottingham, Newcastle, etc. In many of the towns he visited there are large immigrant communities. He also visited about a dozen colleges and universities where he aroused great interest among the many colonial students resident in this country.

In Nottingham, at a meeting sponsored by INTERNATIONAL, he spoke to nearly 100 people, among whom were the main leaders of the militant section of the Black community.

In Glasgow, he addressed another meeting sponsored by INTERNATIONAL at the trades council hall. The 90-strong audience was mainly made up of members of various marxist groups. Some of them received a lesson in the principles of marxism from Paul.

At a meeting in Edinburgh University his barbs against the Queen provoked the SCOTTISH DAILY EXPRESS to publish an editorial denouncing him. He had referred in passing to the Queen as being a "parasite who should be put to work washing floors." This rather upset the ultra-Tory and fanatically royalist SCOTTISH DAILY EXPRESS.

At Newcastle University a quickly organised meeting of the Socialist Society received good support - 130 people in the middle of exams - with coverage on television and in the local radio and press.

At Sheffield, while speaking at a teach-in on student power, Boutelle received a taste of the sectarianism which infects elements of the left in Britain. He was attacked by Nick Spence, of the KEEP LEFT Young Socialists and the Socialist Labour League, who accused Boutelle of "confusing the Black working class and playing into the hands of the Black capitalists" and encouraging apartheid. Spence proposed that the only way ahead for the Black workers was a unity with the white working class.

S.L.L. IGNORES CHALLENGE

Boutelle was able to show his challenger didn't even have an elementary knowledge of the Black struggle in America, pointing out that the idea that Black people should hold back until such time as the white working class moved was reactionary. Boutelle announced that when he had first come to Britain, he had challenged the Socialist Labour League to a debate on the topic of Black Power, but they had chosen to ignore his challenge.

Boutelle's first London meeting was at the Caxton Hall and was sponsored by the International Marxist Group, which supports the Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International. The crowded meeting, which was chaired by Tariq Ali, heard how the

S.W.P. used the election campaign to promote the ideas of socialism.

News of Boutelle's visit to Britain spread rapidly through the Black community and Boutelle's final rally in Hyde Park was preceded by a series of quickly organised meetings throughout London in the immigrant ghettos. A meeting in Islington, sponsored by the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, chaired by Oscar Abrams, a leading Black militant in the area, heard Boutelle explain why Black consciousness was essential if Black people were to overcome oppression. The exploiters took the African away from Africa and made him into a Negro, he told the audience. We have got to get rid of that, he said. Before we can be free we have to become ourselves, he went on, and we have to become what we once were and in the process, by so doing, destroy the system that enslaved us.

On Saturday, June 8th, Boutelle was the featured speaker at a special meeting in central London to commemorate the ideas of Marcus Garvey, organised by a combination of several Black Power groups under the title of Black United Action Front.

Among those present was Obi B. Egbuna, a leader of the U.C.P.A. and one of the most articulate spokesmen for Black Power in Britain. On the platform were Frankie Dymond of the Racial Adjustment Society and B.S. Ghose of the U.C.P.A.

A PROGRAMME VITAL

At this meeting, Boutelle laid great stress on the importance of a programme for the Black Power



Malcolm X

Paul Boutelle

movement if it is to be successful. As far as he was concerned, he stated, there was a great lack of programme among many of the Black Power tendencies in the United States, although, he continued, many organisations such as S.N.C.C. and the Black Panthers in California were seriously attempting to come to grips with the problem.

Once you have a programme, he said, it became that much more difficult for the ruling class to co-opt you into the system or into either of the big political parties. He emphasised the need for building an organisation. The organisation is more important than the individual, he said, more important than even the greatest individual and should be capable of lasting out any of its leaders.

The Socialist Labour League followed its failure to take up Boutelle's challenge with a virulent attack in its newspaper, the NEWSLETTER, on the whole concept of Black Power. Treading its familiar path, it equated Black nationalism with white racism and slandered such spokesmen of the Black community in the United States as Stokely Carmichael and Le Roi Jones.

Unfortunately, the S.L.L. is not alone in this sectarian behaviour: predictably the British MILITANT has also been attacking Black Power, but the latest recruit to this peculiar brand of sectarianism is International Socialism. In an article in SOCIALIST WORKER (formerly LABOUR WORKER) Black Power is described as a dangerous slogan. This article was by no means as bad as those appearing in the MILITANT and NEWSLETTER and we are told that it is not an official position of I.S., however, surely an editorial comment disassociating the editors from the article was necessary.

Our sectarian friends always seem to rise to the occasion on such questions as Black Power exactly at the time when the capitalist press and the representatives of the ruling class (e.g. Ennals) launch their attacks. Sectarianism is known to be closely linked with bourgeois prejudices and, flowing from that, formal (i.e., non-dialectical) methods of thinking. For the sectarian it is enough to learn a few slogans by rote and bring them out at the appropriate time.

SECTARIANISM AND RACISM

In the case of race questions, the sectarian thinks it is sufficient to bring out the slogan of Black and White Unite. And for him, anyone who does not recognise his brand of absolute truth is naturally petit-bourgeois or even an agent of the ruling class. Those sectarians who argue that if Black people organise separately white racism is reinforced repeat, albeit in a different jargon, the liberal-bourgeois-religious argument that the source of racism is psychological. They appear not to notice that racism is already prevalent despite the fact that the Black people have not, up to now, organised to any great extent separately.

Another confusion in the mind of the sectarian is his inability to separate long-term and short-term strategies. From a long-term point of view nothing could be more correct than Black and White unite. But for the short term, we must recognise that a large section of the white working class is racist. Instead of lecturing the Black people about the iniquities of them organising themselves separately, white marxists should be getting stuck into the job of combatting this racism by education and propaganda. For marxists

the key thing is to make revolutionaries: Black people are much more likely to become revolutionaries when they are aware of their own power and identity (i.e., overcome completely the ideology of inferiority their slavemasters, past and present, imbued them with). Once having become revolutionaries Black people will be much better fighters against capitalism - it goes without saying that marxists should do all they can to introduce Black revolutionaries to the ideas of marxism.

UNITY IN REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

Unity of Black and White will be best expressed in a struggle - a revolutionary struggle, if possible - against capitalism. To put the main emphasis on this unity now, when, so far, the white workers have not been capable of meeting the challenge of the Labour Government is futile. On the other hand, can we seriously go to the Black workers and say "Don't organise yourselves, build unity with the white workers instead, that is the best way to fight racism," when the Black worker knows very well that the white worker is not even capable of defending his own living conditions? When he knows that traditionally militant sections of the working class have turned their militancy against the Black workers instead?

To say these things is not to condone them or pretend that we wish it were not otherwise. But to refuse to face the realities of the situation is pure blindness.

The best way to solve these problems is through struggle against capitalism. If the Black people are prepared now to fight against discrimination and oppression we should seek to encourage this process with all our power.

Paul Boutelle's historic visit did much to help us in these aims. His influence on the Black community has, we are sure, considerably hastened the formation of a Black Power movement in this country with a programme. His talks to white socialists has helped to clear away the confusion caused by the sectarians and the liberals. We look forward to seeing him again.

CORRECTION

An unfortunate typographical error occurred in part two of my article MARXISTS AND THE LABOUR PARTY, having the effect of making me appear to question everything that I had written!

The last three paragraphs of the article as printed should have appeared earlier in the article. Thus instead of ending on the note:

"Does this, then, mean that the arguments I have used in this article are no longer valid?"

The article as written ended:

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

PAT JORDAN

VIETNAM

PART 2

a balance sheet of Russian aid

India (which makes war on China), Iraq, Syria, Finland, are better supplied than Vietnam! An article appearing in the NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR alters nothing of our findings; the fire power of North Vietnam would not stop the aircraft of the 7th Fleet, but it is quite capable of meeting two or three flotillas at a time". That is to say categorically: the firepower is sufficient to defend Hanoi (and Haiphong). In fact this implies a dramatic choice: either to defend Hanoi and Haiphong, or to defend the other parts of the country (for, whilst the "two or three flotillas" attack Hanoi, the rest of the 7th Fleet plus the Tactical Air Command, for example attack Vinh Linh and other places).

How have the Vietnamese been able to inflict 50% losses on American aviation? "At a stupefying rate the SAM rockets rise up, often in clusters. The standard of the slogan "a blow, an aircraft" surely isn't respected. What does it matter, the rockets don't run out.

This corroborates what we would say: the necessity of a cloud of SAM 2 for each direct hit. The battle of Hanoi is only further proof of it.

In Hanoi the anti-aircraft armament has reached a fearful density; it is only here, by making a veritable "wall of fire" that the Vietnamese succeed in repelling the American air-power. But you only see such density at Hanoi and Haiphong: the other parts of the country are vulnerable.

The fact should be emphasised that it isn't a question of adding to American losses solely by increasing the density of anti-aircraft fire. (The considerable increase in Soviet aid recently will not practically improve the lot of the country towns and villages). At the same time the quantity of the equipment must be increased. American losses would then exceed 90 or 95%, not only over Hanoi, but over all the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

NOTHING, TECHNICALLY OR MILITARILY, EXPLAINS SUCH A SITUATION OF SHORTAGE.

What are we to think of the Soviet technicians? They have solved successfully the problem of destroying rockets in flight (Khrushchev). They have shown on T.V. the interception of a medium range warhead; they have shown us an A.B.M.(1) (anti ballistic missile), capable of 95% interception of the nuclear warhead of an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, falling from 200 km at a speed of 28,000 km per hour, and yet they do not know how to knock down a plane flying at 2,000 km per hour?

How can we consider that 1 to 2% losses must be the maximum possible, when the Strategic Air Command itself forecasts that an attack "By saturation" against the U.S.S.R. (that is to say all the U.S. Air Force) would only let through 2 to 3% of the aircraft?

In fact, the U.S.S.R. possesses low altitude-anti-aircraft rockets equivalent to the U.S.

Hawk, mounted in a protected vehicle, self-propellant and parachutable. These vehicles pass through Red Square every year. Moreover, there exist rockets capable of being carried by an infantryman, derived from the Soviet Atell and the U.S. Sidewinder (reducing engine). The method of use is simple: POINT IT TOWARDS THE NOISE, PRESS THE TRIGGER - THAT'S ALL! With 90% chance, an aircraft flying at twice the speed of sound is knocked down.

In only taking account of what the Russians have revealed to the public of their armaments (and without prejudicing any changes for the better) we could argue the following:

Protected by the MIG 23 and the Yakovlev capable of resisting U.S. fighters, 50 AN-16 cargo aircraft leave Vladivostok for Vietnam, refuelling in mid-air over the Pacific (to avoid China and not to put them in a position to be attacked by the U.S.A.) by means of some II-28. Always protected by fighters (which also refuel in mid-air) they land at several points on Vietnamese territory, on non-prepared runways 500 m long, unloading their long-range rockets, their low-altitude anti-aircraft rockets, their radar, all in protected vehicles. The whole thing could be installed in less than three hours.

The first U.S. raid, taking off from the Forrestal, loses at least 90% of its aircraft...Utopia? No. The manoeuvres of the Warsaw Pact powers have shown that it is possible to seal off the frontiers of North Vietnam....

BUT IT WOULD IMPLY A DIFFERENT POLICY

Only an energetic counter-escalation would stop American aggression against North Vietnam. Now this counter-escalation is contrary to the policy of PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE which from the affair of the Cuban rockets (the Cuban missile crisis) means abandoning a socialist nation to more and more hard blows by American imperialism (North Vietnam), passing to the 'denunciation' of the Latin American guerillas, and the refusal to assure China of unconditional support in the case of American aggression.

When the bombs which fall in clusters on Hanoi are aimed to put a stop to all human activity there, some people dare then to affirm that the U.S.S.R., faced with the danger of nuclear war from U.S. imperialism, has a responsible attitude and that it "has saved world peace."

We would respond: "What peace?"

Footnote

(1) Certain Soviet generals think that the Anti-ballistic-missile makes no difference to the situation. On the scale of a nuclear war, 5% of the American intercontinental ballistic war load (there are 1,200 of them) would amount to 60 bombs of more than 3 megatons each. It has been calculated that this would mean 100 million immediate deaths. Moreover, certain intercontinental ballistic missiles are between 15 and 30 megatons each.

Special: interview with leader of banned French movement



Alain Krivine

The following interview with Alain Krivine, one of the leaders of the French student movement and a leader of the now banned Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (J.C.R. - Revolutionary Communist Youth) was obtained by Mary-Alice Waters, of the Y.S.A. (Young Socialist Alliance) of the United States. We have left out those parts of the interview which dealt with the history of the struggle because we have already covered that aspect. The full interview appeared in the June 21st issue of THE MILITANT, obtainable from Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1. price 1/- (3dpost)

MARY-ALICE WATERS: In the United States, as in France, the Communist Party has been attacking the J.C.R. particularly, and the students in general, as being ultra-leftist, adventurist, and trying to divide the working class. Why are they so fearful of the student movement?

ALAIN KRIVINE: It is important to note that almost the whole student movement - those who participated in the struggle - is to the left of the Communist Party. At present, except for the organised vanguard, these students do not have a programme, but they agree on a number of points in regard to the Communist Party. They reject reformism, they reject the C.P.'s theory of peaceful co-existence, they reject stalinism.

There are two main reasons for this. On the one hand, at first, we did not realise the impact that our activities have had in the student milieu during the past two years. The principal positions developed by the J.C.R. - a critique of the C.P., of Mitterand and Company - have become mass themes absolutely accepted by virtually the whole student movement. The full implications of the long and patient activities of the vanguard groups, the impact of our propaganda, revealed itself during the current upsurge.

Second, the attitude of the C.P. itself has contributed to this rejection of the C.P. Since the beginning of the movement, and even now, the C.P. has attacked the students very violently, accusing them of being led by ultra-leftists, which, of course, only gives additional authority to the leaders. But there are extremely perfidious attacks. For example, at the time of the barricades, the C.P. accused us of infesting the Latin Quarter with "la pigne," the scum of society, and with all the buffoons of Paris - a word-for-word repetition of Pompidou's accusation. I must say

that this only leads to a more open-minded atmosphere among the students.

The Communists have a table in the courtyard of the Sorbonne; but they are endlessly besieged by hundreds of students who attack them politically. The result of all this will be that the C.P., for a very long time to come, will lose all political prestige among the students. One can say without underestimation that in the political arena - that is, among the politicised students - the C.P. is only a "handful" in comparison with the organisations of the vanguard. They will continue to have influence in the student milieu of course, but they have suffered a tremendous blow. They exposed themselves to the students, day after day, as the events unfolded, and it will be difficult for them to salvage much in the student milieu.

ACTION COMMITTEES

MARY-ALICE WATERS: What are the Action Committees and what role do they play?

ALAIN KRIVINE: Well, the Action Committees were created more or less spontaneously, although there were political militants heading them. The vanguard groups had never been able to mobilise more than seven to eight thousand students in the Latin Quarter, notably for Vietnam demonstrations. On the barricades, which is, after all, a more vigorous experience, about 15,000 students participated, and then there were 50,000 on the Champs Elysees. But we ourselves recognised that three-fourths of the students who were then completely apolitical, if not conservative, two months earlier. The former leader of F.N.E.F. (The National Federation of French Students), an extremely right-wing rival organisation of U.N.E.F., is participating in the movement and is advancing socialist ideas, fighting for a socialist revolution, criticising the C.P. from the left. It's a spectacular reversal for the student movement!

Since no organisation had hegemony over the whole student movement, the students felt the necessity of organising themselves into committees to give structure to the whole movement. The Action Committees unite all the students of the movement - members of organisations, non-members, and they exist in all the various schools of the university.

The Action Committees began at the university, but the second stage opened when hundreds of

workers began coming to the Sorbonne, which played the role of the Smolny Institute at the time of the Russian Revolution. That is, the students served as an example. They played a leadership role when the working class entered the struggle. The workers, very often, came to the Sorbonne asking for advice, asking the students to help them organise themselves.

Thus the students saw the need to create Workers and Students Action Committees. Very quickly the Action Committees extended to all of Paris, to all of the districts. The Action Committees, which were at first led by the students, quickly embraced all sectors of the population, workers and housewives, everyone. In certain districts, Action Committees of 150 to 200 persons, only 10 of whom were students, were formed.

EMBRYONIC DUAL POWER

There are now about 300 Action Committees in Paris, which group together workers, students, professors; everybody and anybody is in these Action Committees. The Action Committees serve as a kind of infrastructure for the movement.

When the revolutionary movement was at its peak, certain Action Committees developed a much higher level of organisation - that is to say, certain Action Committees, particularly in the provinces became genuine embryos of dual power.

Today there is a real shortage of some products in Paris. There is not enough sugar and coffee. There are no cigarettes, and there is not enough gasoline. In certain very localised places, for example in Nantes, the Action Committees purchased food by presenting only I.O.U.s. The merchants distributed goods, without receiving any money, and in return they received I.O.U.s. The Action Committees blossomed into genuine embryos of dual power.

FACTORY COMMITTEES

MARY-ALICE WATERS: In the factories, have there been similar Action Committees or strike committees which have played a vanguard role?

ALAIN KRIVINE: In the factories the political vanguard does not have the leadership. The movement in the factories was also started in a spontaneous way by the youth. An example I can give is the Renault plant - an example which was multiplied many times.

The movement started off with 150 youth, spread out in three workshops, for the most part unorganised. They closed the workshops and decreed an unlimited general strike; carrying a red flag, they marched through the factory calling for a general strike. The unions were completely outflanked. Much later, after long deliberation, the C.P. called for a strike.

The workers did not anticipate this movement; no one anticipated it. The workers have never been educated in what socialist strategy is. The C.P. has kept the movement under control, although they have been contested.

The C.P. is opposed to the creation of strike committees. The C.P. has ordered three-fourths of the workers back home. The strike pickets are mainly composed of C.G.T. and C.P. members. There is no genuine political life in the factories - they are almost empty today.

There are some strike committees, but they are

often simply trade-union liaison committees at the union brass level. In certain factories where there are vanguard militants, there are genuine strike committees, democratically run, having elections, etc., but this is extremely rare.

The vanguard workers are even blocked by strike pickets from entering their factories. That is why the most advanced elements participate in the Action Committees of their neighbourhoods set up by students. The genuine political life has shifted from the factory to the neighbourhood.

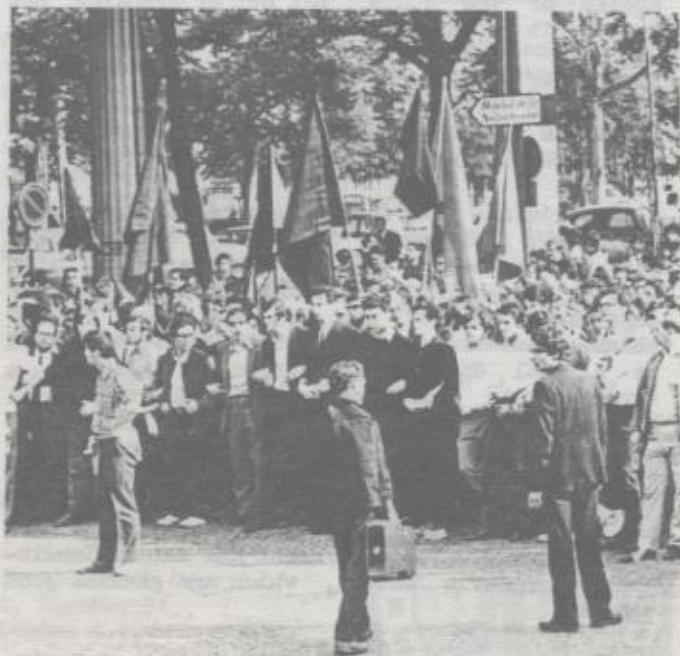
THE ROLE OF U.N.E.F.

MARY-ALICE WATERS: The press has talked a lot about U.N.E.F.; could you explain exactly what U.N.E.F. is and what role it plays?

ALAIN KRIVINE: U.N.E.F. is a student union of about 80,000. It is not a political organisation - it is a union that has always been headed by left-wing militants, generally of the P.S.U., but a few times by the C.P. It played an important role during the Algerian War in directing the struggle against the war.

But for the last three years, for a number of reasons, U.N.E.F. has been in complete decline. There is no more internal life; today it is more name than anything else; there are no more militants in U.N.E.F. When U.N.E.F. organises a demonstration, the monitors of U.N.E.F. are in reality the J.C.R. monitors. We are all members of U.N.E.F., but that only means we have a membership card.

But if U.N.E.F. has played an important enough role as regards the press, this is due to the nature of the movement. The movement is extremely heterogeneous; there is no organisation that has hegemony. There are political organisations like the J.C.R., which plays a predominant role as a political organisation, but the totality of the movement is not politically organised. Given this very great heterogeneity, U.N.E.F. was able to play a unifying role by calling demonstrat-



Alain Krivine in one of the Paris demonstrations.

ions, etc., but it has no following in and of itself in the student milieu.

THE J.C.R. "SURVIVED"

MARY-ALICE WATERS: What has been the role of the J.C.R. itself in all the events of the past months?

ALAIN KRIVINE: In reality, we are the only organisation that "survived". The student masses - during the whole crisis - underwent a profound self-criticism. Amongst the student milieu there was no a priori prejudice towards the vanguard groups, only a prejudice towards the C.P. and social democracy. The student masses subjected each group to an intense scrutiny. During all the general assemblies, as soon as someone took the floor and said something they didn't like, they whistled and stopped the speaker from continuing.

The Lambertists (a sectarian group which broke from the Fourth International) and the Maoists, because of their sectarian positions, have actually discredited themselves among the students. The dynamics of the movement obviously taught them nothing. They were undercut just like that. The J.C.R. was the only organisation to be not only tolerated but to enjoy very real and important support. It has a considerable audience at the present moment, especially among the students and High School kids. But it has also made very important inroads among the workers. Many workers are joining us now; we enjoy significant sympathy in certain sectors of the working class. For us this fact is one of most positive results of the struggle.

This sympathy is due to the following fact: the militants of the J.C.R. did not lose themselves in the Sorbonne. Either working with the Action Committees, or as J.C.R. militants, they went to the factory gates and to the different neighbourhoods to discuss politics. Their activities were oriented towards the working class.

I think that the J.C.R. will come out of this experience very much reinforced. The capitalist press does not delude itself - it frequently speaks of the J.C.R., not out of sympathy, but because it represents a genuine political current.

THE THREAT OF FASCISM

MARY-ALICE WATERS: You hear quite a bit of talk about the threat of fascism as the current upsurge subsides. What is your opinion on this?

Alain Krivine: The fascist groups were very weak and very ineffectual during this crisis. They did not have more than 100 members in the Latin Quarter, organised in squads, and under military discipline. Up to now, or even now, I don't think there is a real fascist danger; but there is a real danger of repression. Although a strong state apparatus prevailed up to now, it did not appear as such, because the working class was not in motion. Now that it has entered the struggle, the strong state will show its true colours. It will try to employ goons to suppress strikes; already individual militants have been attacked. The Government has set up Committees for Civic Action, which are genuine goon squads.

The farmers and the petit-bourgeoisie were beginning to follow the workers, but now, because of the betrayal of the C.P., they find themselves without a leadership, without an alternative offered by the workers' movement. As unemployment rises they will either follow de Gaulle or under

extreme economic difficulties (without really speaking of a fascist danger) they might follow the leadership of the nationalist organisations. The bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie, terrified by the revolutionary potential, marched 500,000 strong at a pro-Gaullist demonstration on the Champs-Élysées on May 30. Their slogans were fascist in character, such as "Cohn-Bendit to Dachau," etc.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

MARY-ALICE WATERS: What has been the international student response to the struggles here in France?

ALAIN KRIVINE: Internationally, the movement snowballed. We worked here month after month to organise demonstration after demonstration in support of the students' struggles in Germany and Italy. We never thought that our turn would come so soon. The movements of solidarity in Germany, in Italy, in Belgium, as well as in Rome, where thousands of students marched under the slogan of "two, three, many Parises," had a great impact on us; we feel part of a vast movement. I think this fact will help to reinforce the revolutionary vanguard.

During the strike we didn't have the time to make much contact internationally, but since the beginning of the struggles there have been numerous delegations from the revolutionary student organisations in Italy, Germany, Belgium and England. They want to discuss with us, they want to learn from our experiences, they want to aid us financially. Since the Berlin demonstration in February, all these student organisations have participated in struggles in their own countries and are putting up a fight. We will all come out of this with a much richer experience.

The authority of the J.C.R. stems from the manner in which it integrated itself into the movement. At its inception the movement had an almost anarchic character, all leadership, all organisational apparatus. At first, although the JCR had some sympathy, it was nevertheless looked upon with suspicion - we were too organised, too centralised, we had too much of a structure and discipline. This aspect of our organisation shocked many people.

THE NECESSITY OF ORGANISATION

We understood the movement from its inception. We knew that it would not remain at its embryonic stage. Little by little, through their own experiences, the students understood the necessity of a political leadership, of an organisation. Although we integrated ourselves completely into the movement, we played a leading role. We did not play a sectarian role - that is to say we did not arrive with ready-made ideas and solutions, we did not impose our organisation, if we did; we would have been thrown out.

Little by little, as the movement progressed, we were only one step ahead of the students instead of 50, and little by little we developed our tactics, we enlarged our conceptions of organisation, of the revolutionary perspective, of dual power. We developed these themes at a time when the students felt a need for them.

This makes all the difference between us and Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Cohn-Bendit was in actuality the leader at the beginning. He and his anarchistic ideas corresponded to the realities of the

movement as it was then. But now events have by-passed Cohn-Bendit, unless he changes. His political conceptions regarding the spontaneity of the movement, and regarding certain Marcusean tenets, remained the same, whereas the movement entered a new stage. I think that the non-sectarian attitude of the J.C.R., its integration into the movement, and the vanguard role it played in subsequent events, are some of the reasons for the great support it enjoys.

We have made mistakes, but we have understood the dynamics of this mass movement. That is decisive.



'control the workers!'

As yet, no national trade union official has offered a systematic socialist critique of the recent Royal Commission on Trade Unions. For instance, just as Clive Jenkins is sympathetic about Jim Mortimer joining the Prices and Incomes Board, so too he makes no fundamental criticism of the Royal Commission. Mr. Jenkins' recent article on the Commission in the NEWS OF THE WORLD was a very approving one. It is clear from their comments that such trade union officials as Woodcock and Cousins view the Commission's Report with, at best, narrow trade unionist consciousness. There seems to be a feeling of relief in the trade union establishment that the Commission has come out against the legal enforcement of industrial agreements. Such feelings are misplaced. It is surely obvious that it has become quite unnecessary for the Commission to advocate such legislation when the Prices and Incomes Act already covers this crucial area.

UNOFFICIAL STRIKES

The Commission is worried about unofficial strikes, even though it has to admit that by European standards the figures are quite low in Britain. The Commission's concern clearly reflects the present precarious state of the capitalist system - after all, it seems that a strike by a couple hundred women workers for a few days at Fords can

put the capitalist system into chaos and cause panic among the Labour Cabinet. (The ministers certainly do their best to defend the right of Fords NOT to pay 5d. an hour increase to the £12 a week women.)

It is in this kind of atmosphere that the Commission recommends the setting up of an Industrial Relations Commission which would have powers to investigate problems in an individual factory or a whole industry and supervise the registration of agreements. In a recent article in THE TIMES, one of the Commission members, Mr. Eric Wigham, made clear the Commission's underlying philosophy - "we are all agreed on the basic analysis of Britain's industrial relations troubles. We all think that labour relations in the workshops in many industries are out of control and that this is a main cause of unofficial strikes, restrictive practices, chaotic wage structures and unbalanced growth of earnings." The conclusions from all this is obvious: the shop floor workers, and in particular the shop stewards, must be put more firmly under "official" control by the joint apparatus of trade union hierarchy, employers prerogatives and where necessary, state power. (This is yet a further development of the corporate state, almost as obvious as the recent fraternal gathering of the C.B.I., Harold Wilson, the Queen and other members of the royal family, Edward Heath, George Woodcock and Co., which took place at the London Guildhall in celebration of the T.U.C.'s centenary.)

PENALISING UNOFFICIAL STRIKE LEADERS

One of the Commission's proposals is particularly vicious. This is the proposal to remove from unofficial strike leaders immunity from legal action. This proposal would be made to operate by bringing more rules about the breach of contract. (This recommendation was carried by 7 to 5.) Lord Robens, a member of the Commission, went even further by suggesting that all unofficial strikers should lose entitlement to redundancy pay. Among the Commission's suggestions which aim to sweeten the pill is one which urges all employers to recognise trade unions in their plants. (Perhaps the workers' struggles at Roberts Arundel for such recognition makes the Commission's pontifications on this point a little unnecessary.)

So it is the shop floor workers and especially the militants who are the Commission's target. Clearly our job as socialists is to defend the shop stewards and at the same time to extend workers' rights by campaigning for workers' control demands.

(Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 1965-68, £2 from H.M.S.O.)

Alan Rooney

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Connolly slanders answered

A letter The Newsletter didn't print

The Editor,
THE NEWSLETTER,
186a, Clapham High Street,
London S.W. 4.

Dear Comrade Editor,

The art of character assassination is a neglected one nowadays, it has never recovered from Khrushchov's speech to the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. The NEWSLETTER has done a little to keep the flame alight, but has never risen to the heights of such adepts as Vyshinsky or Stalin.

May 18th's NEWSLETTER sees the first attempt of a newcomer to the field, Stewart Cochran, but his incompetence, and the unassailability of his subject, James Connolly, leads to total failure.

Possibly, to get the knack, he should have started with someone who, by some obvious indiscretion or blunder, afforded a head start - for instance the man who accused Castro of murdering Che Guevara and has never retracted. In fact I deliberately scanned the three following issues to see if there would be an editorial disassociation, or an indication that the paper had been indulging in some unaccustomed levity, but in vain. Obviously, therefore, this mind-rotting garbage must be a serious attempt to assess Connolly's achievements.

Let us patiently go through the errors in this article, if for no other reason than the fact that as long ago as 1870 Marx was carefully studying the Irish question and came to the conclusion that it was the key to the revolution in Britain. So for British marxists a correct interpretation of Irish history is a debt we owe to our own history.

Comrade Cochran correctly assesses the rottenness of most of the Irish bourgeois nationalists, but in suggesting that Connolly was their prisoner and that the Easter rising was no more than an adventure he is dead wrong.

Far from tagging along with the nationalists it was Connolly who was the most energetic in pressing for the rising, William O'Brien his fellow veteran of the I.T.G.W.U. records "Connolly insisted that if the organised workers were to pledge their support.....the Irish Volunteers should be also pledged to back that policy with military support..." (1) and in an early October 1915 issue of THE IRISH WORKER Connolly wrote: "The Volunteers must realise....that there is but one effective weapon - the appeal of the Revolutionist" (1)

Because of his stand, and the fact that the Citizen Army was a force independent of bourgeois nationalists, he succeeded in holding a section of the Irish Volunteers to the path of insurrection when the leaders of the majority deserted. The military strategy of the rising and the very successful street fighting methods were drafted by Connolly.

Was the Easter rising "in effect an adventure"? Lenin's characterisation of Radek who called it, "nothing more or less than a putsch," is appropriate

here, "a doctrinaire who is totally incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon." (2)

As Cochran points out, Connolly did not understand the theory of permanent revolution, and thought of the Irish Revolution as being a series of stages, but that he held this mistaken concept is no reflection on him. He died, after all, 18 months before the October Revolution in Russia and was unable to learn from the achievements of the Bolsheviks. He did understand that the most important task of the Irish workers was to defeat British imperialism, and so he took action, with no illusions about immediate success, or even his own chances of survival, in order to stimulate the national liberation struggle. In so doing he made a tremendous contribution to the experience of the struggle for socialism, besides showing the most inspiring heroism. As Lenin said, "It is only in premature, individual, sporadic and therefore unsuccessful revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength and get to know their real leaders".

However, Cochran has not neglected one important factor of any character assassination attempt - the "Big Lie." According to this myopic bungler "When the green flag was raised over Liberty Hall Connolly.....went even beyond nationalism to racialism."

Such a charge made against ANY adherent of the socialist movement is extremely grave, and to make it lightly is a disservice to the movement. To make it against Connolly, a man who fought in 3 countries to build the working class movement, who built up the first independent workers' militia, and thus contributed valuable experience to the Red Guards in the Russian Revolution and who laid down his life in armed struggle against imperialism, shows such squalid contempt for truth that it is difficult to grasp the fact that it is not a joke. What is the evidence? a single quote: "(The decision) will, we are sure, send a thrill through the hearts of every true Irish man and woman, and send the red blood coursing fiercely along the veins of every lover of the race."

This passage, admittedly rather purple - expresses Connolly's love of the Irish people and his solidarity with their struggle against imperialism - emotional as well as intellectual and physical. It has nothing remotely in common with the sentiments of a South Africa "Broederbond" or a Mississippi policeman or British Powellite. In fact, it is not racialism at all, as anyone outside the inverted world of the NEWSLETTER knows.

But what is the purpose of all this distortion and mudslinging? Is it, as the writer claims, "to explain his important achievements and failures to workers in a revolutionary constructive way."? For this some respect for truth would be required - in fact the reason is contained in a passage near the end. "The Socialist Labour League, the British section of the Fourth International(sic), provides the important lessons needed towards the building of an Irish section."

With due modesty the S.L.L. steps forward to

fulfil the tasks in which the "racialist" Connolly failed.

It is a measure of their political stature that they must try to reduce Connolly's to make this seem feasible even to themselves.

Connolly was a great revolutionary. No one can oust him from his place in history, when the Irish workers have done finally with capitalism they will acknowledge that their victory was impossible without his example, and they will always remember their debt to him. They will not owe anything to the Socialist Labour League.

Fraternally,
Bob Purdie

(1) "Fifty Years of Liberty Hall" I.T.G.W.U. Dublin, 1959.

(2) Lenin, "Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism," Progress Publishers, Moscow.

A Payneful Travesty

No figure looms over the twentieth century like Lenin. When the Churchills, de Gaulles, Kennedys of this world will have become merely shadowy figures in history books, the thoughts of Lenin will still be at work shaping the world of tomorrow.

It is a real tragedy that the two men who could have given the world a worth-while biography of the founder of the Soviet Union, Leon Trotsky and Isaac Deutscher, should both have died before they could complete their work. Certainly Robert Payne's *THE LIFE AND DEATH OF LENIN*, first published by W.H. Allen & Co in 1964 and now re-issued as a PAN Paperback (15/-) does not meet the need for a definitive life of the leader of the October Revolution. Indeed, the picture which emerges would scarcely be recognised by those who have studied his works and his contribution to marxist theory.

One of Lenin's most important works, "The State and Revolution," in which he tried to rescue the marxist teaching on the nature of the state from the social-democratic epigones who had distorted it, is described by Payne as "so devoid of logic.. a kind of utopian dream." He pours similar scorn on "Materialism and Empirio-criticism," Lenin's major contribution to marxist philosophy, and his "Imperialism." This should serve as adequate evidence of Payne's lack of fundamental understanding of marxism. In fact he tries desperately to show that Lenin was not a marxist at all but one who found his inspiration in the 19th Century revolutionary, Nechayev.

The only real perception which Payne shows is his awareness that Stalin played only a marginal role in the Bolshevik Party in the years of Lenin's ascendancy. His *LENIN* is a mixture of stalinist iconology and bourgeois demonology. He recognises Lenin's immense intellectual and moral superiority over Stalin but to him Lenin is the begetter of Stalin. No wonder the critics of the capitalist press have found nothing but praise for it.

Charles Van Gelderen

Greetings to the RSSF

The formation of the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation should be welcomed by all socialists. It is a sign that there exists among British students the same potential as was shown by the French students. The organisation can help to fill the gap that has been made by the virtual demise of the Labour Party Young Socialists and N.A.L.S.O. It introduces a new militant factor into British politics.

The debates at the founding conference - despite the poor organisation and lack of preparation showed a seriousness and respect for theory in wide circles of British students. We welcome, in particular, the appearance of several documents which endeavoured to apply the concept of Student Power to British conditions. The discussions were, of course, difficult, after all the conference was charting new territory and no one had adequately worked out the many organisational and political problems that such a meeting brought.

It is to be hoped that the preparatory committee will learn from the founding conference and that the envisaged November conference makes it possible to lay a firm theoretical and organisational basis for the R.S.S.F.

A REGRETTABLE INCIDENT

One incident, however, mars the generally positive picture: that of the attitude expressed by some of the initiators of the conference to the foreign student representatives and Tariq Ali.

What gift for the capitalist press to be able to quote student spokesmen as saying they didn't want these leaders and that "Tariq Ali represents no one but himself."

We understand that statements like these (which were approvingly quoted over Paris Radio) were made by members of International Socialism. This group has been talking a lot about unity since the Powell speech: it is difficult to envisage unity with a group whose members behave in such a manner - even if this is not "official" I.S. policy. Surely, other more responsible members of the group should have made their organisation's position clear by disassociating themselves from these sentiments. Until the I.S. can control its members it will be associated with such sectarianism.

STUDENT POWER THE KEY

Looking to the future of this organisation, we are convinced that its success will be linked to the question of its ability to put into practice activities which embody the concept of Student Power in its revolutionary sense. The R.S.S.F. should not be envisaged as an organisation catering for the existing marxist wing of the student population. It should be an organisation which will make thousands of students who now may be apolitical or conservative into socialists and revolutionaries.

We hope very much that the R.S.S.F. will be able to achieve this and we call upon all readers and supporters of *INTERNATIONAL* to assist in any way possible this new arrival on the British political scene.

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF



Exams Examined

Tom Fawthrop's "Education or Examination" is without doubt one of the most important studies to come out of the contemporary radical student upsurge. The first part of the booklet is devoted to "an examination of examinations" and questions some of the assumptions upon which the system works. Are examinations reliable in relation to their aims? are they objective? and linked to these questions - are they relevant? These are all answered by an impressive battery of arguments which expose examinations as a gigantic fraud. Take, for instance, these quotations which Fawthrop has managed to find: "It isn't a matter of knowing all about your subject, it's a matter of knowing all about examinations." (Dennis B. Jackson, Educationalist) or, "All the experimental data has shown that for a particular performance expressed in terms of an examination script assessment by different examiners produces marks with considerable variety such that in the determination of these marks the part played by the examiner can be greater than that of the examinee". What can be more damning statements than these?

Not only are examinations unreliable within their own terms of reference - they also have positively harmful effects both academic and non-academic. Among the academic effects cited are the limitations imposed upon the syllabi and the necessity to cram; among the non-academic are the suffering and misery of failure and the problems of mental illness - "the final witness for the prosecution".

AN ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM

Having established the case against examinations Fawthrop goes on to suggest alternatives, and this section of his booklet is for socialists the most exciting and stimulating. Not only must examinations be abolished, but students must abolish the power structure from which they originate. Thus the student can become an "active participant within an intellectual community" instead of a "passive consumer of the knowledge factory". Along with new rights and power students must take corresponding obligations and responsibilities and possibly in the last resort sanctions may be evolved to prevent their evasion. Education cannot stand apart from society; it has to take sides. The authoritarian nature of education now is to shape, mould and manipulate students from the primary school through to the university to fit into place in capitalist society. Instead of obedience to authority, education should stimulate critical awareness, geared to human values. "I am arguing for revolutionary education which takes the side of the 'masses'. This is the whole point of humanistic education." Fawthrop is, of course, aware that real student power cannot be achieved without a new society and sees the necessity for united action within the working class. In this context Student Power is closely related to the demand for Workers' Control.

Readers may remember how a few weeks ago Tom Fawthrop tore up the papers of his final degree examinations. He argues that action by students should include whatever sanctions are at their disposal - the final sanction being a boycott of examinations themselves - and urges support for the Radical Student Alliance. Students should not be afraid to lose their respectability - they will not succeed if they attempt to keep it.

One point of criticism arises. In the study there seems to be some doubt as to the feasibility of dropping examinations entirely in the natural science subjects. There is a gap here which must be followed up. To abolish exams in the arts and social sciences but not in the natural sciences would act as a strong disincentive to the study of the natural sciences. But with this, and a degree of repetition discounted, "Education or Examinations" is a definite must for all students.

Brian Davey

Labour's Left Luggage

Northcote Parkinson is slightly less right-wing and decidedly less funny than Peter Simple. What he has attempted to do in this book* is to critically follow the progress of the Labour Party from Keir Hardie to Wilson.

His thesis is that by the 1950s Labourism had run out of steam and ideas. He makes a number of telling points but none more devastating than to tell straight how Crosland, in his "Future of British Socialism", tried to construct an ersatz ideology for Labourism. Crosland assembled a programme of twelve socialist points and then sadly dropped all but two - welfare and the desire for equality - which might be electorally useful. Workers' Control and Clause Four went early on in this particular balloon debate.

The book is at its funniest when Harold is quoted. "We are not a flag-waving party, but we are a deeply patriotic party." Parkinson comments, "This is true: and often, one might add, appallingly true."

The High Tory Parkinson sees no role left for Labourism. They have nothing left to say on the great issues of the day. "...the founders of British Socialism ended, many of them, as Communists. To stop short of this, in the style of British Socialists, talking of democratic equality but dreaming of the plan which is to save the world, is merely futile. Without Marxism as its logical sequel, socialism is nothing."

Julian Atkinson

* "Left Luggage" by C. Northcote Parkinson, published by John Murray at 25/-

CUBA-THE ACID TEST

George Cunvin

After the October Revolution in Russia, most marxists anticipated that successive socialist revolutions would follow more or less the same path, soviets would come into being which would be the instruments for taking over power and establishing workers' power; leadership would come from well-organised vanguard parties. It was also confidently expected that the technically advanced countries of Western Europe would be the first to follow the Russian example. Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and other outstanding leaders of the Communist International in the early 20's were, however, not unaware that historical development does not always take the desirable course. Because of uneven development, not only between countries but also within specific countries, a revolutionary situation could ripen before a vanguard party reached the necessary maturity to lead it. The THESES ON TACTICS adopted by the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1922 provided for such eventualities. It emphasised that a coalition of working class parties could form "workers' governments" (or "workers' and peasants' governments") which would not be the same thing as the "dictatorship of the proletariat" but could under given conditions be pushed in that direction.

Dogmatic marxists, anxious to maintain their virginal purity, even if objective conditions demand new solutions, have stuck to the formula "no vanguard party, no soviets no workers' state." These people, of whom the Socialist Labour League is an outstanding example have, therefore, obstinately stuck to the position that Cuba is a capitalist country ruled by a petit bourgeois clique in the interests of Wall St.

WALL STREET CAPITALISTS KNOW BETTER

The Wall Street imperialists, of course, have taken a more realistic view of the situation and have drawn a "cordon sanitaire" round Cuba to prevent this "petit-bourgeois" contagion from spreading to their vassal states in Latin America.

The National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States has done marxists an outstanding service by publishing the record of the controversy on the Cuban question in which marxists have been engaged since 1960. It contains the DRAFT THESES ON THE CUBAN REVOLUTION adopted in December, 1960, by the Political Committee of the SWP, which traces, step by step the developments in Cuba from the time Castro came to power in January, 1959, showing how the hostility of American imperialism and the propertied classes in Cuba to the July 26th Movement forced the Castro Government to turn to the left. From the autumn of 1959 Cuba could be said to be ruled by a workers' and farmers' government as foreseen in the Comintern's THESES ON TACTICS.

American imperialism declared economic war on Cuba and under the impact of this pressure the Castro Government was compelled to resort to increasingly radical measures. These included the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, nationalisation of the latifundia, expropriation of American and Cuban capitalist holdings. These steps necessitated economic planning and the

property relations in Cuba began more and more to resemble those established by the October Revolution. Cuba became the outpost of the socialist world in the Western Hemisphere. The old state structure was smashed and the new state structure is so committed to a planned economy that only bloody counter-revolutionary invasion could restore capitalist property relations. The Cuban economy was tied to that of the Soviet bloc.

NO SOVIETS YET

The THESES underlines the fact that organs of democratic workers' form of power (soviets) have not yet been established in Cuba. In this sense Cuba can be described as a deformed workers' state just as the Soviet Union, where the soviets were destroyed by the stalinist bureaucracy is correctly designated by marxists as a degenerate workers' state. But the absence of these norms of workers' democracy in no way invalidates the fact that both Cuba and the Soviet Union are workers' states which must be unconditionally defended by socialists against attacks from imperialism.

There is abundant evidence that the Cuban leadership is painfully seeking to overcome this lack of workers' democracy. They are constantly discussing ways and means of preventing the consolidation of a bureaucracy and to absorb the necessary lessons from the experiences of the Soviet bloc, China and Yugoslavia. Above all, they have recognised the international character of their revolution and have not hesitated to place their own gains at risk in order to extend the revolution to the whole of Latin America. Their unconditional solidarity with the fighting people of Vietnam is also proof of their working class internationalism.

Cuba is today the acid test for all who call themselves marxists, just as the October Revolution was in 1917. This publication, with its valuable appendices which include extracts from the debates on the THESES AND TACTICS at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, will help to clear away the cobwebs which clutter the minds of those who attach more value to the traditional forms of the revolution than to the real revolution which is taking place today.

* THE NATURE OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION, obtainable from Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee Street, London E.1.; 7/6d plus 10d postage.

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NATIONALISM & SOCIALISM IN SCOTLAND

Now that the tumult following the S.N.P.'s mammoth gains in the Scottish elections has subsided, it is appropriate for socialists to take a cool look at the new political situation in Scotland.

The swing to the S.N.P. was massive, yet one or two signs seem to indicate that it was mainly a protest against the Government - the fact that it was Labour which suffered overwhelmingly, and the failure of the S.N.P. to make headway in former strongholds, e.g., Stirling, West Lothian and Hamilton.

This is the first lesson, that so long as the Wilson Government keeps up its anti-working class policies, and no deep-rooted alternative on the left appears, the S.N.P. will make the running in Scotland. The unprincipled way in which the right-wing in the Labour Party fought the campaign is also worth noting: with no policies which they could defend, they concentrated upon name-calling and purile "exposures", such as the fact that S.N.P. members of 12-years-of-age could vote in branches. They also indulged in the "battle of statistics" (since Scotland's economic statistics are not available separate from U.K. ones, by judicious arithmetical acrobatics, literally anything can be proved from them), confirming Mark Twain's dictum: "There are lies, damned lies and statistics."

SEPARATISM NOT NEW

But is SUPPORT for separatism the main basis of the S.N.P.'s gains? It is difficult to say how widespread such feeling is, although it has undoubtedly grown considerably. It is not, however, a new factor in Scottish politics. In fact, until the mid-thirties, it was a central plank in every popular, radical and working class movement; from the "United Scotsmen" of 1797, through the Chartists to the I.L.P. The surge forward of the S.N.P. echoes the General Election of 1922, when Scotland returned sixteen I.L.P. M.P.s, ten of them from Glasgow. These historical precedents can be related to the parochialism which has always been a feature of Scotland's political and cultural life.

An exception to this parochialism, however, was John McLean, the great Clydeside revolutionary, whom Lenin made the first Soviet consul in Britain. McLean raised the slogan of a "Scottish Workers Republic", echoing his friend and contemporary in Ireland, James Connolly.

However, the S.N.P. bears no comparison to even the vaguely left I.L.P. Its recent conference makes its nature, as a hotch-potch of middle-class demagogues and disoriented workers, more clear.

The conference was opened by the party's veteran chairman, Arthur Donaldson, with a call to the party to act "responsibly" (a familiar word to Labour Party members!), and the conference went on to pass a resolution committing the first Scottish Government to accept a "fair share" of U.K.'s debts. Other notable resolutions passed called for the removal of Polaris, and foreign military bases, and equal pay for women in an independent Scotland.

TWO VAGUE TENDENCIES

What emerged from the conference was the identification of two major, if extremely vague, tendencies in the party. One, a right-wing middle-class

grouping led by the veterans of the "old days", Donaldson and William Wolf; the other, of a left tinge, containing people who are relatively new to the party, and having a background in the working class movement, involving such figures as Winnie Ewing, and Isobel Lindsay, who was one of the new Glasgow councillors, who was prominent in the Young Socialists in the early sixties. They are held together by their extreme vagueness, and the sheer momentum the party has gained.

NOT FASCIST

They are quite clearly distinguished from fascist nationalism, which in a period of capitalist crisis bases itself on an inverted return to the early days of the formation of the "nation state" and seeks to solve the problems of the ruling class by a grotesque reflection of the achievements of Napoleon, Garibaldi and Bismarck, i.e., the extension and consolidation of the territory of the capitalist state.

To date the left has, in the main, ignored the whole issue, and although the C.P. has made an opportunist reflex and is now assuring everyone that it has "always" campaigned for a Scottish Parliament, and the tiny Maoist group, the Workers Party of Scotland, is raising once more McLean's slogan of a "Scottish Workers Republic", the main response has been to regard any separatist demand as a diversion. The more marxist-inclined elements point out that socialists' support for national movements is only appropriate to nations which are the victims of imperialist domination, Scotland not being into this category the S.N.P. is labelled "fascist."

This label might be appropriate were the S.N.P. actually a nationalist movement in the marxist sense. Its roots are in the contradictory historical formation of capitalism in Scotland, which became fully developed as part of BRITISH imperialism, Scotland's ruling class is indistinguishable from England's. But the traditional carriers of culture in a nation, the middle class, never became absorbed to the same extent, and maintained a distinct Scottish culture and consciousness which it transmitted to the working class. Similar manifestations are in evidence in Quebec and Wallonia (the French-speaking part of Belgium). These tendencies, which are most accurately described as "separatist" are the result of the decay of capitalism and the absence of a strong revolutionary proletarian leadership.

All sections of society are plunged into confusion and some middle class elements see their salvation in breaking away from the imperialist state, which in good times they had heartily defended.

Given the petit-bourgeois utopian nature of these separatist movements, and their opposition to the capitalist state, which can often be quite radical (though not in the S.N.P.'s case), and the widespread support they gain from the workers, there is nothing, in principle, wrong with socialists supporting the right of separation, provided this is done in the form of transitional demands, which make no concessions to backward prejudices and which aim to detach the workers from the middle-class elements.

There has not yet been a deep-going discussion and examination on the left in Scotland, which could work out the relevance to the Scottish workers of separatist demands. It is to be hoped that this article will help to stimulate such a discussion.

Bob Purdie

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