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MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

A MARXIST QUARTERLY

No.1 Autumn 1969

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CLASS STRUGGLES IN ITALY
Silverman.

Roger

LEGISLATION, THE T.U.C. & THE FUTURE
OF THE TRADE UNIONS

Peter Taaffe

THE WORLD COMMUNIST CONFERENCE
Ted Grant.

& Notes on Ireland, Czechoslovakia, India

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Contents

International Notes

Northern Ireland.....	2
India.....	4
Czechoslovakia.....	7

Legislation, the T.U.C. and the Future of the Unions.....	10
Class Struggles in Italy.....	25
The World "Communist" Conference.....	36

INTRODUCING MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW makes its debut at a time when the Labour Movement, both nationally and internationally, faces a greater political and social ferment than at any time since the war. In the last year millions of French workers, in the greatest general strike in European history, occupied the factories and reached out their hands for the State power. They were balked by the leadership of the French Communist Party. Using its mass influence this leadership managed to derail that Revolution, substituting for bold measures to mobilise the masses for the seizure of power the policies of "Popular Frontism" i.e. coalition with a section of the "liberal" bourgeoisie. Now in Italy the magnificent movement of the workers and peasants is being prepared for the same fate. Together with the growing crisis in the colonial world, striking new blows against imperialism in Africa Latin America and Asia; including the inevitable defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, and the upsurge of opposition in the Stalinist deformed states of Eastern Europe, these events have shattered the illusions in the post-war ideas of "social peace" and "affluence". A whole new generation of workers, of youth and students, is awakening once again to the ideas of **Marxism**. In particular layers of the Communist Party in France and Italy, and the Labour Party in Britain are demanding an explanation of these events, the role of the leaders of the mass organisations and the programme and policies which can lead the working class to take power and establish socialist democracy.

In Britain the enormously powerful Labour Movement is beginning to question the underlying reasons for the failure of the leadership to carry out its election programmes of 1964 and 1966. In particular the tremendous campaign in the Unions and constituency parties together with the mass strike action forced the Government to retreat on the punitive measures it was proposing to introduce for use against the Trade Unions. Big steps forward to the Left have been taken by important sections of the Labour Movement. But there is still, we believe, widespread confusion as to the kind of alternative on which the Party can be rallied for final victory in the achievement of the Socialist aims embodied in Clause 4 part 4 of the Labour Party Constitution. It is not enough to demand a return to the old positions of 1964 and 1966, Wilson's minimum reform programme, as some of the Left MPs and TU leaders are doing. The failure of that policy was rooted in the disease of the British economy. A senile and decaying system is incapable of providing lasting solutions to the problems of housing, education, the social services etc. In the given state of British capitalism it has been impossible for Wilson and the Labour Leaders to grant large scale concessions on the basis of capitalism. Thus it has been demonstrated that the "practical" policies, which entailed the waving of a magic wand to bring increased production and harmony between the capitalists and the working class, are in fact utopian on the basis of an ailing economy. The experiences of the Labour Government have vindicated the criticisms made by the Marxist wing of the Labour Movement of Wilson's programme both before the election and during the last five years.

Our journal could not make its appearance at a more decisive stage in the development of the Labour Movement. We aim to present a clear explanation of the problems which face the Labour Movement generally. The articles in this issue

on the World Communist Conference, the electric events in Italy and the developments in the Trade Unions in Britain are all vital issues facing the International Labour Movement. In future issues we will be publishing articles from the pens of the great Marxist teachers, book reviews and film reviews as well as material dealing with current events. In this way we hope to arm the advanced workers in the Labour Movement with the knowledge, the facts, the analysis and the programme which can answer the needs of the working class. We are confident that in the titanic events which impend in Britain and internationally in the next few years ever wider layers of workers will see the need for a clearly worked out Marxist programme. To this end is MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW published.

NORTHERN IRELAND

British troops have had to be sent, not to a remote colony, but to a province of Britain itself. This after the unprecedented defeat for the Ulster police at the hands of the people of Bogside, who rose in a mass resistance supported by 25,000 workers against the attempted invasion of the RUC.

As with Rhodesia and many other colonies, the chickens of British Imperialism are coming home to roost in Ulster. For it was with active support of British capitalists that Carson and his Ulster volunteers were used to create a bastion of British big business in the North-East of Ireland, to keep the working class divided on "religious" lines and ensure that capitalism in Ireland would remain subject to that of Britain. For 48 years, the Unionist Tories have stayed in power with the votes of the Protestant population, including large sections of the workers whose fear of domination by the overwhelming majority of Catholics in Ireland as a whole, has been ruthlessly exploited to keep them in subjection to the capitalist class. But it is the minority of Catholic workers who have suffered most, with unemployment for years on end, the lowest wages, living in squalid slum ghettos, oppressed by a sectarian police force, in fear of attack by Protestant Paisleyite thugs and the B-specials, and denied even the basic democratic right of voting in local elections. To-day, in spite of massive handouts of £100 million a year from the Westminster government, unemployment stands at 38 000 and the development of new industries has not been enough to offset the decline in the traditional fields of shipbuilding and linen.

The continued hold of the Unionists over sections of Protestant workers has stunted the development politically of the Labour Movement. But it is not only in the North that the border has been used as a diversion to turn the workers from their social and economic problems. The Fianna Fail governments of Eire have ruled as consistently as the Unionists in the interests of Big Business, resulting in even greater poverty and unemployment than in the North. This is not an attractive proposition to the relatively less poor Protestant workers, who fear that in an Ireland united under capitalism, a Fianna Fail government would use them as scapegoats for their own failings, and put them a similar underprivileged position to that of the Northern Catholics to-day.

For 48 years the rulers of both Dublin and Stormont have used the partition issue to rule in the interests of private profit and the continued exploitation of the workers. To-day, however, the more far-sighted representatives of both British and Irish Big Business can see that this issue is irrelevant and hints have been dropped by, for example, George Brown and Neil Blaney, that a united or federal Ireland would be desirable. Already economically Eire is dependent on Britain, which in turn uses Irish emigrants as cheap labour. The applications

by both governments to join the Common Market illustrate the logic of closer co-operation, even on a capitalist basis. It was from this sort of viewpoint that O'Neill was trying to turn the Unionist Party from its state of sectarian reaction into a more "enlightened" conservative party like the British one, by introducing reforms and appealing to the Catholic middle-class. Such a policy was clearly in the interests of both British and Ulster capitalists, who no longer, as in 1912, are prepared to support the Protestant extremists. As the recent delegation of Tory M.P.s stated, in the event of a shift to the right by the Unionists, the Conservative Party would have to cut its connections. They can see that their interest could only suffer if the growing unrest of the oppressed Catholic workers were to lead to direct action in support of their demands.

But the Frankenstein's monster of British Imperialism could not so easily be destroyed. The Unionist backwoodsmen forced O'Neill out of office, to be replaced by the feeble and inept Chichester-Clark. Although putting forward the same reform-programme as O'Neill, for an end to the most blatant forms of discrimination and gerrymandering, he found himself between the hammer and the anvil, the need to push through the reforms being countered by the pressure from Unionist extremists to resist them altogether. His pathetic weakness under this pressure was revealed by his refusal to ban the march of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, an act of provocation which would obviously enrage the Bogside population and which led to the direct confrontation between the workers and the arm of the state, the RUC.

Only British troops could stop the "Battle of Bogside" from becoming a bloody massacre, as the Stormont government demonstrated its criminal nature by unleashing the openly sectarian B-specials. It is not surprising that at first the Catholic workers of both Derry and Belfast welcomed the troops, as a protection against the RUC and the B-men. However, the armies of any capitalist power, not excluding Eire, are used to protect one thing only - the profits of private industry. The role of British troops in Aden shows clearly that they will act against working class organisations if they pose a threat to British investments.

The only protection for the workers, both Catholic and Protestant, is the strength of their own organisations. The heroism and solidarity of the Bogside workers showed the fortitude of a people prepared to stand up and fight. But how much more powerful would they be if united with their Protestant comrades, who are exploited by the same bosses! Already in Belfast, joint vigilante forces have been formed to patrol the streets. If Catholics and Protestants could unite in 1913, behind Connolly and Larkin in the great strike of the Transport and General Workers' Union, then they can again to-day. The hysterical cries of sectarianism cannot forever hide the identity of interest between all the workers. Those quasi-Marxists who claim it is utopian to call for Protestant and Catholic workers to unite, and dismiss the Protestant workers as similar to the "colons" of Algeria are guilty of a treacherous rejection of the whole class basis of Marxism. Even the Algerian settlers could have been won to the banner of Socialism, had the Communist Party put forward a class programme to unite Algerian and French workers. Yet they were a tiny part of the population with a far more privileged position relative to Arabs than that of the Ulster Protestants relative to the Catholics. To write off two-thirds of the working class population is a programme of defeatism, especially when no positive policies are posed, but only the demand to keep up the barricades, which can only serve to disillusion the Derry workers unless linked up to a programme and a perspective.

The only realistic programme is for a United Protestant and Catholic working class movement, firstly to form joint trade union defence forces against police attacks and the hooligan elements who have exploited the situation. It is in militia such as these that real class unity can be forged. Secondly, the need is to campaign for the nationalisation of the monopoly industries and the socialist planning of industry and new towns, linking this to the immediate demands for equal pay, a minimum wage and a crash housing programme. To carry out such a programme, it is only the Labour Movement which can give the necessary lead. It is true that both the NILP and the Republican Labour Party are playing very minor roles, there is no alternative force capable of bringing together the Trade Unions. The great upsurge of support for the Irish Labour Party in the urban areas of Eire shows the latent power of the political arm of the Labour movement.

From such a campaign could develop a working class unity on both sides of the border, with a Socialist United Ireland making the partition and the old religious barriers a thing of the past. This would have immediate repercussions in Britain, where three million people are of Irish descent, and would accelerate the movement towards Socialism throughout both islands.

INDIA

By Julian Silverman

Mrs. Gandhi's decision to go ahead with the nationalisation of the 14 banks of India will not in itself go anywhere towards solving the catastrophic crisis in Indian society. But it has unleashed a whirlwind. Congress has irrevocably split into Right and Left. On the one hand, the right wing "syndicate" which has always controlled the party has been floored. Many have resigned or been pushed out. Already they have been holding secret talks with the extreme reactionary Jan Sangh and Swatantra parties about future coalitions.

On the left, the Communist Party has welcomed her actions. She has been greeted with uproarious applause at Congress Party meetings. Hundreds of thousands of workers in all the big cities have demonstrated in her favour. There have been demands for her to take over the import business. Steel and metal workers, rubber plantation workers have clamoured for the nationalisation of their industry. Journalists have come out for the nationalisation of the press - and Mrs. Gandhi herself has stated that "newspapers should be wrested from the hands of big businessmen to make editors free." An enquiry has been set up on this question, but up to now she has disclaimed any intention of taking over the press. She has spoken of a "new era" but immediately hastened to assure big business that "this does not mean an era of nationalisation." (Actually it would hardly take an era to take control of the "commanding heights" of industry - 80% is in the pockets of only 75 families anyway.)

The victory of her nominee for president, Giri, against the official "syndicate" nominee accepted by Congress, Reddy, has consolidated her position. Threatened by the "syndicate" with disciplinary action and by the right wing parties who accused her of "a treacherous act against the constitution", she appealed over their heads to the masses.

But how far will she go? Big Business remains virtually untouched. Starvation, poverty and unemployment are even increasing! The past three years of inactivity by the Central Government have meant the rise on the one hand of reactionary right wing nationalist movements in the States, and on the other, of left wing "United Front" governments led by the formerly pro-Peking wing of the Communist Party. The cynical jostling for positions in governments which do nothing to appease the mounting frustration has meant continuous breakdown and, amid rioting, the Central Government has stepped in and set up a system of Presidential Rule. This happened, for example, as long ago as ten years in Kerala. More recently a similar pattern was repeated in Bihar this July. It looks as though the present situation could lead to a similar train of events on a national scale. "There will be more incentive, not less, to cross the floor and even to bring down a Government, in State or Centre, for the sake of a promise of a post in the new coalition. The history of State coalitions in the last few years is an eloquent warning." So wrote the Financial Times. That is why the issue of the Presidential elections was a political one. He will be no mere figurehead as he has been in the past, in the event of a coalition.

In order to stave off the disintegration of India two alternatives are before the ruling class: a right wing coalition with the aid of the army, or a left wing "United Front". All the signs point towards the latter in the first instance, but it is vital to be forewarned: so long as big capital is not touched the catastrophe will grow deeper and deeper. There is no halfway solution.

Take the experience in Kerala for example. The "left" wing of the Communist Party had been in power there for two years when the Financial Times foreign editor there wrote that despite rising misery "nothing has happened, nothing been attempted, nothing achieved." "The leaders blithely admit the miserable conditions of the State. But 'What can they do? It is the system that is at fault' they insist 'not the men in power.'" Party leader Gopalan assured the editor that "Financial Times readers would find a genuine welcome for their investment", but "Industry refuses to move in". Even the F/T foreign editor was compelled to state blandly that "it seems astonishing... that the appalling conditions of the masses have not already produced a strong revolutionary movement."

It is indeed the system which is at fault. The excuse for doing nothing about it has been that nothing should be done which might provoke the Central Authorities, nothing which might upset the middle classes, the peasants etc. Of course, the "intervening layers" must be won over. But it is not a "ramshackle and opportunistic coalition" (to use the F/T phraseology once more) which is going to win them over, it is action in defence of their interests. In Kerala, the "United Front" Government will

be defeated at a certain stage; their inaction is paving the way for the disillusionment of the masses. In West Bengal, the situation would have been identical but for the struggles that took place when the Central Government tried to step in. Workers seized factories and locked up the management, peasants seized the land. The people themselves attempted to carry out the policy of the United Front Government and more.

So long the economy is run by and for the 75 families, what hope is there for the middle class, the peasants etc. hounded by moneylenders from the cradle to the grave, never free of debt, starved of credit in a market which barely exist as far as the starving millions are concerned? On the other hand, Kerala, though poverty-stricken, has the most literate population in India. Together with the advanced industrial workers of Calcutta and the rest of West Bengal they could form the base of a workers' government which, having expropriated the big monopolies, could hand out credit to the peasants and small businessmen on terms infinitely preferable to the present terms dictated by greed and corruption. A United Front Government, however "left" in words will be able to do nothing more than aid the enemies of the 'intervening layers', the monopolists who run society at the moment. The middle class will continually be pushed into bankruptcy and unemployment as they are today. What is needed is action on a clear alternative programme.

The Marxists in India must prepare themselves. They must call for all support for the mass movements of occupation of the land and the factories; to lead on to a workers and peasants government. The Working Class in Russia in 1917 was no bigger a proportion of the population. Taking power in Petrograd and Moscow, their demands raced through the whole of the U.S.S.R. and the world. This could be the perspective for India.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On August 21st, about 50,000 Czechoslovaks massed in the squares of Prague and Brno to mark the anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion. They were met with tanks, tear gas grenades, water cannon; they were chased systematically by police wielding rubber truncheons. At least eight youths were shot dead. 2,000 people were arrested. According to the British tourist who became entangled with the demonstration, police were viciously beating all the detainees in the police station until they collapsed. The leaders and the official Press smeared them with accusations that they were all "criminals, vagrants, fascist stormtroopers," etc. The savage treatment meted out - by Czechoslovak police, under direct orders from the Czechoslovak Government - finally unmasks the real face of this "realistic" "compromise" regime. The crowds that gathered had no programme, no plans to overthrow the leaders, no real hope of reforms. Their constantly-repeated slogan consisted of the single word: "Dubcek".

But Dubcek, like Husak, had appealed for "calm". Moreover, he is one of the four signatories to the new viciously repressive laws, which provide for detention without trial, representation or appeal in all cases of criticism of the current Party line. If we look at the other three heroes of the era of "socialism with a human face", we see the aging President Svoboda still presiding, Prime Minister Cernik faithfully parroting the slanders of the Kremlin about the "counter-revolutionary" danger, and Smrkovsky - undoubtedly the principal target of the Stalinists - openly repudiating the massive support offered him by the trade unions and the students and meekly accepting his own dismissal.

Dubcek, Smrkovsky, and the other spokesman for the managerial wing of the bureaucracy, preferred the slender hope of co-operating and "reasoning" with the desperadoes of the Kremlin, only to be unceremoniously kicked out of their influential posts rather than offer principled resistance. Husak too prided himself on his "realism". The "Sunday Times" (24th August) is at least less hypocritical than most of the Western Press:-

"Meanwhile, we in the West have no right to blame the Czech authorities for collaborating with their victors. How many of our own politicians, given the choice, would prefer war in the streets, the physical occupation of our capital, the probable death of many of our fellow-citizens, to acquiescence - however humiliating - in a deal which at least leaves the appearance of our national sovereignty intact? We may despise the Strougals and the Indras, the active Quislings of Czechoslovakia. For Dr. Husak and his beaten colleagues we must reserve our pity."

If Dubcek had not appeared too identified with the 1968 tradition, he also would be at his previous post, alongside Cernik and Svoboda. As it is, even now he is still for the moment among the top politicians "collaborating" with the "victors", swallowing their "humiliation", rejoicing in "at least the appearance of national sovereignty", and enjoying the pity of the "Sunday Times". It is hard to distinguish between the policies of Dubcek, Husak and Strougal today.

In the mute despairing crowds massed in Wenceslas Square stood the symbol of the people's thirst to resist the terms of the Kremlin. A Czech journalist writing in "The Observer" (24/8/69) said:-

"The outright Quisling regime in Czechoslovakia today relies on no social force worth mentioning. The support it has is incomparably smaller than the pro-Dubcek rule ofNovotny....Outside Czechoslovakia it is often believed that until last August the intelligentsia, especially the writers, were the most nonconformist section of society. This is an illusion, probably caused by the fact that this particular social group, by the very nature of its work, is able to give public expression to its views. In fact, however - and this is the most positive aspect of the present situation - the workers in the factories are showing the same resolute opposition to the policy of the Czechoslovak leadership... The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia claims to be the party of the working class. The leading role of the working class is anchored in the constitution. And yet the working class now distinctly, and publicly, refuses to accept the official brand of socialism...."

If the workers in the factories who defiantly sounded the hooters at midday on August 21st, whole strata of the trade unions and of the Communist Party itself, the whole of the student population, and everyone else among tens of thousands of demonstrators were really all "counter-revolutionaries", 21 years after the revolution, then it is a sad reflection on the leadership of the C.P. both in Czechoslovakia and in Russia. In fact, only half-hearted attempts were made to provide the flimsiest evidence of bourgeois subversion. A year after the invasion, no counter-revolutionary has been brought to trial. Now, perhaps, show trials will be staged - but it has taken a year to fabricate the evidence. The whole population except for a handful of Novotny's creatures was pressing for simple democratic rights to check the arbitrary acts of the State and Party apparatus.

The British C.P. daily "Morning Star" wrote a leading article on 27th August, neatly apportioning equal portions of praise and blame to all the parties involved. The invasion was a "tragic mistake" (last year's empty verdict). But, equally, mistakes were made by the Czechoslovak leadership last year..... insufficient action was taken against the anti-Socialist forces. So was there a threat to the revolution then? No, "recent material published.....is even less convincing as evidence of an imminent counter-revolution last August than the material published immediately after the intervention". So was the regime right to break up the demonstrations? Ah, but "anti-Socialist forces took advantage of the situation". But all the same, the working people "were expressing support for what they feel to be the correct path for Socialism in Czechoslovakia." They do not tell us whether their feelings were right or not, because "it is only the Czechoslovak Communists and working people who can solve their problems." Though, of course, "Communists in other countries.....are entitled to express their opinions on the position in Czechoslovakia or anywhere else." Provided, it seems, they say nothing conclusive or intelligible.

Would resistance have led to a bloodbath? The tactic of utter capitulation has already spilt the first drops of Czechoslovak blood. Victory is possible if, and only if, the masses are rallied to the banner of real proletarian internationalism. By a class appeal to the soldiers of Russia and the Warsaw Pact countries, and a clear programme to end the rule of the Brezhnevs, Husaks and Ulbrichts forever and to create a genuine socialist federation based

on the firm principles of workers' democracy, a giant stride forward could have been taken. That the political revolution could spread like a forest fire all over Eastern Europe is proved by the panic and the haste of the Warsaw Pact bureaucracies in stamping out the tiny sparks of revolt that appeared last year in Czechoslovakia.

Brezhnev and Kosygin have had to abandon the role of liberal "technocrats" as quickly as Khrushchev exposed the hollowness of "de-Stalinisation" in 1956. They are totally discredited, open goalers of the new generation in Russia. Only brute terror maintains the rule of the bureaucracy in Russia and Eastern Europe - and that means that it cannot be long before it is overthrown and the workers direct the revolution back into the democratic and internationalist traditions of the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution.

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LEGISLATION TUC & FUTURE OF UNIONS

By Peter Taaffe

The trade union and Labour Movement scored a tremendous victory in forcing the Labour Government to climb down over its proposed anti-trade union legislation. The accumulation of opposition forces from the bedrock of the Labour Movement itself forced them to retreat. To have gone ahead with the punitive clauses in "In Place of Strife" would have resulted in an irreparable breach between the Labour leaders and their base in the Labour Movement. Thus, the "Times", organ of the dominant sections of the British ruling class, correctly summed up the situation and the array of forces against the Government's measures: "Not only practically the whole trade union movement but also a majority of the Labour Party Executive, a large number of trade union and other backbenchers in Parliament and even some members of the Cabinet." The ruling class had itself been warned of the consequences of legislation at this stage actually being applied. The mere production of the White Paper had resulted in a storm of opposition which produced the massive one-day protest strikes. The May Day strike involved over 200,000 workers. Together with the February 27th strike, this was the first directly political strike on any big scale since the 1926 General Strike. In addition, the General Council of the T.U.C. were forced to call an emergency congress, the first of its kind since 1920. And as if they were not convinced by this, they only needed to look at Australia, where similar legislation had resulted in a mass strike wave in the last few months. Why, then, have certain sections of the ideologues of the capitalist class increasingly flirted with the idea of legislation against the unions in the last few years - a suggestion eagerly clutched at by Wilson and the Labour leaders as a supposed election winner? The explanation is to be found in the present parlous state of British capitalism and the attempt to offset this by clipping the power of the unions.

POWER OF UNIONS

One consequence of the postwar economic upswing was to bring about a certain softening of social relations for a whole period. But as Marx pointed out, "reality always has two sides". Because at the same time the boom has resulted in a massive extension and strengthening of the power of the unions. Whole new layers of workers, formerly standing outside the ranks of the organised trade union movement, have been drawn in. Thus, we have increasingly witnessed civil servants, clerks, teachers, and in the last period even publicans, taking to the road of industrial organisation. A visible reflection of the undermining of the social reserves of capitalism is given by the recently announced Transport and General Workers' Union's drive to organise the ranks of the Army into the union. This in turn has been as a result of the example of the successful organisation of German soldiers by the Transport Union there.

One of the reasons for the increased militancy and unionisation of the white-collar and unorganised sections has been the increasing tendency for the

various postwar governments, certainly since 1960, to unload the consequences of the slowing-down of the economy on their backs. Commencing with the 1961 wage freeze, the Tory Government, faced with the increased combativity of the manual workers, more rigorously applied itself to the task of holding down the civil servants, teachers and nurses. Another factor forcing them into the ranks of the unions has been the application of factory methods and conditions to white-collar workers, especially those employed in the big combines. Even the top executives, faced with the ruthless pace of monopolisation, and consequent redundancy, have been rushing to join ASTMS, which is one of the fastest-growing unions in Britain, with 2000 recruits a month. Overall there has been an approximate doubling of union membership since 1930. It is now 42% of the total labour force.

At the same time, there has been the growth and strengthening of the workers' shop floor organisations. In 1966 there were almost 150,000 shop stewards in unions affiliated to the T.U.C., a vast increase since the inter-war period. This process has also involved the white-collar workers, with 20% of the total shop floor representatives of those unions affiliated to the T.U.C. coming from these sections. With increased numbers has come increased power. In the face of this, the employers have been forced to acquiesce to the demands of the workers. Some quasi-Marxists, such as the International Socialists, have drawn the conclusion that the short duration of strikes are indicative of a lowering of militancy and a sign of weakness in union organisation. Precisely the opposite is true. In the inter-war period the working class were forced to engage in long-drawn-out battles, in a period of mass unemployment, in defence of their meagre standards. Since the war, once organised workers have deployed their power the capitalists have usually been forced to accede to most of their demands.

At the same time, the workers have more and more encroached on the formerly "divine rights" of management. In the big combines in particular, this has resulted in the shop floor determining overtime ratios, canteen facilities, and in some cases the use and deployment of the labour force in the factory, i.e. so-called "restrictive practices". Faced with the might of the union organisation and with a sellers' market for labour, for a whole period, the capitalists were forced to tolerate the extension of "another power", continually counterposing itself to that of management and ceaselessly interfering and hamstringing "management prerogatives". Through the shop stewards' committees, elements of dual power have taken root in the factories. But with the increasing difficulties of British capitalism, particularly marked since the beginning of the '60s, the British bourgeoisie have sought to deal with the power of the unions. This has been imperatively imposed by the increasing tendency of the rate of profit to fall. More and more it has become necessary for the capitalists to hamper the unions in the attempt to cut the working class' share in the surplus produced by their labour.

COLLAPSE OF P.I.B.

Thus, for a whole period the representatives of the capitalists, first of all under the guise of "planning", i.e. the Incomes Policy, endeavoured to bring this about. Overnight, the "never-had-it-so-good" Tory Party was converted to this concept - "we are all planners now", said Macmillan. But

the real purpose of the Incomes Policy has been clearly illustrated by the work of the Prices and Incomes Board. In its latest review of the whole period since it was established, it shows the benefits to the capitalists which have accrued from its work of holding down wage claims. Thus, in its table on earnings, it is revealed that "wage costs" to the capitalists have been kept significantly lower than prior to its establishment, rising by only 2.4% in 1968 compared to a 3.1% average for the years 1957-66. At the same time, productivity per worker has rapidly increased; 4% in 1968 compared to the 2.9% increase in the year 1967 or 2.2% average for the years 1957-66. Thus there has resulted a piling up of greater and greater profits for the capitalists and an increased super-exploitation of the working class. One giant monopoly, I.C.I., increased its profits by 50% in 1968 (Company Journal). On the other hand, the working class, faced with an accelerated rise in the cost of living, has been forced to eat into its already meagre leisure time by overtime, women working, etc., in order to maintain standards. Thus the A.E.F. revealed in January that there has been an enormous extension of overtime in the past three decades. Overall, whereas an average of only 30 minutes was worked thirty years ago, it is now something like six hours a week, giving the British worker a working year some nine weeks longer than his Swedish counterpart. In the manufacturing concerns, employing more than 11 workers, over one third were forced to work overtime (D.E.P. figures).

In order to redress the balance, the industrial workers in particular took to the road of struggle. Thus in the key industries of the docks, engineering and the motor industry, there was an upsurge of industrial struggle in 1968. This has been carried over into 1969 with the Incomes Policy being blown sky-high in one dispute after another. In the first four months of 1969, according to official statistics, there was a sharp increase in the number of workers involved in strikes in the car industry, 112,500 against 63,600 in a similar period last year. It was to deal with what the capitalist spokesmen called the "strike-prone" industries, in the modern sections, i.e. the "metal-working" complex of industries, that the idea of anti-strike laws was canvassed. This sector employs one quarter of the total labour force and accounts for one third of the "export earnings". The strategists of capital have seen these workers, with the increasing degree of militancy shown by them, as an obstacle to them competing in the cut-throat battles with their rivals on the world market.

Foreseeing the collapse of the restraining functions of the Incomes Policy, a section of the ruling class increasingly flirted with the idea of the State, their State, legislating to hold back the workers' movement. They have clutched at a straw to extricate themselves from the difficulties they have faced in the confrontation with the working class. Rather than demonstrating the strength of the capitalists, it has in fact indicated the opposite. Unable to put over their stamp in the factories they have appealed to the State to do the job for them. Barbara Castle and the Labour Leaders were themselves forced to admit this in their White Paper. "It is because employers do not in fact use what legal power they have against unofficial strikers that some have suggested a very-far reaching role for the Government, ... taking from the employers the responsibility." (Paragraph 89.) But then the Labour leaders proceeded to obediently attempt to carry out the task which the capitalists were unable to complete. In so doing, they have echoed all the malicious propaganda of the ruling class as they have attempted to picture the

working class as the main culprit for the crisis facing the British economy. So-called "unofficial" strikers were specially marked out as "saboteurs" of the "national interest". Strikes were, it seemed, the only obstacle to a flourishing economy.

STRIKES - EMPLOYERS DISTORTIONS

In answer to this, even the official union leadership have shown that strike action only accounts for a small proportion of days lost in industry. Thus the General Secretary of the T.U.C., Victor Feather, showed in his speech to the June Emergency Conference of the T.U.C. that a mere one-tenth of one per cent in gross national product is lost through strikes. Professor Turner, in his booklet "Is Britain Strike-Prone?" explodes every one of the myths as to the responsibility of the working class for economic crisis through strike action. This booklet, moreover, is a searing indictment of the employers' methods, the double-dealing and cheating used by them in order to bring pressure for action against the unions. The main points in the booklet should be reproduced in every union, a clear explanatory foreword added, and distributed to every shop steward, union branch secretary and through them to the union membership as a whole. It would have high educational value as a means of showing that it is in fact the employers who are responsible for "industrial anarchy" and not the workers. As an example of the duplicity of the employers in relation to the number of strikes in the car industry, Turner says: "In their evidence to the Donovan Commission, the car manufacturers' representatives stated that they had been informed of, on average, over 600 strikes a year in the car factories from 1962 to October 1965; a study by the present writer showed that there had been less than 100 strikes a year during this period in terms of the official definition - the overwhelming majority of the incidents included in the manufacturers' own statistics being very miniscule affairs indeed (one firm appeared to have counted shop stewards coming back late from lunch-hour committee meetings as being on strike)". He also shows that if the American definition of strikes was used, omitting some small strikes, even the White Paper's assertion that there are 16.8 stoppages per 100,000 employees, compared to 13.2 in the United States would have been reduced to 11 for Britain. Thus, despite the punitive legislation in America, there is a greater frequency of strikes than here with a greater number involved. Moreover, the time lost in Britain through strikes "averages something like one hour per head of the working population". Compared to the enormous wastage arising from the bloody carnage in factory accidents, the illness and disease, not to mention the unemployment, arising from the chaos of capitalism, this is a drop in the ocean. Overall, according to the figures of the old Ministry of Labour, there are 100 times more days lost through illness compared to strikes. In one instance, sickness through rheumatism, an estimated £150 million in wages to the worker is lost per year. And according to a recent report, in the "Financial Times", "industry (i.e. the capitalists) is blamed for accentuating the effects of rheumatism in workers. Absence caused by rheumatic disease was highest where men had to work in awkward positions, had to lift heavy weights or had to make some effort with their backs." Many of the so-called "unconstitutional" strikes are to prevent the ruining of the workers' health, lack of safety equipment and general bad and unsafe conditions which exist in industry at the present time. With increased unemployment over the 1964 figure alone, there has been 12 times the days lost through strikes last year.

But notwithstanding these damning indictments of the system, until balked by the opposition of the Labour Movement, the Labour Leaders and their supporters in the Parliamentary Labour Party paraded the usual "lawyers school" arguments..." If the employers can be legislated against why not the working class also...bringing the law into industrial relations" etc. Thus did Will Howie vice-chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party argue in a debate with a MILITANT speaker at a recent YS London day school. He no doubt reflected a widespread sentiment amongst Labour MPs. No wonder then that Harold Macmillan in his recent memoirs summing up his attitude towards some of the Labour representatives approvingly quoted Canning "I do not fear firebrands in this House. As soon as they touch its floor they hiss and are extinguished". A big section of the Labour MPs with little experience of the daily problems facing the workers in the workshops have drawn away from the people they are supposed to be representing. They have forgotten even the elementary history of the struggle to build the Labour Movement. The law was ruthlessly applied by the ruling class against the pioneers of the Labour Movement. The most refined legal jargon out of the mouths of bewigged lawyers and judges were used to justify open class oppression; the whip, transportation etc. to stamp out the first beginnings of Trade Unionism. The Labour Party was itself formed out of the struggle against the reactionary Taff Vale judgement, a measure applied for class reasons. The judges, lawyers, etc. are drawn from the ranks of the ruling class and their outlook is determined by the dominant capitalist ideas of the time. A graphic illustration of the role of so called "neutral" arbitrators is the work of "Sir" Jack Scamp. Appointed as an arbitrator in the car industry, he is now the personell officer of GEEC. In this latter capacity he has attempted to put over the recently announced massive redundancies to the GEEC workers. By buffeting his car on a recent protest demonstration ten thousand Liverpool workers indicated that they knew which side of the fence he was on.

Where a judgement has been given against the employers it has been again because of naked cash calculation by them and their legal hangers on. The Fords case was one example which resulted in a victory for the Unions because it would have produced a greater determination by the workers to stick it out if the decision would have gone the other way. The DIRECTOR, no friend of the Labour Movement, in commenting on the case said "legal action probably made the dispute more, rather than less difficult to resolve in the end", APRIL ISSUE.

AUSTRALIA & N. ZEALAND

An example of how the law has been used in an attempt to hold back wage claims is Australia. For 12 years a complicated system of legal sanctions, arbitration awards and a system of trying to split workers on craft lines has been applied in Australia. It has only been effective because of a big new influx of immigrants, sections of whom have taken time to organise themselves to fight the Government measures. Through a

system of arbitration there is a periodic review of wage rates, with an intangible "work value" element determining how wages will rise. In this way the skilled workers at least up to the recent period have been given favoured treatment. In addition, legal sanctions, including fines, are deployed by the capitalists in an attempt to prevent any kind of industrial action. Between 1956 and 1968, thirty unions were fined on 799 occasions a total of A 282,410 dollars. Against this, just to show the "impartiality" of the law, the employers were fined a mere total of A 2,514 dollars. Over a period, the opposition to these measures has been seething in the ranks of the unions and the Labour Movement. Before the recent trial of strength between the organised workers and the capitalist state, an indication of this opposition was shown by the open defiance of the anti-strike laws by eight boilermakers, immigrants from England. With the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Boilermakers' Union has spearheaded the opposition to the legal powers of the central Government, which the "Financial Times" (9/7/69) stated "make striking illegal in all cases"! Several years ago, Ted Hill, former General Secretary of the Boilermakers here, advised his members not to emigrate to Australia, and called on the Australian boilermakers to "rally their forces and get rid of the vicious penal clauses of the Arbitration Act". The message seems to have been acted on after a delay. Recently, these eight boilermakers from England, were fined A30 dollars for walking off their job. They refused to pay the fines, and were threatened with jail, but on the eve of their being imprisoned the fine was anonymously paid! The capitalists could foresee an enormous sympathetic strike wave which would result from any imprisonment. And this is precisely what happened when the threat was put into effect by the imprisonment of Clarence O'Shea of the Tramways Union for refusing to pay a fine imposed by the industrial courts. The response from the organised Labour Movement was electric. A mass strike followed. Over one million workers, out of a total trade union membership of 2 1/4 million, came out in the biggest movement since the immediate period following the Russian revolution. The numbers involved, out of a total population of 12 million, is indicative of the pent-up feeling against the Government's penal powers, which has been gathering in the ranks of the workers' movement. The panicky response of the capitalists was testimony to the power of the strike wave. Fearful of the consequences to their economy and the possibilities which was opened up for the workers' movement by mass action, they intrigued to have the fine of O'Shea paid by a journalist. A lone blindhearted citizen always, it seems, waits on the sidelines of the industrial stage ready to pay the fines of recalcitrant unions' leaders! But this time the working class, once moved into action, demanded more than a face-saving gesture by the Government. Gorton, the Australian Prime Minister and his ministers, were forced to give an undertaking to introduce legislation to cancel the punitive powers. This they will have to do if the capitalists are not to face another revolt from the factories and workplaces.

TORIES WILL FAIL

The Australian events are a graphic illustration of the enormous power accumulated by the Labour Movement in the postwar period, which has affected all the advanced capitalist countries to a greater or lesser degree. It is one thing for the capitalist to put laws on the statute-book; it is another thing to apply them on a drastic scale. Where they have succeeded in nibbling

away at the rights of the unions, as in Australia, for the special reasons described above, once the workers have become conscious of the repressive role of legislation and have organised themselves, at the first serious test the capitalists are forced to retreat. To take on the Labour Movement would be to risk a mass social explosion threatening the very existence of capitalism itself, something which, at this stage, they are not prepared to risk.

Similar legislation in other countries is an illustration of this point. In neighbouring New Zealand, for instance, the powers of the state for use against the unions have had no substantial effect on the movement of the workers. Thus, "The Times" (24/7/69) remarked: "On paper, registered unions subject to an agreement ... have to all intents lost their 'right to strike'." Yet even these powers cannot prevent the workers moving into action when they feel their conditions undermined. Thus in the period 1964-66 New Zealand had more strikes per 100,000 workers than Britain. Moreover, the powers already possessed by the New Zealand capitalists for fining workers on strike were only used with caution. In a recent meat-freezing workers' strike, for instance, when the Minister of Labour was challenged to take legal action, he refused to do so, because this would have been "obviously impracticable". In fact, the last time the New Zealand Department of Labour actually took action in court against a union was in 1955! After this experience, "The Times" pointedly warned Heath and the Tories, "New Zealand is moving away from a system which has all the restrictions on the right to strike that any Conservative could wish for". And yet a Labour Movement significantly weaker than in Britain effectively evaded the legal obstacles placed in its path. How much more so would a Labour Movement, conscious of its defeat of the Labour Government's plans to put a harness on the unions, quash the attempt of the Tories.

A further illustration of the impotence of legislation against the Labour Movement is given by the example of West Germany, held up for years as the model of "industrial relations". Thus in Germany, it is now revealed, that the 36 million Deutschmarks imposed in fines on strikers under the anti-strike laws had never in actual fact been collected! In the United States, with a praised "cooling-off" system, out of 26 disputes cooled off, 24 actually ended in strikes.

BRITISH WORKERS ALSO

But the most striking refutation of the "legislative school" in the ranks of capitalist spokesmen is the example of Southern Ireland. The Irish capitalists have already introduced many of the measures which have been canvassed here for use against the British workers. Yet Ireland now has the highest "strike incidence" of all. And only two years ago, when the electricians went on strike, the leaders were imprisoned. But the strike could only be called off and negotiations begun when the capitalists released them.

The British workers, no less than their brothers in these countries, have shown in the past that legal sanctions can have no permanent delaying effect on their demands. Even the Donovan Commission was constrained to remark that the Kent Betteshanger coalfield strike during the war could only be called off when the imprisoned miners were released and negotiations could begin on the miners' wage claims. The dockers' strike of 1948 similarly revealed that the

legal sanctions of the then Labour Government served only to inflame the workers even more. The Government were consequently forced to release the strike leaders or face a mass sympathy strike.

These facts have now penetrated the heads of even the most obtuse capitalist commentators, if not yet the rather thicker material composing the heads of the leaders of the Confederation of British Industry. Realising that they would reap a whirlwind from legislation at this stage, the capitalists have opted for the next best thing. They have cajoled the union leaders into attempting to police the workers. Out of the series of meetings between the T.U.C. and Wilson, the "Programme for Action" was born and eventually accepted by the June recall Congress. This in turn has been greeted by the capitalist press and even sections of the left, such as "Tribune", as a big step forward. "Tribune" went so far as to say: "The idea of the General Council...acting as a 'general staff for labour'...echoes a demand put forward by the Left for many years." (6/6/69.) But the miners, on the other hand, with the harsh experience of industrial battles behind them, more pertinently warned that they had not defeated the penal laws only to find a more refined means of holding back the workers being attempted by the T.U.C. For this, in the final analysis, is what the T.U.C. is attempting. "Programme for Action", despite proposals for amalgamations, etc., accepts the same standpoint of the Government, i.e. that "unconstitutional stoppages" are a threat to the "national interest". They have sought powers to intervene directly in disputes and are pressurising the individual unions to apply sanctions against the leaders of so-called unofficial strikes, including the use of expulsion as an ultimate weapon. They have particularly marked out those strikes, such as occur in the motor industry, which throw other workers out of work. The inter-dependence of the motor industry is one instance where a strike involving one small section can reverberate throughout the industry and result in thousands being laid off. But it is the motor manufacturers themselves who are responsible for this state of affairs. Their "scientific management" techniques have produced a situation whereby stockpiling against interruptions in production is cut down to a minimum in order to reduce "overheads" and so boost profit margins.

TUC ACCEPTS STANDPOINT OF GOVT

Moreover, as Turner once again shows, capitalists actually provoke strikes when the order books are thin. He says: "occasionally management have ~~retaliated~~ against a small stoppage in one section by laying off workers not involved in the initial dispute, in order to bring pressure to bear on the original strikers to return to work or as a general deterrent to future stoppages. In such circumstances, what appears as a big strike may virtually be a partial - though not explicit - lock-out." (Page 37). (Our emphasis). He also demonstrates that the very same "scandalous industrial anarchy" which the motor manufacturers ceaselessly complain about is very often consciously brought on by them: "A great part of the apparent 'loss' of working days from strikes in the motor industry has occurred at times when it was not inconvenient to the industry that production in fact be reduced..." (Page 39). Expressed very simply, this means that the motor capitalists provoked strikes in order to lay off workers in times of limited orders. They then used these same incidents to attempt to bring about restricting laws against

the workers in times of boom.

Of course, when thousands of workers are thrown out of work through a strike in another part of industry, it is an issue on which the unions should take action. But instead of seeking to act against workers on strike, the T.U.C. would be more suitably employed in examining their causes. They would find that it is almost totally the employers who are responsible for large shut-downs. This has clearly been revealed in the car accessory plants of Girlington in 1968. In one strike, the total weekly claim of £100 for a small group of security men was rebuffed by the management after months of patient negotiation. The resulting strike threw thousands out of work and cost one company, Ford, £¼ million in lost production. Instead of regurgitating the propaganda of the employers about "wildcat" strikes, the General Council should take the demands of the Ford workers as a starting point to ensure that the employers pay for the chaos of their system by guaranteeing a full week's wage when workers are thrown out of work as a result of an industrial dispute elsewhere in industry. They should be conducting a mass campaign to explain to every worker the elementary facts which reveal the chaos, mismanagement and waste of the productive potential which is a result of the obsolete rule of the bourgeoisie. Some of this material we have mentioned above, and these are daily occurrences in the factories. But even the Labour Party publications have recently revealed the extent to which the state bolsters up the capitalists. Stung by the constant harping of the Confederation of British Industry on the issue of "excessive" Government expenditure, Transport House, in its economic bulletin, pointedly revealed that the Labour Government is providing subsidies, i.e. state bribes, to the capitalists to the tune of £2 million a day. Similarly, in the "Mid-Term Manifesto" presented to last year's Labour Party Conference, it was admitted that "more and more it is Governments which finance risk projects, while all too often private corporations tend to avoid the very risk which in classical theory is the justification of their existence". This is an indictment of the capitalist system. The implication is clear: the capitalists have lost their "justification" for continuing to control and own the productive forces. And this has been revealed in a thousand and one other ways. In research, for instance, the State accounts for two-thirds of all that which is carried on in Britain. And yet the Government still bends the knee to capital. But now the N.E.C. of the Labour Party is considering more radical measures for the next election manifesto: a wealth tax and the "extension of public shares" in industries such as aircraft and drugs. But why wait until the next election to put the measures into effect? Why do not the Labour leaders commence to introduce them immediately as a means of mobilising mass support? These minimal measures would in fact bring them right up against the capitalists. Of course, every section of the Labour Movement would welcome a wealth tax as a step forward. But the experience of this Labour Government has demonstrated what results from even limited attempts to clip the fingernails of the capitalists, as with the Corporation Tax bill. As a result of the pressure of the capitalists, 130 amendments were accepted, which effectively emasculated the main purpose of this Bill. So too would it be with this measure.

Sections of the capitalist press are even now suggesting that this proposal could be turned into an advantage for the dominant sections of the bourgeoisie, the monopolies. Thus, the "Observer" remarked: "The strongest

arguments in favour of such taxes rest on the belief that they would make capitalism work better". They see it as a whip for the laggard sections of the capitalist class, to drive the inefficient to the wall, particularly the smaller firms "it would compel the sleepers among these firms to wake up". At the same time they demand that surtax should be cut in order that the total levy on capital is not cut. And as if to emphasise the point they point out that "In fact, few of the countries which operate a wealth tax do so. In Sweden for example, wealth taxes are offset against income taxes, so that no one pays more than 80% of his income in taxation." If this proposal were to seriously mean inroads being made into the resources of the capitalists it would have only one result.

The capitalists would immediately retaliate. If they would go on an investment strike. The surplus which they extract from the labour of the working class is used for re-investing back into industry and piling up greater profits. Profits are the lifeblood of the bourgeoisie. Touch the capitalists profits and he will refuse to invest which in turn would result in a seizing up of production and a consequent rise in unemployment.

If this measure is to be seriously put into effect it would inevitably bring the Labour Government into head on collision with the bourgeoisie and either bring on the collapse of the Government or further measures to prevent the sabotage which would inevitably be forthcoming. This would in turn mean that the question of taking over the commanding heights of the economy would be posed.

RECENT STRIKES

This is the conclusion which the trade union movement should be drawing from the experience of the past period. The growing together of the State with monopoly capital forces every serious struggle to take on a political character. When Leslie Cannon attacked the one day strikes as "political" and opposed to the "traditions" of the British unions he was deliberately ignoring the fact that it is the very actions of the capitalists, turning to the State for succour, which gave the Seamen's strike, the Ford's strike and the struggle against anti-trade union legislation a political character.

In each instance the workers in these industries were forced to see the struggle for amelioration of their conditions in terms of "who holds state power"? A dynamic and politically armed trade union and labour movement would provide the answer with the demand for the reorganisation of society along socialist lines. But this conclusion the present General Council is stubbornly resisting. In fact at a time when a more openly political approach is needed they are suggesting abolishing the yearly ECONOMIC REVIEW because it is ostensibly outside their province! This after the experience of the last few months and with

the unfolding battle taking place in industry at the present time!

But the proposals of the TUC will cut as little ice with the industrial workers as have the Government's. Their main danger is that they provide a propaganda field day for the capitalists to reinforce the latent anti-unionism in the politically backward sections of the population. This will in turn be used in the future against the organised workers by the bourgeoisie. And there is no doubt at all that the "democratic" face of capitalism will be replaced by more openly repressive methods when the bourgeoisie can no longer afford to give concessions to the working class. Thus a serious representative of the capitalism, Lord Gladwyn remarked in 1965, at a time of increasing gloom for the ruling class "Everything seemed to point to the continuance of some kind of democracy in western Europe - even in the near Bonapartist regimes, such as that of France. If there was mass unemployment, and a general fall in the standard of living, however, democratic regimes would probably give place to something which might call itself democratic, but would be the reverse of democracy."

TIMES 2/8/65. Although there is no immediate danger of fascism being resorted to by the bourgeoisie, because of present social conditions, the Unions have been given a clear warning of what lies in store in the event of a crisis. But at the present time the General Council will be baulked by the same forces as the Government, a powerfully organised working class which is in no mood to tolerate the dragooning attempts of the State or the trade union leaders. The temper of the industrial workers has been graphically revealed in the series of major strikes which have rocked the employers. Moving into action, a movement has been unleashed which has forced the capitalists to retreat.

Thus the recent Leyland workers' strike, the first for 40 years, resulted in a victory for them. Similarly the first national strike of the Post Office Engineering workers forced the Government to concede all their demands. So too the Merseyside dockers' strike brought victory with the employers granting the dockers the right to man the Container terminals. This strike, incidentally, clearly revealed that the dock workers are not at all opposed to Containerisation so long as it does not result in the dirty stick for the workers. Their spokesman during the strike revealed what the employers conception of modernisation is : "putting half the men on the dole. What we mean by it is that dockers should have a reduction in their working hours".

But the issue which has clearly brought to the surface the mood of the workers at the moment is the blastfurnacemen's dispute at Port Talbot. Although only 140 of the lower paid workers were actually involved in the £1 a week claim, 1300 came out with the obvious support of the rest of the workers at the plant and the housewives in the town. Despite the combined pressure of the capitalists through the press, radio and television and the pressure of the TUC leaders, the workers remained solid. Sixteen times they took a ballot and every time they voted stubbornly to continue the strike, when behind the scenes the employers were privately assuring the trade union leaders that their claim would be granted if they returned to work.

Only the public admission by the strike inquiry of the validity of the men's claims was sufficient for them to call off the strike.

But the refusal of the blastfurnacemen to accept the original formulas revealed underlying unease apart from the immediate pay claim. In fact a total lack of confidence in their own Union leaders, combined with the fact that productivity agreements which would result in the sacking of at least 3000 at the Port Talbot plant alone, had been signed over their heads by the Union leaders. The role of the TUC was designed to bring about a return to work in such a way as not to undermine the position of the top leadership of the Blastfurnacemen's Union. This same leadership, despite the unanimity of the workers, accepted the standpoint of the TUC on "unconstitutional" stoppages and refused to sanction the actions of the men. The TUC's role in both this strike and the Leyland strike indicated that the General Council set its face against an important workers' movement instead of giving it a lead, spreading its case to other sections of the workers and mobilizing the maximum support to ensure victory for those who are out on strike. For the General Council to become a real General Staff of Labour it would have to organise to make the unions better fighting instruments of the masses and not to urge that the top leadership be policing the ranks on behalf of the bosses.

FOR A REAL GENERAL STAFF

The original conception of the Minority Movement during the 1920s for a real General Staff of Labour, was based on the conception of mobilising the workers to change society. It also meant that the trade unions committed to this programme should organise to get this strategy accepted also by the Labour Party. But even this slogan under the influence of the Communist Party was transformed into a trap for the workers during the 1926 General Strike. In their hands it helped to perpetuate the legend that the trade union leaders Purcell, Hicks and Swales were "left wingers" because they sat on the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee and declared verbal support for the Soviet Union. In practice they acted as strike breakers in derailing the 1926 General Strike and so effectively prevented the successful development of the social revolution in Britain at that time. The Communist Party even after this defeat refused to unmask these "lefts" for almost a year after the strike.

To answer the attacks of the employers, the misrepresentation as to the effects of strikes and any legal enactments against the Unions, including the proposal of the Government to maintain the legal sanctions of the Incomes Policy, it is necessary not just to accept the status quo or the present make-up of the Unions. It is necessary to make changes, but changes which will make them more fitting to the workers' needs. It is claimed that 90% of the strikes which take place are "unofficial". But this is an indication of the remoteness of the union organisation, as also are the actions of the leadership of those like the blast furnacemen's Union. In order to bring them under the control of the workers, it is necessary that they be organised, the unit to the job, with an extension of the power of the shop stewards and combine committees. The Transport and General Workers' Union at its last Conference was forced to give a greater power to shop stewards and shop floor representatives because of

the lack of contact and understanding of the workers' real feelings which developed in certain sections of the union officialdom. The T.U.C. revealed in 1959/1960 that only 25% of all strikes were even known to the headquarters of the Unions! At the same time, the process whereby positions in the unions become a stepping stone for place and career at the expense of the workers' interests should end. Only recently certain officials in the Transport and General Workers' Union/the General and Municipal Workers' Union have put in for sizeable increases which put them well above the average wage of the workers they represent. The "lead" has been given by Sidney Greene of the N.U.R., who has just been given a £25 a week rise, while pouring scorn on the demands of the signalmen for a 7d-an-hour increase! As an elementary step, the demand should go through the union branches, and be echoed at every union conference, that every official should get on average no more than the skilled worker, excepting travelling and other expenses (rigorously audited by rank-and-file members), including the General Secretaries of the Unions. Combined with the demand that all officials should be elected and subject to recall, this would be the first step to seeing that the unions really represent the feelings and demands of the rank and file. This would in turn mark the beginning of a campaign to win the whole of the Labour Movement for the socialist transformation of society.

BOLD SOCIALIST LEAD REQUIRED

Not only have the latest movements in industry indicated the need for generalising the workers' struggles on a national plane, but some of the elementary lessons of the workers' struggle on an international plane have been absorbed by the advanced workers. Thus the reaction of the Liverpool G.E.C. workers to the planned redundancies in Liverpool was one of intense anger and a determination to prevent this happening at any cost. When a T.V. announcer questioned the validity of the decision to stage a sit-down strike, a shop steward retorted that "only action gets results - look what happened in France in May last year, and in Derry now". The London tenants, threatened with eviction by the London Tories, made the same point. Similarly, as a result of the Ford strike early this year and the unsuccessful attempt of the employers to play off the Continental and American workers against the British workers, the A.E.F. and T.G.W.U. have taken steps to 'organise with the American Automobile Workers' Union and the continental Unions for international-wide action in the Ford Company in the future. The movement of the workers is crying out for a lead and a direction.

Neither "Programme for Action" nor the document of the N.E.C. of the Labour Party provides this. Instead of tinkering with the system, a bold socialist lead is now required. The bourgeoisie can see, historically, the ground disappearing from under them. Thus the Institute of Directors, fearful at the pace of monopolisation, has remarked: "One cynical view is that Socialists encourage the formation of large units in industry as a prelude to easier nationalisation". The "cynics" are wrong; the amalgamations into bigger and bigger monopolies are an inevitable process under capitalism. But the capitalists, while being forced to carry it through, can also see that it can only serve to increase the pressure for State control in the long run. They can foresee the pressures which have begun to take shape in the Labour Movement, involving a shift to the left of the active workers.

This is expressed in the turn to the left inside the Unions, particularly marked in the case of the A.E.F., the T.&G.W.U. and the N.U.M. The scheme of Cannon to bring about an amalgamation between the E.P.T.U. and the M.&G.W.U. is designed to bring about a right-wing counterweight to these unions. But even this step will recoil on Cannon and Cooper. The shift to the left will also affect these unions also at a later stage.

USE POWER OF UNIONS

In the short run, the concession of Wilson in backing away from a head-on collision with the unions may bring about a temporary "peace" between the Government and the industrial wing of the Labour Movement. But even now the dissatisfaction in the ranks is apparent by the demand of the A.E.F. for the complete abandonment of the Incomes Policy penal clauses by the Government, and the D.T.U. for a day strike, organised by the T.U.C., if this is not complied with. Probably after a General Election there will develop an even greater determination by the ranks in the Labour Parties and Union branches to see a change in policy by the Labour leaders. If defeat ensues, there will be a demand for an explanation for the setback and the whole disastrous course of the Government over this period. If victory, then, as Frank Cousins implied at the T.&G.W.U. Conference, the unions will present their bill of goods: "It (the Government) must give up trying to placate the unions' enemies and try to placate its friends".

A process of transformation will follow. Frank Cousins, by way of answering the demands for a break from the Labour Party, pointedly stated: "It is not the Labour Party of Mr Wilson. It is the Labour Party of the members - our Labour Party." In that statement is foreshadowed an inevitable clash between the Labour leadership and the Trade Unions and local Parties, if Wilson and the Government cling to their present ruinous policies. The Labour Party rank and file will cast out from the Party those sections of the Government and the Parliamentary Labour Party who fail to reflect this new mood which is developing. It will in turn mean a swing towards a mass left wing inside the Labour Party at a certain stage.

But it is not sufficient just to express opposition to the Government's measures. Nor to replace the present policies of the Labour Government with the same limited reform programme adopted prior to the 1964 and 1966 elections. It is as impractical and inadequate in the hands of the Left M.P.s and the General Council as it was in Wilson's. It is necessary to learn the lessons of the struggle to defeat the anti-trade union legislation, brought about primarily by the action of thousands of workers. It is necessary to go further. Instead of a policy of half-way reforms, it is imperative that the Unions be armed with a socialist programme for the taking over of the 250 major monopolies, banks and insurance companies. If the campaign against the anti-union laws could move hundreds of thousands of workers into action, linked to the demand for equal pay, a minimum wage, a million houses a year, a massive extension of education and the social services immediately, this measure would bring millions into the struggle for a socialist society democratically controlled and managed by the workers themselves. At the special Trade Union Congress it was Richard

Briginshaw, General Secretary of SOGAT, who pointed out that the Trade Union movement in Britain had the organised power of 9 million workers, which with their families made up about 20 million, behind it. In the wake of the defeat meted out to the Government's anti-Union laws, the "Daily Mirror" lamented that there existed in Britain now "a power outside the precincts of Parliament as great as that which exists within." Imbued with a sense of their own power, these millions of workers would be able to rally behind their banner also all the downtrodden, unorganised and impoverished sections of the workers for a change in society. This is the goal which the Trade Unions must set for themselves. Their enormous power needs to be used for the struggle to win the Labour Party to the kind of socialist alternative as outlined above. Once implemented this policy would herald the beginning of a new era. It would end all attempts to curtail the power of the unions. Instead the unions would provide the main pillar for a socialist Britain. From their ranks would be drawn the technical and administrative personnel to begin the economic transformation of society. The British workers would then offer the hand of friendship to the workers throughout the world, leading to the collapse of the world bourgeoisie and the ending of poverty and all attacks on the workers' organisations once and for all.

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CLASS STRUGGLES IN ITALY

by Roger Silverman

The prolonged economic upswing in the Western countries is said to have ensured social stability. Events in the last year alone prove how precarious capitalism is even where it has achieved its most glowing successes. The strike of ten million workers and the occupation of the factories in France last year provided a brilliant indication of the workers' power to overthrow capitalism. The lessons of the French upsurge are doubly underlined by the events in Italy over the past year.

Nowhere has the postwar boom brought greater social changes than in Italy. No less than in Japan, the face of society has been utterly transformed in the last twenty-five years. Since shaking off the burden of more than twenty years of Fascist tyranny, the working class has grown immeasurably in size, cohesion and confidence. Today it is the turn of Italy's rulers to be paralysed by the strength of the workers.

Never since the birth of the Italian nation has there been a period of stable bourgeois rule. Arriving belatedly, Italian capitalism had a weak social basis. The industrial working class in the Northern cities showed as early as in the "Red Week" of June 1914 its hatred of its exploiters and in particular its opposition to the imperialist war. After Italy's entry into the war, there were mass desertions. In the wake of the Russian revolution the workers moved spontaneously to create a workers' republic and link up with their brothers in Russia and the world. From 1919 to 1921, general strike followed general strike. Soviets were formed throughout the country, and 300 factories were occupied in the huge mass movement that swept the country. The leaders of the Socialist Party and the trade unions did nothing to guide the workers towards the conquest of power. In 1921 there was a split and a Communist Party was formed, but it developed too late to be able to provide the leadership of a movement which after three years' heroic struggle was beginning to ebb. The capitalists lost no time in hiring Mussolini's Fascist gangsters - disillusioned petty-bourgeois, reactionary officers and lumpen-proletarians, armed to the teeth and protected by police and army - to mount a campaign of terror, using bullets, razors, castor-oil and rope. They lynched 3000 local workers' leaders before being handed full power. Under the Fascist heel the Labour Movement was completely smashed, and all internal underground resistance was suppressed by 1934. Meanwhile the Communist Party, first in Italy and later in exile, was turned into a tool of Stalinism. In 1936, when Stalin was trying to come to an accommodation with Mussolini, the Italian C.P. even issued a programme addressed to "all Blackshirts and heroes of the African campaign". In the resistance movement which began to revive after 1940, the influence of the C.P. grew steadily, despite its opportunism.

When the Italian capitalists, together with the top officers and the less lunatic sections of the Fascist leadership, realised that the Axis powers were bound to lose the war, the Fascist Grand Council deposed Mussolini and appointed Badoglio in his place. Immediately the floodgates burst open and a spontaneous uprising rocked the Northern half of the country. 300,000

workers came out on to the streets in Rome, Turin, Milan and Genoa. The Allies bombed the Northern cities mercilessly in order to crush this movement, and then allowed Hitler to occupy the North and re-install Mussolini. The Communist Party gained a decisive influence as a result of the wave of radicalisation. Its membership increased from 3000 in 1941, scattered throughout the world, to 400,000, and it was still growing fast. 70% of the partisans were in its ranks. It rose to the occasion by disarming the workers and entering into a coalition, accepting ministerial portfolios under the Fascists' nominee Badoglio and their long-standing protector the King. Once the opportunity for revolution had been wasted and the energies of the people deflected, in Italy as in the rest of Europe at the end of the war, the political basis was laid for the postwar capitalist lease of life.

POSTWAR GROWTH

The dizzy pace of industrialisation, in Italy as in Japan, was made possible by the huge reserves of labour power that were available in the countryside. Herein lies the key to the irreconcilable contradictions within Italian society. On the one hand, the standard of living of the urban population (which has grown from about a quarter to three-fifths since the war) is incomparably higher than ever before. To take one index, the ratio of private cars per head of population has risen from 1:120,000 to 1:6. The annual rate of industrial growth has varied between 6 and 10%. But side by side with the prosperity there remain whole belts of crippling poverty. Sicily still has the worst standard of living in Europe and is run by the notorious Mafia. The Vatican still occupies a privileged position in Italy's political, economic and social life.

The growth of the Italian economy has brought the most lavish benefits to the tiny handful of shareholders. While profits rose by 200% in the period between 1953 and 1960 alone, consumption rose by only 52%. The constant drift from the poverty-stricken South into the towns keeps unemployment high - currently at 600,000 and recently as high as 1 million - and this depresses wages. "The Times", advertising Italy to investors, wrote on 22nd April: "The Italian economy is helped by...low-cost labour....There are still large areas of poverty....Full employment is a distant goal....There can be a very real temptation to take on an underpaid job from a small employer, whatever trade union regulations may lay down....In general, employers display a paternalism and employees an interest in work which are reminiscent of an age gone by...." The average wage in Italy is 5/10d per hour, compared with 9/5d in West Germany; taking into account the much shorter average working week (34 hours in Italy to 44 in Germany - 4-5 million Italian workers are officially classified as under-employed), this means that the Italian worker receives only half as much pay per week as his German counterpart - about £10. In the South, wages are 20% lower, even where there are equivalent jobs to those in the industrial North. Although two-fifths of the population still live in the South, they consume only one-fifth of the National Income. It is not surprising that there is a swelling flood of migration to the towns. In 1968 309,000 families left the land, or 6.8% of the agricultural labour force, despite a rise of 4.5% in the farm labourers' wages. 2.3% left the land during the previous year. Four fifths of the people that leave the farms are between the ages of 20 and 40. Only 22% of the population now work on the land.

BUREAUCRATISM

Any solution to this problem, and any administration of any of the needs of the capitalists themselves, is choked by bureaucracy. "The problem of Italy's 'Mezzogiorno' would be a difficult one to tackle even in the best of circumstances," said the "Financial Times" on 15th April. "The progressive deterioration of Italian politics and the equally progressive degree of inefficiency of the country's bureaucratic machine can hardly be said to provide such circumstances." The "Sunday Times" on 20th April wrote: "In general, all Italy is suffocated by a monstrous bureaucracy....While impeding the reform of everything, including its bloated self, it interferes in every phase of the ordinary citizen's life." Before a new school can be opened, the relevant documents must pass through the hands of 3,166 functionaries. It has been estimated in an official report that, after a law has passed through Parliament, the average project takes 500 days to get over all the bureaucratic hurdles before work can begin, and that some take as long as 900 days. The "residui passivi" - or sums allocated for government expenditure but clogged up in a bureaucratic bottleneck and lying unspent, reached £3,445 million in 1967, of which £185 million was allocated as much as ten years previously. The accumulated total reached a new record of £4,095 million in 1968. Of £312 million allocated two years ago for school building, less than £1 million has been spent.

As a result, education, health and the welfare services are starved of funds. 100,000 people live in the shanty towns on the outskirts of Rome alone. Recently the major demonstrations in support of the squatters have drawn attention to this scandal. The students' demonstrations highlight the chaos and overcrowding in education, and those of the medical students have likewise shown up the appalling conditions in the hospitals. The legal system is similarly cramped. Two million cases are awaiting decision in the courts, and the average period of waiting before going to trial is two years eight months. There is even a special Ministry of Bureaucratic Reform which is as unproductive, parasitic and overstaffed as all the others.

One particularly sordid effect of government inefficiency is the condition of the thousands of families made homeless by the Sicilian earthquake. Writing on 9th February, one year after the catastrophe, "The Observer" wrote: "75,000 people...still live in cattle trucks, tents and muddy shanty villages....Millions of pounds in aid have failed to complete a single house....Hunger strikes, marches, epidemics, services of intercession, have failed to stir the innumerable authorities to effective action."

The results of the administrative chaos are equally disastrous for Big Business too. The "Financial Times" wrote on 28th January: "Economic activities are showing clear signs of a slow down in no small measure due to the paralysing inefficiency of Government machinery. The incredible growth of the 'residui passivi'...is causing a deflationary situation when the policies and actions of Parliament and of the Government should be having exactly the opposite effect. Domestic demand is sagging...."

The blind anarchic industrial boom has left much of agriculture bare and primitive. Italy is forced to depend for raw materials on foreign trade. So competitive are Italian exports, mainly owing to the fact that the

modest rise in labour costs has been far exceeded by the growth of productivity through investment in modern machinery. Export prices actually fell by 7% in the last decade. As a result there is strong pressure being brought to bear on Italy to revalue the lire. The Government hoped that a new rise in domestic demand would suck in extra imports and make this unnecessary, and this was one reason why originally it was prepared to make ~~some~~ concessions in the field of social welfare. But the "Financial Times" summed up the problem ruthlessly: "Italy's economic managers grapple with a factious parliament, politicking trade unions, and an eighteenth century bureaucracy in their attempt to carry out a reflationary policy.... A rise in pensions is dangerous because it cannot be reduced again at will if the economy gets overheated." The alternative of stepping up the public works programme is blocked by administrative sluggishness. But it is pointed out that "if all the unspent funds were to be spent without the usual delays, Italy would be in danger of massive inflation." Any significant reform would bring new dangers in its wake.

The economic indices for 1968 show that the gross national product grew by only 5.7%, which by Italian standards is a disappointing figure. To pay for the pensions increase granted in February will require an annual growth rate of 6-7%. Consumption rose by only 4.2%, and industrial investment was as low as 3.1%. This is a result of the low rate of domestic demand and, of course, the accelerating tempo of labour unrest. The big state corporation IRI lost 1½ million working hours through strikes in 1968, compared with only 72,000 in 1967. The 1968 investment figure reflects the capitalists' growing nervousness; it compares with a rise of 13.2% in 1967. Unemployment rose by 38,000 (though it has since decreased), and as a result of the depopulation of the farms and the primitive level of agriculture, there was a drop of 4.2% in agricultural output. The Minister of the Treasury called the figures "unsatisfactory", and the "Financial Times" (19th February) openly accused the Government of "window dressing". With up to a million workers unemployed and up to five million under-employed, and while industry is working at little more than half its capacity, investors are pouring their capital into gold and foreign currency. The "Financial Times" on January 28th called this "a clear sign of economic malaise". Italy now has the third highest hoard of gold in the world. During 1968 1,500 million dollars left the country. In fact, because of smuggling and widespread fiddles, the "Financial Times" (15th April) informs us that "there is no way of measuring the amount of money which has been moved out of Italy." While the State is forced to intervene in private enterprise to rationalise and stimulate investment in certain sectors, the employers' organisation Confindustria laments that "private industry is being cautious because of fears of 'creeping nationalisation'."

THE 1968 ELECTION

The upheavals in France were the climax of ten years' pent-up tensions. Amid all the administrative chaos and the warnings of economic difficulties in Italy, the example of the French workers was enough to burst the bubble of the "Italian miracle". Fed up with the poor housing, the unemployment, the low wages, the small pensions, the geographical inequalities and the miserable social services, the Italian people vented their feelings first through the ballot box. At the peak of the French general strike, the world's

capitalists received a new shock. In the Italian general election, in which 93% of the electorate voted, the Socialists had lost ground to the Communist candidates, who gained another 800,000 votes, and to the PSIUP on their left, who at their first election won 1½ million votes. One in three of the electorate voted for a decisive break with capitalism. As the politicians shuffled positions and intrigued for portfolios, patching up another short-lived Centre-Left coalition, and the established parties split wide open on the extent of reforms and the viability of any coalition, the masses took matters into their own hands. When police opened fire on a crowd of Sicilian strikers, killing two of them, 12½ million workers downed tools on 14th November in protest. The official workers' parties and trade unions, principally the C.P., learned the lessons of the French events and were doubly cautious, to the extent of repeatedly staggering what in effect were general strikes, calling out one town after another, one section after another, and limiting the strikes sometimes to a matter of hours or even minutes. Nevertheless, all sections of the population - workers, clerks, peasants, unemployed migrants, students, pupils - became involved. The strike of 1 million state employees on November 19th involved teachers alongside railway workers, and the judges staged a work-to-rule. The 5-minute general strike in defence of the Greek political prisoner Panaghoulis was a tribute to the internationalist consciousness of the workers, and was intended as a warning to "all dictatorial regimes" and to the would-be adventurers in the Italian armed forces.

The students' demonstrations for educational reforms affected nearly all the colleges and universities in the country. Most were already partially or completely occupied. In February the medical students occupied mental hospitals and campaigned together with the patients against their shocking overcrowding and maltreatment. On February 5th the long-drawn-out negotiations for pension reforms were brought out on to the streets. Twenty million workers - more than have ever participated in any general strike in history - struck. Huge demonstrations were held in every town, and there was street-fighting in Florence, Turin, Bologna and in Genoa, where 5000 industrial workers occupied the railway track. At the same time students, motorway attendants, petrol-pump concessionaires and orange-growers were all on strike. A week later, on February 12th, a new general strike was called, in protest against geographical discrimination in wages. This time the leaders cautiously confined the strike in the industrial strongholds to 3 hours in Milan and Genoa, 2 hours in Turin, and only one hour at Turin's militant Fiat plant. Immediate concessions were made on both issues. Pensions are to be raised from 50 to 80% of pay on retirement, linked by a sliding scale to the cost of living. This will cost £5,400 million over the next ten years. The wage "zoning" system has been abolished, and a minimum wage has been granted. A dock strike paralysed the country on February 26th. On the 27th, big protest demonstrations greeted the arrival of President Nixon on his "goodwill" tour, and there was more street-fighting in Rome. On March 6th, a vote by the staff at Euratom's main common research centre at Ispra to barricade itself in, as a protest against mass redundancies, was only very narrowly defeated.

MASS STRUGGLES

It was against this turbulent setting that the country was rocked by a new police outrage. In Battipaglia, a small town near Naples where only 3000

people were employed out of a population of 25,000, a peaceful demonstration against the threatened closure of a tobacco factory and a sugar factory was fired on. A 19-year old youth and a young schoolmistress were killed, and another 200 were injured. This provoked an immediate local insurrection and a general strike. The town hall was set on fire. As the police beat a hasty retreat, the workers blocked the roads and railways, stoned cars, set up barricades of burning vehicles and besieged the police barracks. A nationwide general strike lasting three hours was called by all three trade union federations, and the Government was forced to concede the hollow promise that the closures "would not take place at least in the coming year". The new upheavals electrified the country. Not only were workers and students affected. The mood of defiance penetrated even prison walls. A large proportion of Italy's 100,000 prisoners are awaiting trial on remand. There is no bail system, and many have been waiting for two years. The 1300 prisoners in Milan's San Vittore jail wrecked 80% of the building, causing £330,000 worth of damage. The 1070 incarcerated in Turin's 115-year-old jail, which was built to hold 600, and the 200 who are crowded up to five in a cell measuring six feet by nine in Genoa's jail, all joined the mutiny. They were protesting not only at the inhuman living conditions, but at what even the "Daily Express" (16th April) called the "archaic and savage prison discipline laws". Even prison governors have occupied the Ministry in a protest demonstration. In Palermo, Sicily's capital, explosions plunged half the city in darkness. On May 8th, public transport in Rome was brought to a standstill by an unofficial strike - a rare phenomenon in Italy and a sign of the workers' growing impatience at the timidity of their leaders. Meanwhile, a nationwide work-to-rule by the postmen caused a build-up of 800 tons of mail and 200,000 undelivered telegrams. The post offices and warehouses filled up to overflowing, and letters and parcels had to travel the length and breadth of Italy in 300 railway wagons, with nowhere to store them.

In the South, a mass movement was unleashed of revolutionary dimensions. At Castel Volturno an uprising forced the Christian Democratic municipality to resign. The inhabitants of several towns in the province of Foggia, where methane has been discovered, occupied the wells under the direction of a popular committee, which declared that "poverty is not a punishment from God but the result of a shameful plundering and wasting of resources". Demonstrations under similar slogans were held in the Tavoliere area, and at Cerignola and other towns the labour exchanges were occupied.

In Rome on 20th May 100 senior civil servants occupied part of the Treasury building, as 9000 civil service executives struck, and 30,000 others were either on strike or working to rule. By this time 100 million letters had piled up as a result of the postmen's dispute, and workers on strike included shipyard workers, stationmasters, taxi-drivers and insurance and social service workers. In June Sicily saw further outbreaks. Bus drivers and other city employees who had not been paid their wages for May occupied Palermo Town Hall for a whole week. 200 farmers tried to take over the regional assembly. Two hospitals were taken over by striking staff. The dustmen struck. Workers blocked the railway lines. 100 shipyard workers on June 19th besieged the palace where the "carabinieri" (army police corps) had their headquarters, and prevented General Giglio, military commander of Sicily, from entering his office.

Even in primitive Sardinia, 7000 troops massed for manouvres were prevented from exercising by 500 shepherds and their wives who occupied the site.

Beset by titanic mass struggles, the ruling Socialist and Christian Democratic Parties both shattered into splinters, and the coalition government fell to pieces. Again the spontaneous upsurge of the people left the ruling class demoralised and impotent. But the movement unrelentingly pressed ahead. On July 3rd half a million workers struck in Turin for 24 hours against rising rents. A crowd of several thousand, including most of the workers at the Fiat plant, marched through the streets. Barricades were set up, and demonstrators fought 200 riot police and carabinieri. "The Economist" (12th July) reported that "the hard core of student revolutionaries was joined on the barricades by large groups of young workers". On July 4th, there was a national broadcasting strike, and underground workers in Milan struck against bad ventilation. On 10th July, another 24-hour general strike hit Sicily, and the "Sunday Times" (13th July) wrote in alarm that "workers have been out in the streets carrying Maoist banners". 2500 peasants marched in Rome, shouting among other things: "The land to those who work it!" On the same day, there was even a demonstration outside the Ministry of Labour by 500 invalids, many of them without an arm or a leg. The priests have also been swept along by the people's movement. One Florentine priest who sanctioned a sit-in in his cathedral was supported by a march of 1000 parishioners against his suspension. The strikes became so widespread that a special telephone service was installed to give callers the latest information as to which workers were on strike at any given moment.

POLITICAL CRISIS

As the class battles gathered momentum, the political authority of the state - precariously balanced and bureaucratically hidebound even at the best of times - became utterly discredited. In July Italy's 29th postwar government disintegrated, bickering and panic-stricken. The Christian Democrats, traditionally the dominant force in every government, split into eight distinct factions; the Socialist Party, which had eventually healed its long split and united two years ago, losing only a small minority to the new PSIUP, broke into five factions at its Congress in November, which came to blows and broke up in disorder. In July the right wing split away, smashing the coalition. The world's capitalists were terrified of the consequences. Not only did the crisis wreak havoc in the economy - ruining the tourist trade, almost halting private investment and driving huge sums of capital abroad, thus putting the balance of payments in deficit by £232.6 million in the first four months of the year - but the whole political system was in mortal danger. "The Times" (22nd April) lamented that "the promised social reforms....have been overlooked in the more pressing business of political manouvring and the absorbing game of preserving the immediate bases of power". The "Financial Times" (15th April) drew the conclusions: "The sad truth is that Italian public opinion is becoming increasingly disenchanted with Italy's parliament and with its brand of democracy....Politics are becoming increasingly divorced from the interests, problems and needs of the man in the street. Strikes, agitation and violence are becoming a permanent feature of Italian life." In an editorial on 7th July headed "Italian Gloom", "The Times" surveyed the wreckage of the principles on which politics has been founded since the war. "That the Christian Democrats were the dominating party in the country and in all

coalitions; that they could rely on the active support of the Church; that the Communists were not acceptable partners in a coalition; that the neo-Fascists would not be acceptable either; that the armed forces would be kept out of politics. Nobody now can be sure how long all or any of these assumptions can continue valid...."

WILL THERE BE A COUP?

There have been rumours of an impending coup d'état. In a recent scandal it was revealed that in 1964, during a similar though less serious Government crisis, General de Lorenzo, who was head of the Carabinieri and of counter-intelligence, was actively plotting to lead an Army putsch and to arrest tens of thousands of militants. The scheme was part of the NATO contingency plan that the military command unrealistically imagine could be operated in any Western country. Even in Greece, the more farsighted capitalist politicians were dismayed at the inevitable repercussions provoked by the colonels' precipitate adventure, and would have preferred to compromise the left parties in a coalition first, so that the masses would be demoralised instead of being on the attack. In Italy, against a seething population, the military blimps would be quite powerless. When the capitalists tried to use fascists against the Labour Movement in 1958, they were met with mass strikes and were forced to abandon the idea. It is not surprising that now de Lorenzo was compulsorily retired, and General Giglio was summoned to Rome after threatening to use troops to break up strikes and road blocks in Sicily. "The Times" summed up the capitalists' impotent despair. "Although rumours of a Greek-style putsch can probably be discounted - nobody wants that - they do reflect widespread despair at the muddle the politicians seem to have made of things....Something will have to be done before the autumn brings industrial contracts up for renewal and the students back to their schools and universities." But what? The same paper repeated on 15th July that "legal or illegal, an authoritarian right wing government would be no more capable of resolving the country's problems than is the present parliamentary regime." What a gloomy prospect for capitalism, and what an exposure of its weakness!

After weeks of sterile haggling, the Christian Democrats stepped into the vacuum to form a one-party minority government. This cannot last. Only two parliamentary courses remain open to the capitalists: new elections or a new coalition formula.

Advocates of the first course hope that the intensity of the strikes and demonstrations might frighten the middle class and give the Christian Democrats a landslide victory similar to the Gaullists' vote in France last June. But already the 1968 elections brought the CDs an increased vote on the right at the same time as the CP and the PSIUP gained on the left. The same would happen again. All observers agree with the "Financial Times" (7th July) on the probability that "the Communists would gain most from an early election".

THE 'POPULAR FRONT'

The other possibility is a government involving the Communist Party. "The Times" (7th August) spelt this out clearly on behalf of world capitalism. "Coalitions...are often a source of strength....Italy's political salvation lies...in the longer term...on the reintegration of the Italian Communist Party...into the national political process. This, of course, means a coalition....The

fact that there are apparently no political leaders there capable of uniting the non-Communist parties into a governing coalition, let alone bringing the Communists safely into a democratic government, is a tragedy from which all Europe will suffer." This dramatic change of heart reflects the recognition by capitalism's best representatives that the Italian Communist Party is at least as reliable as the French, that the last thing that the Stalinist leaders want is revolution, and that a coalition in which the workers' own party was involved in damping down the struggles, in exchange for promises of paltry temporary reforms, would for a time disorient the masses and give the ruling class a breathing-space. The "Financial Times" reported as early as April 15th that "many Italians are becoming resigned to the idea that sooner or later the Communists will be brought into the coalition....Just as in the late '50s it was hoped that bringing the Socialists into office would revitalize the Government,...the same hope is now being pinned on the Communists." On 22nd August the same paper pointed out that "in point of fact they (the C.P.) have been and are thoroughly integrated in the behind-the-scenes give-and-take of Italian national politics".

Can the C.P. leaders trick the ruling class into signing its own death warrant, by exploiting its parliamentary difficulties? In giving their rank-and-file this hope, they are refusing to learn from the bitter experience of the past. In Spain, the entry of the C.P. into the Government, while tying the hands of the working class, frightened the capitalists into the arms of General Franco. The Fascists were backed to the hilt by the same capitalists whose traditional political mouthpieces were compromising the workers' parties in the Republican coalition government. The workers were left politically disarmed and defenceless. The officer caste in France today, on the eve of a new "Popular Front", are already arming in preparation for their role as a reserve rescue brigade for capitalism once the workers' movement has been derailed. "It is assumed by many senior army officers that the arrival of even only a few communist ministers in a government of the left....would cause them to start clandestine planning for a more active role, if not for a coup." (Charles Douglas-Home writing in "The Times" on May 23rd.)

The same is true in Italy and every capitalist state. The conclusion to be drawn is, not to be petrified at the possibility of a coup, not to act as a fire-hose on the workers for fear of "provoking" a reaction, but to organise and warn the people to be fully prepared to repel any would-be dictator as Kornilov in Russia and Kapp in Germany were repelled. Today, by mobilising the enormous power of the multi-millioned Labour Movement and appealing for support from the peasants, students, and the middle class, capitalism could be ended as easily as an elephant swats a flea.

The C.P. leaders talk about the need for "an alliance with the middle class". They are right in repeating that the middle class must be won or at least neutralised before the workers can achieve victory. But there is a world of difference between the alliance that the Bolsheviks forged in Russia between the workers and the poor peasants, taking the first stride towards the world revolution, and the unholy compromise which the Stalinists patched up in Spain with bourgeois parties, opening the road to the Fascist counter-revolution. These parties are not representatives, but **political** exploiters

of the middle class, reinforcing their basest prejudices to tie them to the cause of big business. To "unite" with such parties creates nothing but a vacuum surrounded by political forces pulling outwards in all directions. To win the middle class, the Communist Party must draw up a programme giving the peasants the land, offering small businessmen cheap credits, showing them how they are exploited by the monopolies and the banks. In this way an invincible alliance could be rallied behind the socialist banner.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Instead the leaders of the strongest Communist Party in the West are making overtures to the Christian Democrats, or to certain factions within that party. The C.P., according to the "Financial Times" (22nd August) "has certainly made every possible effort to build up for itself an image of democratic and parliamentary respectability". This at a time when the capitalists themselves admit that parliament is exposed to the people as something divorced from their interests! The "Financial Times" in February entitled its report of the C.P. Congress "Respectable Revolutionaries". The left wing of the Christian Democrats is already making what the "Guardian" (17th April) described as "flirtatious noises to the Communists". They were "well received".

On July 9th the "Financial Times" reported that "the Communist Party announced last night that the time was ripe for a radically new left-wing coalition and hinted that they would consider serving in a future government if asked." Big Business decides that its only hope of survival lies in making the leaders of the working class its direct political agents, and they coyly "hint" that they would consider "serving" - "if asked"! But they are in no hurry even to undergo the test of ministerial office. Berlinguer, the Party's deputy leader, said stoically of the coalition: "It will come. Meantime, no Italian government can ignore us and we can also influence government actions very well by staying outside it." Their fear of office has even curbed their parliamentary ambitions. They have announced in unison with the Socialist leaders that they are opposed to new elections which would "only polarise society further and would not solve any problems". The polarisation of society is a product of the class struggle, and any party bearing the name "communist" would harness the people's revulsion at capitalism to create a new society. Instead the C.P. leaders are openly abetting the discredited capitalist politicians to "solve their problems".

Reichlin, formerly editor of the Communist Party daily "L'Unita" admitted in its pages on May 20th that "a profound popular movement is under way which is aimed at great positive objectives for transforming the economic structure and, at the same time, relations of class and of power." Why does his party not provide the leadership and co-ordination needed to harness that movement to victory?

No wonder that the leaders are losing the monolithic authority which they once had over the industrial workers. "The Economist" (12th July) reported from the key industrial centre of Turin: "Repeatedly (C.P. and other trade union officials) have tried to ride the revolutionary tiger by joining in the unofficial strikes and by proclaiming huge national strikes....These strikes

receive only lukewarm support, while unofficial stoppages, and possibly violent demonstrations, arouse enthusiasm. In Turin things have reached the point where union officials dare not enter certain workshops. Italian trade unionism was born in Turin. Marxism here is three generations old.... Yet it is here that the unions and the Communist Party are losing their hold." The "Financial Times" (15th April) reports that "membership of the C.P. is declining in favour of forces to its left which are accusing the Party of having gone 'bourgeois'.... Violent extremist forces with anarchist leanings have sprung up well to the left of the Communists."

In the course of the impending events, whole strata of advanced militants within the CP, the SP and the PSIUP will learn the need for a thoroughgoing Marxist programme generalising the struggles of the workers in industry and in the offices, the peasants, the unemployed and the students, and linking them to the overall fight for socialism. They will have to warn the people of the effects of the "Popular Front" which inevitably will be created sooner or later to prop up the ailing system, and demand instead a government of workers' parties to carry through a socialist programme by mobilising the masses against capitalism. In this way the rank-and-file of all the workers' parties can be won to Marxism and the workers mobilised behind a revolutionary programme. The tremendous struggles taking place today and tomorrow will re-emphasise to workers throughout the world the might of the Labour Movement and the weakness of capitalism even in its ~~very~~ successful centres in the present era.

As we go to press, the autumn storm, awaited with anxiety by Italian capitalism, has broken. Following further gains made by the engineering workers in Turin, new mass strikes have been called, involving in one week alone two million industrial workers. In Italy, as now in France and in West Germany, the leadership of the trade unions have had to rush to keep in step with the rank-and-file. "Managements are often baffled and bewildered, because they do not know who to argue and bargain with as the official union leaders admit they are not in control while they refuse to disown sudden claims and stoppages." ("Financial Times", 4/9/69.) The growing consciousness within the political wing of the Labour Movement has produced, in addition to the various new groupings to the left of the Communist Party (which the C.P. dare not repudiate) an organised left opposition produced by prominent members of the C.P. and publishing a regular journal - "Il Manifesto" - criticising the official policy of the C.P. leaders. Coming so early in the development of the great class battles, the birth of an established voice of opposition within the C.P. augurs well for the future radicalisation of the Italian Labour Movement in the event of a "Popular Front" coalition. A mass left wing will undoubtedly be created in these conditions, of a centrist character, clearing the path for a genuine mass revolutionary party of the workers.

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"However, state monopoly regulation exercised in forms and on a scale which meets the interests of monopoly capital and is aimed at preserving its rule, is unable to control the spontaneous forces of the capitalist market. Practically no capitalist state has been able to avoid considerable cyclical fluctuations and slumps in its economy, in some countries periods of rapid industrial growth alternate with periods in which there is a slowdown and often a drop in production. The capitalist system is in the grip of an acute monetary and financial crisis.

" The scientific and technological revolution offers mankind unprecedented possibilities to transform nature, to produce immense material wealth and to multiply man's creative capabilities. These possibilities should serve the general welfare, but capitalism is using the scientific and technological revolution to increase its profits and intensify the exploitation of the working people

" Even in the most developed capitalist countries, millions of people suffer the torments of unemployment, want and insecurity. Contrary to assertions about the 'revolution in incomes' and "social partnership", capitalist exploitation is in fact increasing. The rise in wages lags far behind the growth rates of labour productivity and the intensification of labour, behind the social needs and even more so behind the growth of monopoly profits. The position of the small farmers continues to deteriorate, and the living conditions of a considerable part of the middle strata are becoming more difficult.

• GROWING CRISES.

"The instability of the capitalist system has increased. Social and political crises are breaking out in many countries, in the course of which the working people are becoming aware of the necessity of deep going and decisive changes.

"This became primarily evident from the events in France in May and June 1968, from the powerful strike movement there, in which the communists played an important role and the working people made considerable gains. A serious clash took place in that country between the working class and considerable sections of the intellectuals and students on the one hand, and the Gaullist regime and monopoly rule on the other. This clash opened up new possibilities for the struggle for democracy and socialism."

All these factors should lead the Communist Parties in the West, if they had remained revolutionary tendencies to prepare the way for a struggle for power. The middle strata of peasants, white-collar workers, small businessmen and shopkeepers can be won only by irreconcilable struggle against capitalism, which is the mother of imperialism. On the contrary, the policies of the Communist Parties, with the approval of Moscow, is for an agreement with the so-called "progressive" section of the capitalist class. The document notes with approval that the Finnish Communist Party is in the government. Lenin all his life fought against the policies of "coalitionism" or, its modern version, "Popular Frontism". Behind the back of the Popular Front, reaction will prepare its forces. Only a class programme, an explanation in class terms, of the contradictions of capitalism and of socialist

solutions, can solve the problems of the working people. So-called "democratic front" governments can only pave the way for disillusionment and despair within the working class and the mass of the people. It is not enough to 'expose' the theories and fallacies of capitalism, but to provide an alternative. It is not an accident that constantly references are made to imperialism where capitalism would be a better word. And yet mixed up with the demagogic demand for Popular Frontism that "Everywhere the monopoly capitalists try to create the illusion that everything the working people aspire to can be achieved without a revolutionary transformation of the existing system." But how can a revolutionary transformation be achieved without an overthrow of capitalism and preparing the people for this overthrow? Coalition as all history has demonstrated is a gigantic trap for the working class. It only takes place when the capitalists can find no other means of holding the mass of the people in check. Coalitions or Popular Fronts take place only at a time of great difficulty and of social crisis for capitalism. Why should the capitalists or so-called "progressives" who represent capitalism come to an agreement with the forces of the working class if the working class and the masses supporting them are not strong enough for its overthrow? If they are strong enough to overthrow capitalism, on the other hand, why should they allow themselves to stop short of precisely overthrowing capitalism and making a "revolutionary transformation of the existing system?" If the capitalists agree to having communists and socialists in the government that can only be for the purpose of discrediting them in the eyes of the working class. What would be altered in Italy, for example, if the "Communists" were added to the coalition of the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, which held power formerly?

It is not enough to catalogue the crimes of imperialism, of the "guilt for two World Wars", of the racist maniacs, of Hitler and Mussolini. It is capitalism that gave birth to imperialism. Therefore, only the destruction of capitalism can prevent the rise of new racial maniacs under conditions of social crisis. It is Big Business which financed armed and organised the Fascist bands for the purpose of destroying the organisations of the working class. It is a crime, a snare, and a delusion to imagine that the needs of the working class, that the interests of the working class, can be served by any other means than by the taking of power and by the establishment of a workers' democracy. It is not for nothing that nowhere in the propaganda and "theory" of the so-called Communist Parties is an analysis made for the reasons of the victory of Fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain. Nor what happened to the post-war coalitions of "progressive forces" with the Communist Parties in Western Europe. Once they had done the dirty work of saving capitalism from the immediate social crisis they were ignominiously expelled from the government. They played the same role which was played by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in the Russian Revolution. Every conscientious Labour and Communist worker should study the lessons of the revolutionary victory in 1917, and of the crushing defeats which were brought by Stalinism and reformism in the advanced countries.

"PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE"

The section of inter-imperialist contradictions shows the real ideas of the ruling clique in Moscow, and of the satellites.

"Contradictions are also growing deeper within the ruling circles of imperialist countries, between the most belligerent groups who

gamble on extreme measures, on war, and those who, take into account the new relationship of class forces in the World, and the growing might of the socialist countries, tend to take a more realistic approach to international problems and to solve them in a spirit of peaceful co-existence between states with different systems."

It is necessary and even imperative that in their diplomacy the deformed workers states, like Russia under Lenin and Trotsky, must conduct diplomacy for the purpose of splitting the capitalist countries, and if possible preventing them from presenting a united face to the Bonapartist workers states. Lenin and Trotsky conducted such policies. But Lenin openly spoke of the need to ally with the brigands of one group of capitalist countries in order to balance them against the gangsters of another group of countries. At the same time, he explained that it is necessary for the parties of the proletariat, including the Russian Communist Party to explain to the working class that this only represented a temporary relationship of forces. Under no conditions were the Communist Parties to subordinate themselves to "good" capitalist powers as against "bad" capitalist powers. The fact that the Soviet Union belonged to the League of Nations did not and could not prevent the break up of this organisation, and the involvement of most of the countries of the World in the bloody disaster of the Second World War. All the capitalist powers were responsible for the Second World War as they were for the first. It was not only the German capitalists who supported Hitler and brought him to power, (leaving aside the criminal responsibility of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties for Hitler's victory), but the capitalists of France, Britain and America. They helped Hitler to re-arm, to take over Austria and Czechoslovakia, because of their fear of the alternative. Fascism came to power because the ruling class at that particular stage could no longer tolerate the existence of the workers organisations. In the next epoch the problem will be posed anew of either the working class taking control into their own hands or suffering new and more terrible defeats. It is impossible for agreements between the powers to prevent the development of the social contradictions within the capitalist countries. The United Nations, or in reality the disunited national, merely represents a forum for the solutions of secondary problems. It could not even prevent a war between Honduras and El Salvador! It was used in the Congo and in Korea in the interests of imperialism. It, like diplomatic agreements, can only solve secondary problems, but cannot solve the problems of so-called co-existence of states.

HOW NOT TO DEFEND SOVIET UNION

"The main link of united action of the anti-Imperialist forces remains the struggle against war and for world peace, against the menace of thermo-nuclear war, and mass extermination which continues to hang over mankind".

It should be noted too that Stalin in his role of dictator of the Soviet Union and representative of the Bureaucracy, with the dream of "peaceful coexistence" and of so called "collective security" helped to precipitate the Second World War. The policies of the Communist Parties were subordinated to chimera of the League of Nations and of the "peace loving powers". For five years Communist Parties or rather the Communist International as it then was ceaselessly propagandised the false notion, hardly to be described as a "theory", of "peace loving" and "war mongering" powers. They demanded

an alliance between France, Britain, America and Russia to hold Hitler in check. Then doing a somersault Stalin signed a pact with Hitler which by demoralising the workers of France prepared the way for Hitler's victories and the attack on the Soviet Union. The Communist Parties did a hundred percent turn and discovered the war mongers in the former "peace loving" powers, even demanding peace on Hitler's terms. Hitler had been transformed into a "peace lover". Then with the attack on the Soviet Union the "warmongers of Imperialism", Britain, France and America once again became "democrats and lovers of peace".

Through the whole of the period during the attack on the Soviet Union the Communist Party ceaselessly agitated for a second front to help the sore need of the Soviet Union. Anglo-American Imperialism continued to pile up resources of men, materials and munitions, grudgingly supplying the Soviet Union with 3% of its production. The calculations of the ruling class were clear. Truman in America who later became President, Moore-Brabazon, who was in the Cabinet in Britain, blurted out the truth, which the Communist leaders concealed, that the more Germans and Russians that killed each other the better for Britain and America i.e. of the ruling classes of these countries. At the most critical moment of Hitler's invasion Stalin asked for a million British troops, who curiously enough were strung out across Persia and the Middle East, with even more curiously a million Russian troops facing them, to fight on the Eastern Front together with the Red Army. This was supposed to be in lieu of a Second Front which Churchill said was not possible at that time. Churchill as the representative of British Capitalism "generously" offered to garrison the Caucasus and the Baku oilfields with his million troops for service with their comrades on the Eastern Front. Even Stalin understood what that meant and rejected the offer.

The war dragged on in Europe as a war to the death between Fascist Germany and the Soviet Union. The most developed areas of the Soviet Union were laid waste and the Soviet Union was bled white. Only owing to the traditions of the October Revolution, of the advantages of the planned economy, and of the vastness of Russia, did the Soviet Union survive the attack. Then counter-attacking and advancing from Stalingrad 2,000 miles into Germany. It was only when it became apparent that if they did not make haste they would meet the Russians on the Channel that the "Allies" launched the Second Front.

At times these facts which were commented on even by bourgeois historians, are blurted out by the Russian leaders and the leaders of the Communist Parties, at various times of friction between Russia and Anglo-American Imperialism. But neither at the time nor since was the position explained as Lenin would have done to the peoples of the World. The leaders of the Communist Parties of the West have begun to swallow and become infected by their own propaganda, while the Russian and Chinese Bureaucracies cynically play one tune and now and then the opposite, according to the shifting and swaying tides of their own interests. What remains out of the reckoning is the class analysis of national policies. While from the point of view of the working class there is a vital difference between Fascism and Democracy (the democratic rights of the working class form the elements of a new society which from the capitalist point of view it is the task of Fascism to erase) both democratic and fascist countries remain Imperialist because of the class nature of the State. In a confused way this document inconsistently says this when it categorises the countries of Imperialism. Marx and Lenin emphasised again and again the need not to play with phrases but to make a class analysis of

countries and the policies which will be derived thereby. While the Monopoly capitalists, the banks and financiers control the economy, it is they, however complex the inter-relations may be, who determine the policies of the State. This is even more true in this epoch where the monopolies at this stage are intertwined in what the document calls State Monopoly capitalism, under modern conditions, than at any other time in history.

"A new World War can be averted by the combined effort of the Socialist countries, the international working class, the national liberation movement, all peace loving countries, public organisations and mass movements.

The defence of peace is, inseparably linked up with the struggle to compel the imperialists to accept peaceful co-existence with states with different social systems, which demands observance of the principles which sovereignty, equality, territorial inviolability of every state, big and small, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respect for the rights of every people, freedom to decide their social, economic and political system, and the settlement of outstanding international issues by political means through negotiation"

To start with, these principles are trampled on at every turn by the Great Powers and especially the super-Powers. The Russian Bureaucracy itself in fighting for the national interest of the ruling caste has brutally suppressed the right of the Czechoslovak peoples, and previously of the Hungarian people, to "choose" in the one case a regime of workers democracy, and in the case of the former even a liberal democratic reforms which did not alter the basic character of the State, but ended the totalitarianism of Novotny and Rakosi.

"PEACE LOVING"?

The area the Russian bureaucracy regarded as their sphere of influence, and would not permit the peoples of Eastern Europe to decide for themselves. If this is the case in countries where capitalism has been destroyed (although it proves that neither democracy nor liberty exist in the Soviet Union and the other Bonapartist workers states how much more does it apply to capitalist countries? Nor does the unedifying sight of border battles between Russia and China with the conventional methods of modern war, tanks, planes and guns, provide a stimulating and inspiring example of peaceful co-existence to the working class of America, Western Europe and the World). How much more is it the case in the countries of imperialism which were so stingingly indicted in this very pamphlet? One does not educate the tiger to eat vegetables. No more can imperialism be tamed without destroying the basis of imperialism. What are "peace loving" countries in comparison with "war loving" countries? To pose the question is to show the ridiculous nature of the description. For how long did Lenin tirelessly repeat the idea of Clausewitz that "war is the continuation of policy by other means". The document indicts the French, the W. German, the Italian, the American, the British and the Japanese imperialists. But they hold the power in all of these countries. Which then of the great powers is "peace loving"? At times the capitalists powers will support peace at others war depending on their interests and social stress. The document is shot through and through with contradictions. On the one hand a description of imperialism and its crimes, on the other hand mysterious "peace-loving countries". The class

analysis of countries and policies is abandoned. Who is to bring peace? How is peace to be obtained? By what means can peace be successfully defended? Lenin said many times that the correct posing of questions provides a correct solution to the problems of the working class and of the working people. It is true that modern weapons, particularly those of the super-powers pose an even more horrifying dilemma than faced the peoples before the First and Second World Wars. The only thing that could have prevented the outbreak of these wars, would have been the victory of the Socialist Revolution in the main capitalist countries. Lenin said that it was a fairy tale that the First World War was the "war to end wars". The defeat of German and Japanese imperialism in the Second World War has not meant the blossoming of peace and closure. It has resulted in any even more horrifying arms race, and the wasting of the substance of the peoples on ever more horrifying means of destruction. Bacteriological, chemical and nuclear weapons are being manufactured. The solemn attempt by the super-powers to maintain nuclear arms for themselves alone has not succeeded. China, France and Great Britain also have nuclear arms. If World War has not taken place it is because war would not be in the interests of imperialism at the present time. It would inevitably result in a nuclear holocaust. It would destroy the goose that lays the golden eggs by destroying, not only civilisation and the working class, but even possibly most or all of humanity, and turn the planet into a region of radio activity. But the most important reason why there has not been war has been the class relationship of forces. When Russia was at her weakest in 1945 in comparison with Anglo-American Imperialism, at the end of the Second World War, it was the movement of peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa and the radicalisation of the working class in America and Britain, which made it impossible for Anglo-American Imperialism to attack the Soviet Union. But in the ~~in the~~ ^{period} ~~later-war~~ the defeats of the working class led to the victory of Fascism in Italy, Spain and Germany and the defeat of the workers movements in France, Britain and other countries paralysed the working class and allowed the imperialists to take to the road of war. At the present time there is an awakening and radicalisation of the peoples in the main capitalists countries. But if this radicalisation, which draws behind it the middle class and the peasantry, does not reach fruition in the capturing of power by the working class then inevitably it will prepare the way for reaction, and the rise of new Hitlers and Mussolinis. If one imagined that the workers of America, Japan and Western Europe, fail in the coming epoch to take power into their own hands then the victory of reaction which would thereby be prepared could lead to a Third World War. A madman, an American Hitler, once in power would not hesitate to try a "first strike". There would be no other way than war, as was the case with Hitler and Mussolini. Democracy and the rights of the working class are elements of a new social system within capitalism, which it is the task of reaction and fascism to destroy. But the unstable balance of forces which exist at the present time between the classes cannot be maintained indefinitely. While the economic upswing continues the capitalist powers can come to a robbers agreement with each other, and with the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. But when the economic upswing will inevitably be succeeded by a downswing, they will regard the very existence of the workers organisations as an unacceptable impediment to their exploitation of the working people. At the present time they are making super profits and can therefore tolerate various reforms. The hour will strike when they can longer do so if the working class fails to take advantage of the national and international contradictions of capitalism to take power into their own hands.

Only the socialist revolution can prevent a Third World War and the destruction of humanity. The document says: "Mass action against imperialism is a condition for implementing the policy of peaceful co-existence. Directed as it is against the war mongers, reactionaries and monopoly arms manufacturers, this policy meets the general interests of the revolutionary struggle against every form of oppression and exploitation, and promotes friendship between all peoples and the development of fruitful economic, scientific, technological and other spheres of co-operation between countries with different social systems in the interest of social progress." Who are the warmongers, who are the reactionaries and monopoly arms manufacturers? "Recent class battles have struck a blow at the illusions spread by partisans of neo-capitalism and reformism, and has given fresh proof of the basic propositions of Marxism-Leninism. In contrast to the right and left opportunists, the Communist and workers' Parties do not counterpose the fight for deep-going economic and social demands and for advanced democracy against the struggle for socialism, but regard it as a part of the struggle for socialism. The radical democratic changes which will be achieved in the struggle against the monopolies and the economic domination and political power will promote an awareness of the need for socialism among the people." The first part of this quotation is in entire contradiction to the one before and succeeding it. It is only by linking the struggles of the industrial and white-collar workers with the struggle for socialism that even the economic interests and demands of the working class and middle class can be realised for any length of time. There is no special section of the capitalist class which is, in and of itself, reactionary. Against a threat from the working class, the entire capitalist class will close ranks. Friendship between peoples, as the sad examples of China, Russia and Czechoslovakia show, is not a question of pious, pacifist whimperings. The interests of the working class of all countries are one and the same, because the enemy is the same, capitalism-imperialism. It is not a question of an abstract internationalism, but of the actual world division of labour created by capitalism, and reaching an unequalled intensity in the last quarter of a century, which created a basis for the union of peoples. It is gaudlin sentimentality to talk of even co-operation between the capitalist powers themselves, except temporarily, let alone "between countries with different social systems in the interests of social progress". It is like the parsons' and priests' declamations on the need to assist the poor and hungry and homeless and the "underdeveloped" world. This is precisely to ignore social realities and fall into the trap of the proponents of neo-capitalism and reformism.

"Socio-differentiation is developing in the newly independent countries. There is a sharpening conflict between the working class, the peasantry and other democratic forces, including the patriotic-minded sections of the petty bourgeoisie on the one hand, and on the other, imperialism and the forces of domestic reaction, the elements of the national bourgeoisie which are increasingly accepting a deal with imperialism."

And again: "The pressing problems of social development in these states are the object not only of a sharp struggle between the neo-colonialists and the people of these countries, but also of internal social conflicts."

This is perfectly true but in and of itself poses the question of the struggle for power by the proletariat which can, as in the Russian revolution,

carry to a conclusion the tasks of the democratic revolution. Then passing over to the tasks of the socialist revolution, which in its turn cannot be solved on national lines alone. If the bourgeoisie in these backward countries cannot solve the tasks of even the bourgeois revolution which were solved in the past in the industrialised capitalist countries, then how can it even be posed that the "progressive" bourgeoisie of France, of Italy, of America for example, in the epoch of imperialist decay can solve the social tasks posed in these countries? The internal social conflicts in both backward and advanced capitalist countries do not arise at the arbitrary whim of this or that reactionary politician, but out of the economic relations of capitalism nationally and internationally.

"Countries which have taken a capitalist road have been unable to solve any of the basic problems facing them." This applies just as much to the main capitalist countries as to the backward countries. The document then goes on to say: "the imperialists show special hostility towards states with progressive regimes....(They)organise counter-revolutionary activities through their agents and back reactionary elements in the state apparatus and the armed forces. They try to utilise anti-communist prejudices to spread discord among patriots." All this is undoubtedly true. But it does not get us any further forward. If, "confronted with rising popular discontent, the internal reactionary forces in these countries are intensifying with imperialist support their assault on democratic freedom," if "they are kindling conflicts between national, ethnic, religious, tribal and linguistic groups", if the imperialists are doing all this in the backward countries and finding allies in the local capitalists, then it is clear that only an implacable struggle nationally and internationally for the overthrow of the landlords and capitalists can solve the problems of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. And by the way, in a caricatured form even the much maligned theory of the permanent revolution is stealthily included in the section on Latin America - "the struggle for genuine national sovereignty and economic independence is intertwined with an acute class struggle against capitalist exploitation and above all, against the foreign or local monopolies of the latifundia." The only problem is that this is not linked with the idea of a socialist revolution as the only means of successfully achieving and consolidating economic, democratic and social demands. Instead, as in the imperialist countries, we are fobbed off with vague formulae. But if the national bourgeoisie in colonial or ex-colonial countries plays the reactionary role which is hinted at in this document, how can it even be suggested that in the main capitalist countries there is a "progressive" bourgeoisie which will not betray as in Spain, France, Italy and Germany, the aspirations of the people at a moment of danger into the hands of reaction?

"STICKS & STONES"

Having shown the horrors of imperialism and, incidentally, this is repeated and emphasised on practically every page of the document, they then go on to deal with what should be done about this. With unconscious humour, they state: "The Communist and Workers' Parties represented at the meeting, aware of their historic responsibility, proposed united action to all Communists of the world, to all opponents of imperialism, and to all who are prepared to fight for peace, freedom and progress." The fact that the "Communists" are not united on fundamental issues is a comment in itself. They then go on confidently to declare that "a new world war can be averted by the combined effort of the socialist countries, the international working class, the

national liberation movement, all peaceloving countries, public organisations and mass movements." We have already asked: what are "peaceloving countries"? And we now add: what are "public organisations"? There is only one trifle overlooked in this declamatory statement, and that is the question of HOW? Wagging a finger at the imperialists and saying "naughty, naughty" will not even ruffle a hair of their heads. It is no accident that this conference was reviewed very calmly in the serious organs of the capitalist press in the advanced capitalist countries. It reminds one of the old nursery rhyme, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me". The only threat that the imperialists are interested in is the threat to their power, privileges, income and prestige, like all ruling classes and castes in history. To defend their right to rule and in defence of their profits, for temporary periods they are prepared to sacrifice a part of their income. But if a threat is posed, it cannot remain a question of words, because the imperialists will inevitably organise their resources for reaction, if only a partial attack is made. In France, for example, a great part of the gains made by the working class have already been cancelled out by inflation. This will provoke a further movement of the working class which, if derailed on to the lines of a Popular Front and not carried through to a conclusion, will prepare the way for savage reaction and civil war with countless unnecessary victims.

As these lines are written, the echoes of the demonstrations and of vicious repressive legislation are reverberating from Czechoslovakia. The next paragraph following on the one quoted above piously and hypocritically declares: "The defence of peace is inseparably linked up with the struggle to compel the imperialists to accept peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, which demands observance of the principles of sovereignty, equality, territorial inviolability in every state, big and small, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respect for the rights of every people freely to decide their social, economic and political systems, and the settlement of outstanding international issues by political means through negotiation." (Their emphasis.) Again we ask, who is going to enforce this, and how? If the Soviet bureaucracy in defence of what it conceives to be its interests is prepared to flout the public opinion of the international working class and of "progressive" public opinion, how much more would the imperialists act in the same way when they conceive their interests to be threatened? The invasion of Czechoslovakia involved two states with the same social system, where capitalism and landlordism have been overthrown, and which have the same type of ruling bureaucracy. The "defence of peace" is inseparably linked with the struggle for the overthrow of monopoly capital and of the rotting Soviet bureaucracy.

"The actions of the Chinese and Russian Bureaucracies have assisted the capitalists in maintaining their hold on the public opinion of the middle class, and even of wide sections of the working class. That is why the statement like the following ring so hollowly.

The attempts of imperialism to overcome its internal conflict by building up international tension and creating hot-beds of war, are hampered by the policy of peaceful co-existence. This policy does not imply either the preservation of the social and political status-quo or a wakening of the ideological struggle. It helps promote the class struggle against imperialism on a national and worldwide scale."

Again the question that can immediately be asked is how this is done. Of course this is obvious that the Soviet Union and China are not interested in provoking a World War. Even the bureaucratic rulers of these countries, because of the

abolition of capitalism and landlordism have not the same pressing need for markets and sources of raw material. It is true that they are bound to have to participate on the World Market, and the World division of labour, but such participation is conditioned by the monopoly of foreign trade and the state ownership of the means of production. But for the capitalist powers and this whole document is supposed to be against imperialism, imperialism is a condition for the existence of national identities. Though struggling against each other, they have a common solidarity, in the last analysis, against the working class and those countries where capitalism has been abolished. The document in the very next paragraph to that quoted then says:-

"Determined class struggle for the abolition of monopolies and their rule for the institution of a genuinely democratic system, and for the establishment of socialist power, whatever may be the road leading to the achievement of this goal, is an inalienable right and duty of the working people and the Communist and Workers Parties in the capitalist countries. The Communists of the World are in solidarity with this just battle."

Again, these are empty words in contradiction with the previous ideas. It is one thing for the States where capitalism has been overthrown to offer peaceful co-existence to the capitalist States. (and even here it depends on the relationship of forces, nationally and internationally. Had the Communists and Socialists of Germany pursued a different policy it was the duty of the Red Army, if it had been true to the doctrine on which it had been founded to have gone to the aid of the German workers in order to prevent Hitler from coming to power. Such a policy linked to a correct international policy on the part of the Soviet Union and the Communist International would have led to the victory of the revolution in Germany and Europe and thus prevented the Second World War.) But the cynicism of Bureaucrats knows no bounds. During the Second World War the Red Army invaded the small Finnish nation to protect the flank of Leningrad. This brought the Finnish capitalists into the war on the side of Hitler, and dealt an enormous blow to the standing and support of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the World working class. But like the Czech events the invasion was dictated, not by consideration of the need to maintain the support of the world working class, but purely from the immediate needs of the national bureaucracy.

If the question is put from the point of view of being for or against peace, only a madman, particularly under modern conditions, would be in favour of war. But every war in the modern capitalist World has been waged under the hypocritical banner of "A struggle for peace". This did not prevent the outbreak of the wars. The condition for peace is precisely the waging of the class struggle, to a conclusion, and the elimination of the causes of war. "Peaceful co-existence, like "collective security" before it, can only provide a breathing space. If the working class and its leadership fail to take advantage of this breathing space, however protracted it may be, they will pave the way for reaction, a new World War, and perhaps the elimination of civilisation and even mankind.

The document is full of contradiction throughout. Not a single question is thought through to a conclusion in a manner of Marx or Lenin. Contradictory statements are piled one upon another to make a horrible stew of ideas. In the very next paragraph to the one quoted is this statement which is completely opposed to it:-

"Mass action against imperialism is a condition for implementing the policy of peaceful co-existence. Directed as it is against the war mongers, reactionaries, and monopoly arms manufacturers, this policy meets the general interests of the revolutionary struggle against every form of oppression and exploitation, and promotes friendship between all peoples and the development of fruitful economic, scientific, technological and other spheres of co-operation between countries with different social systems in the interests of social progress."

Who are the warmongers, reactionaries, and monopoly arms manufacturers? It is true that between different sections of the capitalist class there are conflicting interests, but these pale into insignificance in face of their struggle against the working class. The policy of peaceful co-existence, which replaced that of the discredited theory of "collective security" has now been followed for almost a quarter of a century. Yet never in history have more of the material means of civilisation been squandered in the arms race in all fields. The statement we quoted earlier on the military strength of the Soviet Union shows that she had been compelled, partly because of the reactionary policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, partly for the needs of defence, to pile up huge quantities of all weapons including nuclear arms and a competition with American Imperialism. Thus the policy of the Soviet Union and of China should be the idea of "promoting friendship between all peoples and fruitful economic scientific and technological and other spheres of co-operation." But how? By abandoning revolutionary methods? But even here the whole purpose is non-revolutionary and anti socialist in ideology. To prattle about friendship between peoples without raising the class question is idle chatter. To facilitate mass action against Imperialism would mean offering a joint plan of production over a number of years with the integration of the economy of the main capitalist countries with that of the Soviet Union, or of China, as the case may be, in the interests of raising the standard of living of all. This would be a means of mobilising the peoples of the Western countries and of Japan against capitalism. That is one of the reasons why neither the Chinese nor the Russian bureaucracy imprisoned in the national outlook of their bureaucratic needs cannot even raise the question in this way. Indeed, it is a sociological comment of the greatest significance that in this epoch where productive forces have outgrown the narrow boundaries of the national states, created by capitalism, as well as the private ownership of the means of production, that the bureaucracies of Eastern Europe have proved incapable of abolishing the national boundaries and organising a socialist Federation of the Balkans and Eastern Europe, together with Russia and China. That in Eastern Europe they are not capable of even achieving a limited economic integration which the capitalist powers of the six Common Market countries have achieved, however shaky and weak this economic co-operation might be. What is the point in demagogic references to a World "socialist" system when they cannot even unite their economies into one single harmonious and fruitful economic, scientific and technological plan?

HOW TO PREVENT WAR

"To preserve peace, the most urgent task is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, and to enforce the nuclear non-proliferation treaty." It was this policy which was one of the reasons for the break between the Russian and Chinese bureaucracy. A potential super power, the Chinese bureaucracy was determined to have all the most modern weapons of destruction. They were not prepared to place themselves under the umbrella of the Soviet bureaucracy. Like the ruling classes in capitalist countries, the bureaucracy of the deformed workers states hate and fear each other, because they know each other for what they are. They would not trust each other when it comes to a question of their fundamental interests. Thus Britain and France, despite their economic weakness in comparison with the super powers, have attempted to maintain their own nuclear arms. Though the might of these arms in comparison with that of the super powers is like comparing the power of a revolver to that of a batteries of artillery. What can prevent the spreading of nuclear weapons to the smaller imperialist powers if they decide that it is in their

vital interests to obtain these? What can prevent West Germany, Japan, Sweden or Switzerland from manufacturing nuclear weapons if they so desire? And even so, there are now bacteriological and chemical weapons which can be as great a scourge to the peoples, and which any developed scientific and technological power can manufacture.

It is one thing to conduct agitation for nuclear disarmament and the destruction of nuclear weapons and stockpiles, in order to raise the level of understanding of the mass of the people, particularly of the middle strata. It is entirely a different thing to imagine that while Imperialism or Capitalism exists- i.e. the power of the capitalist class to control the economy, and thus to dictate policy- that such a ban could be successful. The whole idea of such a campaign from a Leninist point of view would be to link them with the tasks of overthrowing capitalism. So that in the struggle to ban nuclear weapons the people would come to realise the incompatibility of such a demand with the existence of capitalist power. The idea of the so-called "Communists" is apparently to confuse rather than to clarify, because they conduct the struggle against nuclear weapons as if it was an end in itself, and could be achieved while capitalism still remains.

"The basic interests of the peoples demand the intensification of the struggle against militarism in all its forms, particularly against the military industrial complex of the U.S.A. and other imperialist states. To call on all peace loving forces to mount a struggle for a radical cut-back in military budgets and for general and complete disarmament under effective international control, so as to switch resources now absorbed by the arms race to improving the working peoples lives, promoting the health services and education and rendering assistance to the developing countries."

This is a praiseworthy aim. In fact all the governments, parties and churches pay a lip service to this utopia. It is true that Russia under Lenin and Trotsky also issued propaganda for general and complete disarmament. But this was not to increase illusions but to expose the hypocrisy of the governments of the capitalist states. They emphasised and re-emphasised again and again that the sole road to disarmament lay in the socialist revolution, the elimination of frontiers and the fraternal collaboration of peoples. Time and again well intentioned scientists and technicians have pointed out the enormous resources which harnessed, planned and organised could provide abundance for all. Want, poverty and deprivation could be abolished and the planets turned into an earthly paradise. Thus the idea empirically of collaboration of classes and nations for the good of all has been a standby of Protestant parsons, Buddhists, Bikkus and Catholic theologians. All should cooperate in harmony with all. Only one trifle is left out of account, the dialectic of conflicting interests. The struggle between classes and nations which arises as an inevitable result of the class structure of society. Thus general disarmament could only be achieved through the overthrow of the military industrial complex i.e. capitalism.

"The interests of world peace calls for disbandment of military blocks". It is true that in the legend Joshua blew on his horn and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. But paper thunderbolts will not have the same result in the real world. The walls of capitalism are powerful. They can only be breached by the working class armed with the teachings of Marx and Lenin. The army of the working

class cannot be hardened and prepared by the preaching of empty pacifist illusions, nor the delusion that there is an easy road to peace in agreement between the capitalist rulers and the Soviet block and China.

The only references to the United Nations are the demands "for the restoration of the rights of the Peoples Republic of China in the United Nations" and "the complete implementation of the November 1967 resolution of the U.N. Security Council." (on the Middle East.) The paper resolutions of the United Nations like the statements at this conference are stillborn because of the differing interests of the participants. It is instructive to see how since the war the United Nations has been completely incapable of solving any questions considered of vital importance to the world blocks or their client states. If the United Nations is completely incapable of settling small wars and coercing such countries as South Africa, on the issue of its seizure of S. W. Africa, how much less could it coerce the great powers and even less the super powers?

The whole document is confused with petit bourgeois ideology. The class basis of racism, imperialism or war are not simply and clearly laid out so that they could be understood by any worker however politically backward, or the new layers of the middle class, such as the students, awakening to radical ideas. The 'manifestations of Fascism.....demands the united action by all the anti-Fascist forcesalso greater international support from democratic and progressive movements in every country.' The only question which arises is who and what are democratic and progressive movements? Does it include those who benefit by the divisions between the working class and the peoples? Again middle class conceptions ignoring the source of the ideology and practices of racialism. While all Marxists would support the democratic demand and the statement "we communists are convinced that it is impossible to put an end to a policy of imperialist aggression, to abolish colonialism and neo-colonialism once and for all and uproot Fascism and racial oppression without resolute struggle against the power of monopoly capital and democratic demands which, once won, would weaken the position of imperialism as a whole and strike at the very foundations of its rule. Such a struggle would create favourable conditions for achieving the ultimate goals of the working class movement." But again the question can be asked - is not monopoly capital going to prepare its revenge unless it is expropriated? The Labour Government in Britain passed a law making it compulsory to divulge information as to the subventions to political parties by companies. They probably thought that this would frighten the oligarchy. Instead, big companies and small are increasing their subsidies to the Tory party, the party of Big Business in Britain. The only way to struggle against the power of monopoly capital is to prepare its expropriation. The real idea behind this phrase-mongering is shown when they call upon all organisations representing not only the workers and peasants, but 'various groups and social strata...on realistically minded political leaders of the capitalist countries and on all democratic parties...We invite them all to join in a broad and constructive exchange of opinions on the widest possible range of issues bearing on the anti-imperialist struggle...for...united action with all progressive, patriotic and peace-loving forces on a national, regional and international scale.' (Our emphasis) Who are these realistically minded political leaders of the capitalist countries? Which are the democratic parties? Who are the progressive, patriotic and peace-loving forces? It is certain that this statement is not politically realistically minded. Do they

mean in Britain, for example, the Tory and Liberal parties, or their equivalent in other countries? But these are the very representatives of that imperialism and neo-colonialism they are struggling against. They are asking Beelzebub to fight against Satan. The forces of vice to espouse the cause of virtue.

Without a thorough analysis of the class roots of fascism and of racialism, it is impossible to conduct a successful struggle against them. Over the decades the so-called Communist Parties have become more and more degenerate, partly as a result of the bureaucracies of the deformed workers' states, partly as a result of the pressure of capitalism and reformism in the advanced countries, and partly as a result of the abandonment of Marxist theory under the pressure of Stalinism in the past. The striking impression that is made by the document on anyone with a Marxist training would be the lack of transitional demands linking the present consciousness of the working class with the need for a Socialist revolution. The struggle for peace, for bread and for land was linked indissolubly by Lenin and Trotsky in 1917 with the need for the October revolution. While there is not a revolutionary situation at the present time, a pre-revolutionary situation exists in Italy, and the Communist Party sabotages the struggle by limiting it to economic and democratic demands. It should be remembered that the bourgeoisie changes from the use of a democratic facade, though with important concessions to the workers through the so-called democratic parties, and when this proves inconvenient, switches to support of the fascist parties, and when the situation demands it, back to support of 'democratic' parties. They prefer democracy because a fascist regime, or even a Bonapartist dictatorship, is enormously expensive. In a fascist regime they only hold power indirectly. But their power can only be broken completely by the taking of the economic power out of their hands, by the accomplishing of the Socialist revolution. There is no other way of guaranteeing peace, higher standards of living, and ending imperialism and racialism. This is the only safeguard against reaction and fascism.

IDEAS OF MARX & LENIN

"The rise and development of the world socialist system, comprising 14 states and the inspiring influence of Socialism on the entire world, have created the pre-requisites for accelerating historical progress, and have opened new prospects for the advance and triumph of Socialism throughout the world".

Socialism has shown mankind the prospect of deliverance from imperialism. The new social system, based on public ownership of the means of production and on the power of the working people is capable of ensuring the planned, crisis-free development of the economy in the interests of the people, guaranteeing the social and political rights of the working people, creating the conditions for genuine democracy, for real participation by the broad masses of people in the administration of society, for all round development of the individual and for the equality and friendship of nations".

This would be true if the workers and peasants had real control of the economy and of the state in their own hands. This was the society envisaged by Marx and Lenin as a society of transition towards socialism. But every day new evidence appears from all the countries of the so-called world socialist bloc that only the state ownership of production and a plan, the bare bones of a workers state, exist at the present time. The jailing of the writers in

in the Soviet Union, the continued persecution of the Crimean Tartars, the lack of any real liberty or control by the people, the chaos in planning and the waste in the economy, indicate that the statements of this kind are based on the sheerest cynicism. The abuses and malpractice of the bureaucracy did not end with the exposure of the crimes of Stalin. The privileges, power and income of the ruling managers, party leaders, state officials, and army generals, the inequalities and injustices between the workers and the ruling privileged layers is as great or greater than in Stalin's time. In China and in Cuba the "cult of the personality" rages round the figures of Mao and of Castro. The relations between Russia and China and Russia and Czechoslovakia are but symptoms of the relationship within the countries themselves. This 13 years after the 20th Congress was supposed to have ended such abuses. If Socialism was built in the Soviet Union and the other countries the state would have withered away and money, commodity production and the very existence of classes and of castes would have disappeared. At least the process would have begun and be accelerating. The swift economic development of these countries outpacing the economic development of the capitalist countries is proof of the superiority of state ownership and a plan in comparison with private ownership and the anarchy of the market. But the fact that in the decisive field of the productivity of labour the Soviet Union lags behind that of the mightiest capitalist power, the United States, is proof that not even the foundations of Socialism have been laid in these countries. Yet they boast in the Soviet Union of a transition to communism at the present time when there is far from a withering away of the state and an extension of liberty; in the usual zig-zag a tightening up and a limitation of even the measure of reform under Krushchev. Apart from Czechoslovakia, the revolution starting in backward countries, has meant that the failures in the advanced countries; the Revolution in these countries has been covered over with a layer of repulsive and even monstrous features, which exist in any totalitarian society. It is only the restoration in the Soviet Union and its introduction in the other countries of the so-called Socialist bloc by a political revolution which can introduce, not socialism, but a higher version of the living democracy of the Soviet Union under Lenin and Trotsky. His successors, like Stalin, represent the ruling layers mentioned above. It is in their interests that the ideas of Socialism and internationalism are perverted and corrupted. This whole statement is a proof of the degeneracy of the Communist Parties, especially if one takes seriously the statement in the document of the "preponderance of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism over imperialism."!

The fiction that "Socialism has been constructed in these countries leads to the putting forward of all sorts of irreconcilable statements. "The building of socialism and its further development rests on the support, participation and initiative of the working people, inspired and led by the working class"! These lines are shot through with contradictions. Under socialism the state will have disappeared. And how under socialism would there be need for "irreconcilable struggle against manifestations of bureaucracy and...the all round development of socialist democracy"? Socialism implies the administration of society and of industry by society itself. How then could there be manifestations of bureaucracy, when, as Lenin put it, when every one is a bureaucrat, on no-one is a bureaucrat. Bureaucracy is not a question of red tape, but of the existence of a whole caste of officials who utilise their position in their own interests and against those of the people. Engels said that when art, science and government remain the preserve of a minority, they will always use and abuse their positions in their own interests.

This must be so as long as the mass of the people have to work long hours for the bare necessities of existence. The only way out of this vicious circle lies in the conscious control of the working class and in the international overthrow of capitalism in the advanced countries. It is true that in the Soviet Union today the economy is no longer that of the backward economy of 1917. Russia today is among the advanced industrial countries of the world. But in contradistinction with the time of Lenin and Trotsky the situation is now completely different. The workers and peasants have no political rights except to applaud the decisions of their rulers. From being caused by the backwardness of the economy, the bureaucracy, which played a relatively progressive role in assisting the industrial development of the Soviet Union, has now become a reactionary fetter. But having all the levers of power in its own hands, and abusing these in its own interests, they are not prepared to relinquish this power which would mean an end to their privileges, prestige and inflated incomes.

At the same time they are compelled hypocritically to pretend that greater and greater democracy is being introduced. Yet their intervention in Czechoslovakia was forced on the countries of the Warsaw Pact by their panic even in face of the demagogic slogans of "Socialism with a human face". They talk of "irreconcilable struggle against manifestations of bureaucracy and by all round development of socialist democracy" when this flies in the face of all their actions. Socialist democracy can only be achieved with a full right of all tendencies to put forward their point of view. What is there to be afraid of when the advantages of Socialism would be so obvious? Any suggestion of a return to the old system would be greeted with laughter. Far from this being the case the moment they feel their position being threatened they return to the methods of lies, of slander, of falsification, of repressions, of beatings and even of imprisonment, which were a feature of the early years of the Stalin dictatorship. While they cannot return to the insane purges of Stalin's later years, in which millions perished, even now according to the Times in an editorial statement there are a million political prisoners in the Soviet Union. It is significant that the Russian Embassy which always picks up statements in such an authoritative journal of capitalist opinion as the TIMES, has not seen fit to issue a denial. How much cynicism and disgusting hypocrisy do these Communist Parties of the world, represented at the Conference, show when they refer to "the superiority of human and moral values" of the so-called "Socialist" societies.

"The formation of the socialist world constitutes an integral part of the class struggle being waged in the international arena. The enemies of socialism are keeping up their attempts to undermine the foundations of the socialist state power, thwart the socialist of society and restore their own rule. To give a firm rebuff to these attempts is an essential function of the socialist state, which relies on the working people led by the working class and its communist vanguard." We have already explained that the only people inside these countries against whom the state is protecting itself are the working people. How can it be that imperialism or the forces of counter-revolution could have even the remotest possibility of undermining the foundations of the socialist state power if socialism has been achieved in 14 countries or more than a third of the world? If the society were no longer ridden with terrible contradictions, it should surely be the other way around. The imperialists would be powerless to prevent a socialist transformation of society throughout the world. In other words this is just a pretext to smear all opponents of bureaucracy and privilege as the agents of capitalism. Unfortunately for the bureaucracy it is no longer

possible to return to the state of affairs under Stalin. This invention of plots and of enemies of socialism is as near as they can get to it. It is curious that the "enemies of socialism" are not named. Who can they be? Workers, peasants, intellectuals, the working people or perhaps the famous "manifestations of bureaucracy"? To pose the question is to give the answer. If a harmonious socialist society had been created, how could even the remotest support, apart from insane individuals, be obtained? If there were the "fullest socialist democracy" such attempts if made by the imperialists would be greeted with scorn.

"NATIONAL" ROADS

From the point of view of the history of the Communist parties, this conference marked a new stage in the disintegration of the world 'communist' movement. In the early years of the Communist International, there was a voluntary discipline and cohesion of the ranks. The Parties based themselves on the ideas of Marx and Lenin, of an internationalism rooted in the interests of the world working class, to which the interests of all sections were subordinate. This in its turn was based on the world economy itself and the world division of labour which had been created by capitalism. Thus internationalism was not regarded as a sentimental phrase, but arose from the historical needs of the economy, and of the interests of the workers of all countries. This in its turn was predicated by the fact that socialism required the efforts of the advanced workers of all countries to achieve its consummation.

It is part of the contradictory processes of history that at a time when world economy and world division of labour are far more interdependent and intertwined than at any time in the past, the 'communist' countries and the communist parties are moving in more and more diverse directions. The 'theory' of socialism in one country has thus resulted in the complete wrecking of the internationalism of the communist movement. This at a time when distance has been abolished by modern methods of transport and the world is united under the shadow of collective destruction as the only alternative to federation and cooperation of the peoples.

"The delegates to the meeting reaffirmed their common views that relations between the fraternal parties are based on the principle of proletarian internationalism, solidarity and mutual support, respect for independence and equality, and non-interference in each others affairs". This comments for itself! But the next section speaks volumes as to the changes which have taken place since the days of Stalin and even of Krushchev. "All parties have equal rights. As there is no leading centre of the international communist movement, voluntary coordination of actions of parties in order effectively to carry out the tasks before them acquires increased importance". The Russian Communist Party was the dominant party even in the days of Lenin and Trotsky. However under their guidance there was a genuine internationalism on the part of all parties, including the Russian Communist Party, which all voluntarily accepted the discipline of the International. Under Stalin all other parties were subordinated to the interests of the Russian bureaucracy and its foreign policy. In 1943 Stalin, without even calling a conference, contemptuously dissolved the International, but nevertheless the slavish subordination remained.

The split between Russia and Yugoslavia dealt death blows to this monolithic

or totalitarian "unity". The break with China gave it an irreparable shock. Now each party is "independent". There has been no return to the internationalism of the first years of the Communist International. On the contrary, in power and out of power, the bureaucracies of the communist parties are separated from each other on national lines. While independent of each other, they are not independent in the advanced capitalist countries (and in the backward ones too), of their own national bourgeoisie, and of course are instruments of the ruling bureaucracies of a completely nationalist outlook, in the countries where capitalism has been dispossessed. Among other reasons the intervention of the Russians in Czechoslovakia was dictated by the fear not only of the infection of liberal ideas but a breaking away like that of Yugoslavia and of China. This in its turn would have led to the breaking away of all the countries of Eastern Europe and thus the domination of the Russian bureaucracy over the area. Pious phrases went out of the window when the concrete interests of the Russian bureaucracy were involved.

Brezhnev and the Russian bureaucracy called the conference in a desperate endeavour to gain support for their struggle against the Chinese bureaucracy but as the document eloquently testifies, they failed signally to do so. Even this statement is riddled through and through with attempts at pious generalities, some parties - including the British party - refused to sign. It must be with a sense of humour that the declaration says that "united action by communists and workers' parties enrich and creatively develop Marxist Leninist theory....." Some enrichment! Some creation!! Presumably this creativity is in the following sentences which give a finished expression to the nationalist degeneration of the communist parties. "Marxist Leninists are both patriots and internationalists; they reject both national narrow mindedness and negation or underestimation of national interests and striving for hegemony. At the same time the communist parties, the parties of all the working class and the working people are the standard bearers of genuine national interests, unlike the reactionary classes which betray these interests". Till they come to power the working class has no 'national' interest. The working people have no country as Marx and Engels proclaimed in the Communist Manifesto in 1848. National interest by its very character is not above classes but reflects the interests of the ruling class. Who indeed are the reactionary classes if not the ruling class?

"The Communist and Workers' Parties are conducting their activity in diverse and specific conditions, requiring an appropriate approach to the solutions of concrete problems. Each party, guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism and in keeping with concrete national conditions, fully independently works out its own policy, determines the directions, forms and methods of struggle and, depending on the circumstances, chooses the peaceful or non-peaceful way of transition to socialism and also the forms and methods of building socialism in its own country. At the same time the diverse conditions in which the Communist Parties operate, the different approaches to practical tasks and even differences on certain questions must not hinder concerted international action by fraternal parties, particularly on the basic problems of the anti-imperialist struggle".

This is a finished declaration of nationalist "Socialism" and "national narrow-mindedness". Like the parties of the Second International they will meet occasionally to discuss nothing in particular and formally it remains an International. But at least the Second International meets annually. If it is not to discuss "differences on certain questions" and tactics and strategy in the different countries what exactly is the point of meeting? If each country

or rather each "Communist" party arbitrarily "chooses" its "own" method of transition, and its "own" "forms and methods" of "building Socialism" what remains of Internationalism and of Marxism? While it is true that a peaceful revolution is preferable to a "non-peaceful" one, that precisely is determined by the relationship of class forces, the attitude of the enemy and the planning and foresight of the leadership of the workers' parties. The October revolution in Russia and the German revolution of 1918 were relatively peaceful. In France in 1968 the Socialist revolution could have been accomplished peacefully. But precisely the craven attitude of the so called Communist parties by encouraging the reaction and the "reactionary classes"; by a lack of resolution pushing over the peasants and middle classes under conditions of crisis to the side of the capitalists that can make bloodshed and even rivers of blood inevitable. (And what are these "differences"? Is it not the duty of an "international meeting" of parties to discuss their differences openly before their members and before the world working class. In Lenin's day differences were raised openly and thrashed out so that the level of understanding of the membership should be raised. And without the raising of this level of understanding of the working class as a whole and the rank and file of the party claiming to represent the working class there can be no development of the instrument for achieving Socialism. Socialism is not handed on a plate to the working class by a kindly "leadership". In fact the level of understanding of the Communist Parties is if today if anything lower than that of the Social Democratic Parties of the past. This despite the explosive character of the epoch and the terrible lessons of Fascism, of the defeat of the Spanish and German Revolutions, of the events after the war, of the Chinese Revolution, of the Cuban Revolution and of the revolutionary situations in France and Italy in the last years. In any event the transition to Socialism requires the conscious control by the working class of all fields of activity- the State, industry and the party or parties of the working class themselves.

In the short statement on the Communist and Workers Parties there are a whole series of references to these mysterious "differences" which are unspecified "Communists are aware that our Movement, while scoring great historic victories in the course of its development, has recently encountered serious difficulties. Communists, however, are convinced that these difficulties will be overcome...To find a solution to existing problems which would meet both national and international interests...The Communists and Workers Parties despite some differences of opinion, reaffirm their determination to present a United Front in the struggle against Imperialism...other divergences may last long." Again we would ask why not honestly bring out the divergences and clarify them? If this is not done it can only be because of the vested interests of the bureaucracies, of the Parties in power and of parties which are not organically opportunist because of the pressure of the economic upswing of the last quarter of a century and their policies over decades. Yesterday they were used as a tool of Russian foreign policy to put forward opportunist policies in the interests of the "Russian Revolution", in reality of the Russian Bureaucracy. Now having lost all faith in the working class, opportunism has become part and parcel of their policies. They lip service to Socialism but in reality they have gone the way of the Social Democracy before the First World War.

Coming a few paragraphs after the unspecified differences between "fraternal Parties" and perhaps the Russians have "eliminated the differences" with the Czechoslovak Party in the recent period, after violating entirely the whole

method of Marx and Lenin, it is the height of effrontery to talk about

"the policy of joint and imperialist action(which)d demands the ideological and political role of the Marxist-Leninist parties in the world revolutionary process should be enhanced".

The British Party did not endorse the document not because of its eclectic character and its failure to work out a perspective foreither the Socialist or the Capitalist countries but because of "reservations".

"At the same time the Executive Committee is unable to give its assent to the document as a whole, since on some matters it has reservations. These reservations have, in the main, been indicated in the speech made by John Gollan in Moscow. They refer specifically to the paragraphs in section two dealing with relation between Socialist Countries and to most of section four dealing with the role and activity of Communist Parties and inter party relations".

Really what is meant is that the E.C. of the British Communist Party is objecting to the real purpose of the Conference from the point of view of the Moscow Bureaucracy: that is to mobilise support for their struggle against the Chinese Bureaucracy and to try and reimpose a measure of control on the International Movement. This is shown by the statement immediately following:

"While the principles of relations between Socialist countries and between Communist Parties as laid down in the document are acceptable, the Executive Committee believes that their inclusion goes beyond the main purposes of the document as defined in the agenda".

Surely in the history of the International Working Class Movement, if we are to take it at face value, could there be a more light-minded and irresponsible reason for rejecting an "international document". In effect it says we agree with the document but the problems were not defined in the agenda. Apparently it is only a question of procedure that separates it from its brother parties!

"Furthermore, if such questions were to be dealt with in the document then they should not have been confined to a mere statement of principle, but should have covered the implementation of these principles in actual life and so enabled a discussion in depth on the problems that have arisen in this field."

While it is true that it is incredibly light-minded to include statements of principle without discussing them fully, nevertheless implementation of principles in actual life follows from the acceptance of these principles. In reality a discussion of the principles and their implementation would have split the Conference wide open. But merely to reject in the most cowardly way the "decisions" because of a question of procedure and not a question of principle is to reach the lowest depths. This formula is meant not to bring out the differences but to cover them up; at the same time to guarantee the freedom of movement of the leadership of the British Communist Party for the future, unhampered by any party from abroad sticking their snouts into the national soil of Britain which is the prerogative of the "British" Party.

TROTSKY'S PREDICTION

A break away from Moscow's tutelage would have been a progressive thing if a balance sheet had been adopted of the experience of the Movement over the last five decades. But the break away of the Communist Parties of the West, and it has only been a half break, has taken place for entirely anti-revolutionary reasons, and with anti-revolutionary premises.

This is shown in the statement of Gollan, which like the document itself contains many correct points, but in effect adopts all the anti-revolutionary aspects of Moscow's policy:

"The struggle to prevent World War, end the nuclear menace and achieve peaceful co-existence of states, irrespective of their social systems, is vital for humanity and a necessity for any strategy of social revolution. Only a fool would underestimate the danger of World War arising out of the aggressive policies of Imperialism."

We have already dealt with this question, so there is no need to develop it further here, except as it affects the policies of the Communist Party in Britain. Gollan proceeds further along to say:

"Two alternatives face Britain. Either to continue down the dangerous road it is treading, in alliance with Strauss and West German reaction and Neo-Nazism; or to take up a policy of peaceful co-existence, and to work for the ending of military blocks in Europe, and their replacement by a system of European collective security, including recognition of the German Democratic Republic and the post-war frontiers. The first alternative is the road of nuclear menace and disaster. The second is the road to peace and security."

We welcome the peace policy of the Socialist countries. Their initiative in Europe through the Budapest appeal is finding an echo. There is a growing identity of views on European security between the people of Western Europe and the Socialist countries."

Which Britain is being referred to? The Britain of the working class or the Britain of Imperialism? In the long run there can be no peace without the overthrow of the ruling class. The policy of West German Imperialism is no better and no worse than that of British Imperialism. Elsewhere we have dealt with the arguments in relation to Britain and space forbids that it should be dealt with here. But the cowardly position of the European Communist Parties comes out clearly on the section dealing with relations between "Socialist States and Communist Parties".

"The agenda for this conference is that which was agreed on at the February 1968 consultative meeting in Budapest, namely one main item - 'Tasks at the present stage of the struggle against Imperialism, and united action of Communist and Workers Parties and of all anti-Imperialist forces.'"

In our view, therefore, the question of relations between Socialist countries and between Communist Parties is not really appropriate for documents based on this item.

Of course the differences between some Socialist States hinder their cohesion and therefore do damage to our common cause of the

struggle against Imperialism. But the main document does not deal with differences, only the principles of relations."

Comment would be superfluous, but Gollan then goes on:

"If the principles of relations between Socialist States would be fully implemented there would be no problem of relations between them. The repetition of the principles valuable and correct in themselves, does not get us too far. What is needed is to discuss what has gone wrong, and where and in what circumstances these principles have not been fully applied. Is it logical to argue that the conference document must contain paragraphs dealing with relations between Socialist States, and that delegates should not discuss the concrete application of these principles to events which have been discussed in every Communist Party?..... And this means -that ~~we should discuss not just the principles~~, but as they manifest themselves in actual life.

"It is on this basis, presumably, that many delegates have discussed China. Some delegates from Socialist countries have also referred to the political positions of some parties in Western Europe. We have no wish to interfere with anyone's internal affairs"(Our emphasis)The Communist Party of China is departing from Marxist Leninist positions. However, we will not develop out position on this great issue here."

This statement that "we have no wish to interfere in anybody's internal affairs" really means "mind your own business, don't interfere with us, let the other parties do as they wish, so long as we can do as we like." This assumes a glaring expression when Gollan says:-

"The question of relations between Communist Parties, and the principles governing their role and activity, is not, in our view, relevant to the agenda of this Conference. Each party is sovereign. It alone, through highest authority, its National Congress, can decide its policy, its activities and its role. There is not, and cannot be, any collective body or directive centre which can usurp sovereign rights of parties and decide such matters for them." The material in this article is sufficient comment on the position put forward by Gollan and the Communist Party. It is a brilliant confirmation of the Marxist method in that Trotsky forty years ago predicted the development of just this position on the basis of the "theory" of Socialism in a single country.

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