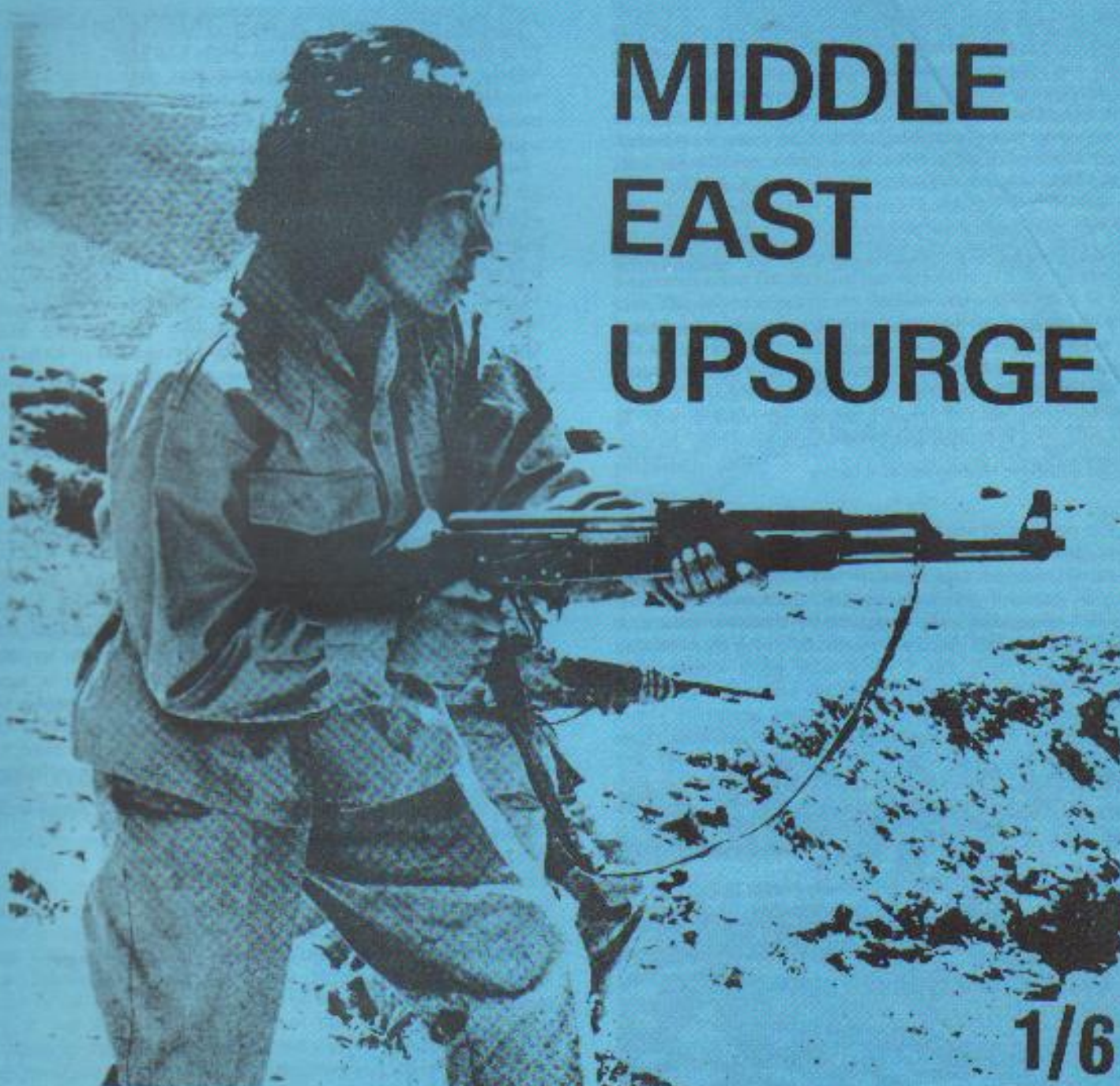


International

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

COMMUNIST
PARTY CRISIS



**MIDDLE
EAST
UPSURGE**

1/6

Letters

The recent disclosures of American atrocities by the Fleet Street press should not be a surprise to any of us. The press has concentrated its attention on one particular atrocity at My Lai—"Pinkville"—for two reasons: firstly, by isolating one or two atrocities the press has tried (with the exception of the *Sunday Times*, 23 November) to make believe that it was only the excesses of a handful of soldiers, rather than being the normal method of suppression that occurs. The second reason why the press has concentrated on this massacre is one of pure sensationalism.

In fact the total duplicity of the capitalist press can be shown clearly when one looks back to 1967, when in Stockholm the War Crimes Tribunal, initiated by Bertrand Russell, presented to the world a mass of evidence of daily atrocities far greater than anything that happened at My Lai. At the Stockholm and Copenhagen sessions of the War Crimes Tribunal, witnesses, including doctors from all over the world, reported on the results of napalm bombing, "lazy dog" shells which exploded into thousands of tiny razors on the civilian population of Northern Vietnam; pictures of babies burned to charcoal by napalm, pregnant mothers with "lazy dog" razors or "guava" pellets lacerating their bodies, also undeniable evidence of systematic bombing of schools, churches, pagodas, sanatoria and even leprosy colonies. And from the south came evidence of the use of toxic chemicals and herbicides on rice plantations; the use of gas as a weapon of war, and the systematic razing of villages and confinement of their population to "pacification camps", a crude euphemism for concentration camps.

During the holding of the tribunals, the international capitalist press didn't even make so much as a squeak of protest against the atrocious revelations. Instead, papers like *The Times* merely reported that the jury was "biased" or else attacked the "sense" Bertrand Russell. And now the fact that the truth begins to worm its way into the open can be seen by all of us who supported and worked in the War Crimes Tribunal, including the Vietnamese people, as a historic vindication of its work.

J. Clough

P.S. A report in the *Guardian*, 28 November, that the U.S. government is considering holding its own "war crimes commission", presents an extraordinarily ironic situation: comparable, one may say, to an assassin taking his hired gunman to court and charging him with murder! The real criminals are not the U.S. Army sergeants or Private Medina, who will be on trial, but Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon and their accomplices are Wilson, Brown and Stewart.



THE GOVERNMENT AND APARTHEID

The Springboks' rugby tour has provided the left and the liberals with an apparently real target upon which to vent their anger against the racism of apartheid in South Africa. And while all of us will support and applaud every demonstration against the Springboks it is worthwhile taking a look at the Labour Government's role. Wilson and his supporters, including THE GUARDIAN have been by no means displeased by the receptions that these representatives of apartheid have received.

In the Government's case this is not because of its solidarity with the victims of apartheid, but because by having his ministers make whispered criticisms of South Africa, Wilson can try to cover up his role of complicity with the Vorster regime.

So deep is this complicity that the British representative voted along with the USA, Portugal and South Africa to oppose a resolution in the United Nations calling for sanctions against the Vorster regime. Whilst we can have no confidence in the UN to do anything positive, this symbolic act speaks far louder than Howell's condemnation of race in sport.

Opponents of apartheid should use the great interest in the demonstrations to explain that the fight against apartheid is a class question and that the main enemy in this country is big business, backed by the Wilson Government, which pours millions of pounds into South Africa each year to reap the benefits of low labour costs. We should also explain why we must support armed action by the African people against Vorster and co.

Manchester reader

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Only unsigned articles are editorial opinion

Mandel-Johnstone debate

D.Kendall

Comrade Mandel's final meeting of his British tour at the Conway Hall in London attracted the encouraging figure of 400 people. He was debating Monty Johnstone of the CP and his meeting there followed hard on the heels of an afternoon meeting at the LSE, which had ended in a heated dialogue between Ernest Mandel and three proponents of the State Capitalist theory, Nagliatti, Marks and Harman. Ernest Mandel spoke first at the evening meeting. He began by telling the meeting what Trotskyism was not. It was not a defeated tendency, nor was it an agent of counter-revolution. The CP would not have been bothering to debate him had either of these been the real situation. Monty Johnstone was there that night because of the growing strength of Trotskyist ideas and the Trotskyist movement among the vanguard of students and young workers. Mandel began by talking of the underdeveloped countries and the reasons why Trotskyism could not but gain cadres there. It was because Trotskyism stood for the theory of the Permanent Revolution and not for the Menshevik, two-stages theory advanced by the Stalinist CPs. It was these Menshevik theories that had been responsible for the deaths of many communists in Indonesia and for smaller disasters in Brazil and Iraq. Mandel drew his examples for the validity of the Permanent Revolution hypothesis from present day politics, but this kind of discussion always leaves CP supporters in a somewhat difficult position. Mandel had wisely said that he did not intend to go into a blow-by-blow account of Trotsky's history—it was the living embodiment of Trotskyist ideas among the new rising youth vanguard that was the interesting thing to be explained. It will always be in the interests of a CP supporter, however, to treat Trotskyism as basically a moral judgement of Trotsky himself, and therefore to delve very precisely into the history of Trotsky's relations with Lenin and Stalin. To argue on the basis of present-day politics leaves the CP in the invidious position of having to admit that Trotskyism is a movement, the ideas of the man are more important than the man. To argue in present-day politics would be to have to admit that there are other lines apart from the orthodox CP line and to introduce the awful possibility that it might be that in these other theories was contained the living spirit of Marxism in our age. It is only this latter approach, however, that would make a really political debate possible. Although Johnstone was prepared to debate on France 1968, he avoided the question of the thesis of permanent revolution in our age and chose to return to the Russian revolution. He said that Trotsky had admitted that on all essential points Lenin had been right, and presented a picture of a Lenin deflected almost against his will from the path of peaceful revolution. As John Palmer of the International Socialist group so rightly said, this distortion was a manifestation of the degeneration of the CP as a revolutionary party. How could this be said of a Lenin who realised full well the precarious and temporary nature of the situation of dual power prevailing in Russia between April and October 1917 and knew that the state was nothing other than a group of armed men? Mandel drew the distinction between the stage of a revolution, the class dictatorship and the tasks to be fulfilled by that dictatorship. Lenin had implicitly accepted Trotsky's ideas on the Permanent Revolution in his April Theses. February 1917 did indeed usher in the era of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in Russia, but it was the precarious nature of that dictatorship and its inability to fulfil the democratic tasks of freeing the peasantry that made the October revolution necessary and indeed possible.

In the industrialised countries Mandel said Trotskyists stood not for putschism or adventurism, but did believe in the existence of

objective conditions regularly and without the volition of any groups bringing about pre-revolutionary situations. It was in these situations that the vanguard and the class could intervene to bring about a revolution. Lenin had defined these situations extremely carefully. The level of working class activity must be considerably increased, the ruling class must be unable to carry on as before without changes and the sufferings of the working class must be more acute than usual. Mandel said that France in May 1968 fell without doubt into this definition of a pre-revolutionary situation, and along with speakers from the floor condemned the failure of the CP to play a real revolutionary role then as it had failed before in 1936 and 1945. Johnstone argued against there being a pre-revolutionary situation in France in 1968. As proof he quoted the elections in which de Gaulle had been returned to power. The CP vote had decreased and had not gone to the PSU, whose vote in the working-class neighbourhoods had also decreased. Johnstone compared this use of election statistics to the use made by Lenin of the October elections to the Constituent Assembly. It was a guide to the political maturity of the working-class. Mandel in his summing up said that he had not said that May would necessarily have led to a successful revolution in France, an immediate victory. The important question of course was what use the CP made of the situation at all, to what use the CP was putting the statistics, whether they represented a genuine guide or a rationalisation for doing in fact very little of a revolutionary nature. The deformations of the Parliamentary orientation of the CP became apparent when Monty Johnstone spoke of the revolution having to wait until it was acceptable to the majority of the population without reference to which sector, without a mention of the majority of the toilers. His perspective for Britain was not one of how to build the vanguard party, but the gradualist one of securing parliamentary victory, and then, but only then, being prepared to defend that victory against minority encroachment by force.

Mandel said that Trotskyism stood for the preparation of revolutionary demands and attempting to fuse these demands with the day-to-day struggles of the working-class even when the situation was not revolutionary. This was absolutely necessary, for otherwise these demands would appear alien and imposed from the outside in the pre-revolutionary situation. The workers would not automatically know what to do if careful preparation had not been made. This was yet another area where the CP had failed. Monty Johnstone quoted the programme of the French CP in his reply, claiming that it contained such demands as workers' control. Once again of course this was just a programme containing a list of ideals and it was the vital missing link of the actualising of the ideals by implanting in the day-to-day struggle by a series of partial struggles, this was the perspective that was missing from Monty Johnstone's speech.

Finally Mandel spoke of socialist democracy. The action of the Russians in invading Czechoslovakia had been a crime because it had re-identified socialism with censorship against the working-class in the minds of workers throughout the capitalist world. The achievement of workers' democracy in the workers' states was one of the main historical tasks still to be achieved in those states. The absence of this democracy was one of the biggest stumbling blocks to the easy acceptance of Socialism and Marxism by the western proletariat.

Monty Johnstone never really did come to grips with what Trot-



Arab guerrilla in Jordan

As a result of this, the situation in Lebanon has been transformed. As in the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, the Palestinian commandos are almost completely outside the control of the official institutions such as the army; and are building a parallel military and administrative network. As in Jordan previously, the growth of the resistance in Lebanon has stirred up a mobilisation of the masses and a general politicisation of the young and militant people among the Palestinian refugees. The fusing of the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese population, as previously with the Jordanian population, has started a process of the involvement of more and more of the Arab masses in support for the resistance.

Because support for the Palestine resistance movement came originally from the people and drew its strength and determination from the exploited masses, it assumed a class character and objectively opened a period of class struggle against the Arab regimes, such as that of Lebanon, which have unmasked themselves openly as counter-revolutionary by trying to stab the Palestinian resistance movement in the back.

The Lebanese crisis highlights the rapid spread of the Palestinian revolutionary enthusiasm among the Arab states which border Israel and which are thus most directly affected by the resistance. It confirms the highly revolutionary role played in the Arab world by the dynamics of the Palestinian revolution. The organisations of resistance constitute collectively the present motor of the Arab revolution, even if this is unconscious on the part of some components, since certain resistance movements do not pose the development and outcome of the resistance in terms of socialist and international revolution. The Palestinian insurrectionary spirit is spreading, today in Lebanon, soon elsewhere in the Arab world; it threatens the bourgeois class and its parasite element, the "compradors", and worries American imperialism, for which Lebanon occupies a decisive strategic and economic position in the Middle East.

HOW THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IS ORGANISED

Contradictory international forces are converging to break the Palestinian resistance movement.

The Soviet Union intervenes in the Arab world through the states over which it exercises some control—principally Egypt—and holds back all expansion of the resistance movement. This policy is illustrated by the Soviet Union's proposal of a peace plan, supported by Egypt. Nasser's hypocritical policy of acting on both sides—namely support for the resistance and the search for peace has just been demonstrated once again. The Lebanese events represent the highest stage in the revolutionary process; Nasser's proposal for negotiations which put the Palestinian resistance movement and the Lebanese army on the same footing show how much this same Nasser, who contributed to the rebirth of the Palestinian resistance movement, is bankrupt. Mediating between the fedayeen and the Arab bourgeoisie, Nasser strives to stop the revolutionary process. He clearly represents a half-way stage between revolutionary dynamism and pro-imperialist conservatism. He can continue playing this game only with the help of the Soviet bureaucracy, without which he would be nobody today.

On the other hand, in keeping with their habitual counter-revolutionary role, the imperialist forces wanted to make themselves felt by forcing the Lebanese army to act. This policy was publicly endorsed by an American representative, Sisco, when he declared his support for the Lebanese government. The American Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean is ready to intervene, as it was in 1958, to put the ruling classes back on their feet if necessary. But the state of Israel which is within the American sphere of influence is the only element which refuses to sign the peace. As a result, the East and West, whose talks were supposed to freeze the situation in the Middle East, now find themselves obliged to control and hold back the activity of the belligerents. The Soviet Union and Egypt are incapable of blocking the resistance movement. The Americans and the English are at present incapable of making Israel accept the peace. The British Minister for Foreign Affairs has stated that Israel must hand over the occupied territories. The peace plan is taking form around a pseudo-solution which would consist of taking into account the situation following June 1967 only and not since 1948. The aim of this approach would be to remove the general problem by concentrating on some of its particular aspects. The objective would be to force Israel to give up the occupied territories in exchange for the recognition of the state of Israel by the Arab states. Thus the Zionist state would achieve what it has been striving for for 20 years and what the Arab states have refused.

Today, the situation is reversed: Israel does not want to sign the peace and the Arab states are waiting together with the "Big Four". Making peace would be dangerous for the Zionists today. They cannot keep up their massive collecting of funds in the imperialist homelands except by shouting about the dangers of "war" and "genocide" that threaten the Jewish people. The Zionist leaders create this situation deliberately. This attempt at peace on the part of the Arab states and the "Big Four" is a dangerous undertaking and everything indicates that on the basis of the present situation, peace is impossible unless there is a massive repression of the Palestinian resistance movement or a capitulation by its leaderships. The expansionist and militarist internal logic of the state of Israel is a stumbling block to this policy and objectively benefits the Palestinian resistance movement, who have understood how to use it.

But with the events in Lebanon, the resistance has reached a further step in the struggle. The Palestinian liberation struggle has assumed a new dimension—internationally and socially—since the Lebanese crisis. In this sense, the liberation struggle turned into a conflict with the pro-imperialist Lebanese government which assumed the social form of a class struggle for which the resistance was not yet prepared. The Lebanese crisis represents a revo-

skyism was. His statements never had the power of totalisation. The new Youth Vanguard he prepared to ignore. He could not answer such statements as why it was that such a large CP as the Italian party had a negligible and declining youth section. The discussion on Permanent Revolution evoked some good contributions from the floor, notably from IMG comrades. Johnstone's replies were very poor. On the developed countries the debate was better, in that Johnstone did defend the line on France and did it by reference to the actual situation, which gave the ground for a real political argument. When he began to talk of the accusation of missed opportunities in the past, especially with regard to Spain, he became much less coherent. Contributions from the floor were

made by various of the groups, with the notable exception of those redoubtable smashers of Stalinism, the SLL. One of the drawbacks of this type of meeting of course was that the structure of a debate, while allowing for these contributions, at the same time restricted the discussion of the main speakers, who need to come back on each other's points more than the one-time reply which the debate structure allows, for a really fruitful dialogue to develop.

(A full transcript of Mandel's speech can be found in the first edition of the *Marxist Youth Journal* and a shortened precis-report of the debate in *Black Dwarf* no. 25).

New stage in the Palestinian Struggle

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL (5/11/69)



The outbreak of armed conflict between the Palestinian forces and the Lebanese army is part of a systematic policy on the part of the reactionary Arab states of liquidating the danger that the Palestinian resistance movement represents for them. The conflict represents a new and more acute stage in the repeated attempts of the pro-imperialist Lebanese government to destroy the militant vanguard of the Arab revolution, the Palestinian resistance movement.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO LIQUIDATE THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

Of the Arab states bordering on the Zionist state—Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon—it is in the latter two, which have never supported the struggle against Israel, that a powerful Palestinian resistance movement has gradually emerged. This political force, well-armed and strongly-motivated, eludes the control of these regimes and confronts them with increasing and permanent risks of Zionist retaliation. This eventuality is what these two govern-

ments fear above all. The Jordanian army has never protected nor aided the resistance fighters when they have been the target of bombing or harassment by the Israelis. When Beirut airport was attacked by Israeli special commandos in December 1968, the Lebanese army, though somewhat surprised, continued to sit with its arms folded.

Each of the governments of these two countries has undertaken a policy of undermining the Palestinian resistance movement. Since November 1967, when the Palestinian resistance first began to develop a mass base, Jordan has tried to smash this resistance, or at least tried to keep it within the limits of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, as it was defined and established at the time of Ahmed Choukeiry. But on two occasions in November 1967 and December 1968, the mass mobilisations of the people of Jordan, an essential support for the resistance, blocked the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of King Hussein of Jordan who retreated in face of the mobilisation of the people.

The implantation of the Palestinian resistance movement in Lebanon grew really substantial at the beginning of this year. The attack on Beirut airport was an attempt on the part of the Israelis to intimidate and pressurise the Lebanese government into taking action against the resistance which, based in South Lebanon, was conducting operations against the Israeli border areas. The attack achieved its objective, but the consequences of the Lebanese leaders' manoeuvres are going to be very grave for all Palestinian organisations and are going to reveal the real positions of the Arab states.

The Lebanese events are tremendously important because they have laid bare the political nature of the state forces directly involved in the Israeli-Arab conflict.

THE DYNAMICS OF THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

The wave of insurrection spread from the refugees' camps, despite their systematic isolation from the neighbouring population by the authorities. The refugees responded with an energetic offensive against the attempts to surround and control them made by the Lebanese army, which doubtless hoped to discipline the fedayeen or even simply to liquidate them.

lutionary awakening of the masses in Lebanon in an international framework which reveals the true nature of the Arab revolution.

The Cairo agreement between Arafat and Bustani, the commander of the Lebanese army, is a compromise between the resistance and the Lebanese government, the consequence of which remains still limited in time, given the nature of the Lebanese government and army. Sooner or later, the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of these supporters of imperialism will be resumed—and it will doubtless be sooner. From attempts at corruption to armed threats, American imperialism is now going to increase its pressure. In the next period we are going to witness the preparation for new conflicts between the revolutionary forces of the resistance and the Arab and imperialist counter-revolution.

Thus the Palestinian resistance movement assumes a tremendous responsibility in the development of the Arab revolution of which it is the vanguard. Nothing has really been settled in Cairo; the so-

called progressive Arab states, Nasser in particular, have done no more than procrastinate and have given themselves a bit more rope by playing the reconciliation game.

Revolutionary Marxists must give firmer political support than ever to the Palestinian resistance movement, and help for new developments for the Arab revolution.

DOWN WITH ARAB REACTION AND IMPERIALIST INTRIGUES!

LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST ARAB REVOLUTION!

discussion on Libya

(Editorial comment: Tessa van Gelderen's letter raises some valid criticisms. However it must be said that we did an injustice to our correspondent Ali El-Fezzani by publishing only one of several reports he has sent us. In this way we gave a one-sided version of his views. We have tried to remedy this by publishing a further article by him.

(Some guide lines are necessary in working out an attitude to such phenomena. Firstly, without question we have to give full and unconditional support to the Libyan government's anti-imperialist measures. All socialists should support the Libyan government against imperialism and, in particular, it is important for British socialists to welcome them—before the coup Libya was little more than a puppet of British imperialism.

(Secondly, we have responsibility to make a class analysis of the event. This is the key question for helping us to decide our long-term attitude and the advice we give to Libyan socialists. At this stage we can define the Libyan revolution as a petit-bourgeois-led bourgeois democratic revolution.

(The theory of the permanent revolution teaches us that such a revolution cannot solve the fundamental problems of the Libyan people. The Libyan revolution can go little further than the Nasser regime in Egypt until it fuses into a general Arab socialist revolution. Such a revolution will have as its aim the creation of an Arab Socialist Federation,

with full rights for minorities, which would be in alliance with the world's revolutionary forces. As our correspondent indicates, a revolutionary marxist leadership has to be built in Libya and all Arab countries to make such a programme a possibility.)

Tessa Van Gelderen

There certainly appear to have been a number of gains made in Libya since the Revolution at the beginning of September and, while we must defend these gains, it seems to me that there are many contradictions within the leadership.

Naturally, this is only to be expected: the "Revolution" was not led by a revolutionary mass party but was in fact a military coup; but the article in the November issue of *International* did not go far enough in criticising the failings of the Government. Col. Qathafi states that all Libyans "should participate in production; everyone has to take part in producing what he consumes". But he makes no mention of workers' control, i.e. everyone *controlling* what he produces—indeed he seems to be advocating *participation*. And yet what does Col. Qathafi mean by "non-exploiting capitalism"? Ali El-Fezzani does not point out that by its very nature capitalism cannot fail to be exploiting. A lack of understanding on the part of the Libyan leadership should not result in a glossing over on the part of the author of the article.

Again, Col. Qathafi refers to "the armed forces not being placed above the people" but what provision has he made for arming the people themselves—the only way, surely, of preventing this from happening.

Of course, the reason for these gaping holes in the programme of the Revolutionary Council is that the Revolution was not a socialist one: (The author himself talks of Libya being "in the vanguard of the Arab Nationalist revolution"). But this being so, Ali

El-Fezzani has failed to put the real and only alternative. In fact he even talks of "the *one weakness*" (my emphasis) "in the programme of the September regime" which is that it has no intention to nationalise the oil-fields in the foreseeable future. The Libyan economy depends on oil and so the nationalisation of the oil-fields is utterly necessary if the gains that have occurred are to be secured.

But, surely, this is not the "one weakness". Surely the main weakness of the revolution is that it has no perspective for bringing about socialism (despite the words of the Colonel since it is deeds we are concerned with). There is no perspective for the building of the revolutionary party or for the setting up of workers' soviets and councils. And the simple reason for this is that the interests of the Revolutionary Council lie with those of the other Arab Nationalist Governments and not with the workers and peasants of Libya.

But in the present situation in the Middle East it is imperative that the Libyan people see the need to extend the revolution to a socialist revolution. It is not enough to say that the "Libyan people must first be consolidated". Only when the people see that their interests (and not those of their self-imposed leaders) are the same as the workers' and peasants' of other countries, in particular those of the Middle East, will the Libyan Revolution be starting along the right path.

And until that time we must constantly criticise the Libyan leadership which is something, unfortunately to say the least, that Ali El-Fezzani almost completely fails to do. Instead he seems to be agreeing that the unity of the Libyan people can be brought about *internally*, whereas, in reality, *proletarian internationalism* is the only way forward for the Libyan people.

Ali El-Fezzani

The leaders of the Libyan Revolution of 1 September are continually disavowing Marxism and the class struggle. But the laws of uneven and combined development, discovered by Marxists, operate irrespective of the ambitions and desires of politicians. In the process of consolidating the revolution, of carrying out its desired objectives, socialism, freedom and unity, the revolutionary leadership finds itself forced into open conflict with imperialism and with the local outposts of capitalism.

The result is that Libya, once the most backward of Arab states, now, only two months after the revolutionary seizure of power, finds itself in the vanguard of the Arab revolution.

Measures adopted by the revolutionary regime are far more radical and advanced than that of any other Arab country. It is to Libya today that the Palestine freedom fighters turn, confident of 100% support; it is the Libyan Arab Republic which is the driving force for a united Arab military command to pursue the war of liberation till every inch of Arab territory is restored to the Arab people. The Libyan revolution has spurred President Nasser to intensify the commando attacks across the Suez Canal. It is the revolutionary urgings of the new Libyan regime to which Nasser now pays attention instead of being held back by the conservative caution of King Saud of Saudi Arabia.

The record of the revolutionary regime is indeed impressive. One of its first acts, after seizing power, was to issue a decree doubling the minimum wage for the lowest-paid workers from 50 piastres a day to 100 piastres (100 piastres = £1.3.0. sterling).

In the first days of the revolution, feeling its way cautiously, the new regime gave the impression that the American and British military bases would be left alone, at least till the end of the current agreements. Now, sure of the support of the Libyan people, and conscious that a foreign military presence is inconsistent with national freedom and provides a base for the counter-revolution, they have given Britain and America notice to quit as quickly as possible. "If they don't go peacefully," said Colonel Qathafi, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, "every Libyan will fight and give his life to drive them from our soil". Britain, the junior partner in world imperialism, has already accepted and preparations are under way to evacuate the British garrisons in Cyrenaica. Negotiations with America, the senior partner, have begun. Meanwhile, Libyan troops and customs officers have moved into the bases and check all incoming and outgoing traffic. Nowhere else in the world have the Americans permitted this sort of indignity.

On the home front the government has moved against the landlords and profiteers. Rigorous price control has been enforced since the first days of the revolution. Now the government has issued a decree drastically cutting rents from 10% to 30%, bringing an end to the speculation in real estate which brought fortunes to a few and sent the cost of living soaring for the many. This week the government took over a 51% holding in all-foreign owned banks, thus gaining control of a key segment of the national economy. The British-owned Barclays Bank is now the Bank of the Revolution, the Italian Bank of Naples has become Independence Bank. Insurance, almost entirely foreign-owned, is next in line for Libyanisation.

Negotiations are under way for a higher percentage of the huge oil profits to remain in Libya instead of being drained away overseas.

Nationalisation of the oil-fields is not an immediate objective. This, undoubtedly, leaves a strong residue of power in the hands of imperialism, but Libya, with its small and backward population, is not equipped to cope with the technical aspects of the oil industry. Nationalisation could only be contemplated within the framework of a united, socialist Arab Federation, and this is a transitional slogan which Libyan socialists must inscribe on their banners. The marketing of the oil is also a key problem, not only for Libya, but for all the oil-producing countries in the Third World. All the outlets for oil—tankers, refineries, retail distribution, etc.—are firmly in the hands of the giant oil corporations. Only a united stand of the oil-producing countries in the Middle East, Africa and South America could fight this monopoly.

Libya's revolutionary leaders talk of an "Arab Socialism" based on the primitive collectivism of certain sections of the Koran. They see socialism in a narrow, nationalist context. But the tasks of the revolution immediately pose issues which transcend the national frontiers. Unless the Libyan revolution makes the transition from nationalism to internationalism, even its national programme cannot be carried through to full fruition.

This is a perspective which can only be realised through the building of a vanguard party based on the principles of scientific socialism and conscious of its historic role. At the moment Libya has no such party, but the problems of the revolution will rapidly establish its need, and the need for a transitional programme which will lead the Libyan people and the whole of the Middle East into the decisive battle with imperialism.

Tripoli, Libyan Arab Republic
20.11.69

Communist Party Crisis — Not the end

The 31st Congress of the Communist Party of Great (sic) Britain met after considerable press speculation about the possibility of a split in its ranks over Czechoslovakia. Both the leadership faction and the pro-Russian minority had sought to get the maximum number of delegates supporting their respective lines. The pre-congress discussion in COMMENT and the MORNING STAR had been dominated by this question. Thus this appeared to be the central issue before the Congress.

In many ways this particular situation suited the party leadership: it enabled it to avoid the major issue which really faced the Congress - why is it that a time when social-democracy has been exposed to millions of workers, when in nearly every industry workers are going into action, and when thousands of young people have been radicalised, that the Communist Party, its youth organisation and press are all in decline. Since the last Congress two years ago the party has lost 6% of its members, the YCL 34% of its, and the circulation of the MORNING STAR has declined by over 5,000. Moreover, practically every left group in the country - with the probable exception of the SLL - has experienced considerable growth.

The pro-Russian minority tried to explain this in terms of the party's lack of "internationalism", i.e., refusal to support the invasion of Czechoslovakia and fully align the party with Moscow. The bankruptcy of the Gollan leadership is clearly demonstrated by the fact that this patently absurd "explanation" got such wide support.

The strategy of the Gollan leadership seems to be to concentrate on "building unity of the left", i.e., consolidating its links with the "left" trade union bureaucrats, TRIBUNE, and "left" MPs, etc. To achieve this they need to demonstrate that they are "independent" of Moscow. However they cannot go too far along this path because to do so would call into question their entire history. In addition, the CPGB obtains considerable material benefit from its connection with the workers states (an analysis of the advertising revenue of the MORNING STAR would reveal this very concretely). Thus the King Street clique are walking a tight-rope - to lean too

far either way would be disastrous for them.

From a long-term point of view, there is an even greater danger to the Gollan leadership from this policy. In many ways they have the worst of both worlds: they do not have the benefit of the clear-cut relationship with Moscow that Sid French wants (which has some compensations from a bureaucratic point of view) nor can they escape political responsibility for the Russian leadership's crimes. On the contrary, the next incident like the invasion of Czechoslovakia will hit the CPGB even harder precisely because of their "independent" line.

From a more general point of view one can say that the CPGB stands at a crossroads: is it to continue being a party which reflects the interests of the Moscow bureaucracy in this country or is it going to evolve into what amounts to a small social-democratic party?

Because the Soviet bureaucracy rests upon the nationalised property relations created by the October revolution and has to defend those property relations - in its own manner - the fact that the CPGB reflects the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy means it retains a vestige of a link with the October revolution.

Although this policy means acting against the interests of world revolution and the building of socialism whenever this conflicts with the aims of the Russian bureaucracy (and this is most of the time!) it also means that the CPGB does not behave entirely like an ordinary social democratic party.

In the event of the interests of the Russian bureaucracy clashing with those of the ruling class in Britain there is a tendency for the CPGB to oppose the capitalist class. This gives it a certain amount of "revolutionary" capital, which is a major factor explaining the Communist Party's ability to survive despite all its twists and turns and the effects of the crimes of Stalinism.

Of course, the CPGB - together with all other parties supporting Moscow - is following a reformist policy, but this reformism is always distorted by its reliance on the Russian bur-

but the beginning.....

By Pat Jordan

eaucracy. This is also the basic reason why it is possible for the CPGB to make "left" - even ultra left - turns.

Whilst it retains this character and whilst the nationalised property relations exist in the Soviet Union, thus making the latter an objective revolutionary factor, the CPGB will always tend to draw to it working class militants and leftward moving youth, thus "regenerating" it. Owing to the crisis of Stalinism, especially the Sino-Soviet conflict, this has been less of a factor in recent years - however it remains the most important political capital the CPGB has.

Hence those people in the CPGB who think their problems will be over by getting rid of this embarrassing relationship are absolutely mistaken. On the contrary, the achievement of complete "independence" from Moscow, unless accompanied by a complete change in policy - in fact its transformation into a revolutionary group - would merely convert the CPGB into a small reformist party. Such a party could have very little influence and most likely would have a short life, why should people support a small reformist party with no electoral prospects when they can join a big one which has the possibility of being the government party?

As a matter of fact, it is possible for the link to be retained with the gains of the October revolution without subordination to the Russian bureaucracy. This is done by having a policy of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union and other workers states and by supporting the struggles of the workers, intellectuals and youth of the workers states in their fight for socialist democracy. This Trotskyist policy, which includes full support for political revolution against the bureaucracy, is diametrically opposed to the Gollan policy of supporting which ever group of bureaucrats happens to be in power in the Soviet Union at a particular time. Because of their Stalinist training it is virtually impossible for the leadership of the CPGB to adopt the former position.

This, then, is the background to the current crisis in the CPGB. This basic dilemma was the unspoken contradiction underpinning all the discussions in the Congress.

Congress started off with an acrimonious dispute over the refusal of the resolutions committee to allow discussion on the numerous resolutions and amendments from branches on Czechoslovakia (no less than 99!). This had the effect of making the whole discussion pivot around the executive committee's resolution, which merely endorsed the party's stand in opposing the invasion. Nearly one-third of the delegates supported the reference back of this proposal after hearing Jack Dunman denounce the decision "as grave interference with the rights of this Congress."

Several of the resolutions and amendments had included demands for a deeper examination of the reasons for the state of affairs which led up to the invasion.

After a discussion in which both sides mobilised well-known speakers (especially industrial militants), the executive committee's resolution was passed by 295 votes to 118. In addition there were presumably about 30 abstentions because the number of delegates over the week end was 435. This vote shows the strength of the grip of the Gollan bureaucracy: in the discussion at district leadership level, about 9 months ago, no less than 40% of the votes had been cast against or abstained on the leadership's policy. Since then the opposition has gained ground: for instance, one former member of the executive committee, Ida Hackett from Mansfield, explained to the Congress how she had come to change her mind to support the invasion (she was not elected to the executive committee!)

Other attempts by the pro-Moscow opposition to change party policy were even more soundly defeated; receiving votes of only 40 to 60-odd. Clearly there was little support for them outside the two district organisations the opposition control: Hants and Dorset, and Surrey.

Apart from the Czechoslovakian vote, the biggest opposition to the leadership came on the question of nationalism. As is well-known the CPGB has never had a principled position on the question - not even in the days of Lenin's and Trotsky's leadership of the Third International. Now it is trying to "hop on the nat-

ionalist bandwagon" by including the demand for separate Welsh and Scottish parliaments in its programme.

This is an important question from the point of view of King Street: it is not generally realised that the biggest sufferers from the recent upsurge of nationalism have been Communist Party candidates. In Scotland it seems reasonably certain that in certain areas up to 50% of the traditional Communist Party vote has been lost to the nationalists.

Feeling this pressure, the Scottish district committee of the CP proposed an amendment that would include an English parliament in the programme. The logic behind this proposal is that this would entail a full commitment to the idea that Britain is federation of nations. This proposal received 98 votes with 21 abstentions (there were 214 votes against; adding these votes up one gets a total of 333, which presumably means that up to 100 of the delegates had gone home when the vote was taken on Tuesday).

Two of the most prominent Scottish members of the executive committee, Hugh Wyper, of the Glasgow trades council, and Jimmy Reid, supported the Gollan leadership against their own district committee. This may be the explanation of Jimmy Reid's resignation recently as Scottish district secretary.

There was another small opposition on the question of nationalism: 17 votes (plus 16 abstentions) for the South Kensington amendment to delete references to Scottish and Welsh parliaments. It was interesting to note that the supporters of this amendment used the very same arguments that the CPGB leadership had used in the past when its line was to oppose nationalism as a diversion.

When it came to the discussion on "Left Unity and the Fight against Monopolies", apart from the Surrey and Hants. and Dorset propositions two other critical positions emerged. Barnet Letsky, of Edgware, moved that the party should call for abstention in the coming general election where there was no CP candidate and the Labour candidate did not support left policies.

There were also two resolutions from the Manchester graduates' branch calling for the CPGB to support "united left" candidates instead of right-wing Labour candidates.

Both these propositions were defeated with only a handful of votes in favour. Whilst they were confused and had both sectarian and

opportunist undertones, in the given context, one can say the supporters of these propositions represented a left tendency, which was reacting against the opportunism of the leadership, especially the latter's attitude towards so-called Labour lefts.

One of the clearest expressions of the Kautskyste opportunism of the British Road to Socialism was the speech of one John Peck, East Midlands district secretary and parliamentary candidate for Nottingham North. Mr. Peck, who used to go on demonstrations wearing his DFC (received for his exploits in bombing German workers' homes during the second world war) said the party strategy "involves transforming Parliament into a real instrument of the people." He added, hopefully, "In a socialist Parliament, Communist MPs will be vital - if we are serious about socialism, we have to be serious out elections."

One other interesting contribution is worth noting: Peter Slade, a London delegate, criticised the resolution on foreign affairs for not posing a positive alternative to the Common Market. He argued that the party should raise the slogan of the United Federation of Socialist States of Europe. He was probably unaware as to how heretical this "Trotskyist" slogan is regarded by King Street. Summing up, one can say that the differences at the conference were the biggest that have been expressed in recent years (almost certainly the most profound since the takeover by the Dutt/Pollitt group). However, there was no rounded out left current, only the hint of one to come. There were very contradictory trends: some of those supporting the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia thought they were making a "left" criticism of the leadership's opportunism. Many of those who wished to have a more thorough-going critique of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia combined this with an even more right-wing version of the British Road to Socialism approach. Such confusion should be expected: the CPGB has a low political level and has no tradition of internal political discussion of fundamental issues.

In addition, the main motor force of the crisis in the CPGB has been the impact of the international crisis of Stalinism; this explains the dichotomy between the way it pushes people on foreign and domestic issues. However, in a period of intensified class struggle and the appearance of large vanguard forces to the left of the CPGB, the crisis will combine the effects of international and domestic pressures. When this occurs the death-knell of the Stalinist-trained leadership of the CPGB will be at hand.

Vietnam and the Left— editorial

The November 23rd Vietnam demonstration was a modest (but very useful) success. Whilst numbers were still down feeling was militant. We succeeded in mobilising quite wide sections - thus confounding those who said this was no longer possible. In truth, only the ANZAVW, IMG, VSC and YCL really worked for the action. Just how wrong others were in saying the Vietnam issue was dead was shown by the impact of the atrocity disclosures.

Already steps have been taken to start work to organise a united action around the time Wilson is due to go to Washington. We welcome the decision of the SLL to organise its own demonstration on January 11th as a step in the right direction.

We must (and can) re-build the united front in solidarity with the Vietnamese people. In particular, we need to mount a campaign to expose the Labour Government's despicable role (the statements by Brown and Senator Muskie confirm all our charges).

We appeal to all on the left to join us; but it must be made clear that no left group which refuses to join a united front in support of the Vietnamese people can claim to be genuinely anti-imperialist.

We need to work harder than ever in support of action to aid the Vietnamese people in co-operation with the world-wide anti-Vietnam war movement.

Teachers: the Government's dilemma

The last few weeks have seen a pay revolt by an estimated 85,000 teachers in schools all over England and Wales. No-one should underestimate the very real dilemma facing the Government and British capitalism on education at the moment.

From a general social point of view, the bourgeoisie could never allow a situation to continue where teachers, who are the custodians of bourgeois values and who transmit these values to the younger generation, are permanently disaffected and question the values of a society which does not pay them a fair living wage commensurate with what they consider to be their important role in society.

So, Mr Short, Secretary of State for Education, echoed by large sections of the bourgeois press, has to admit that teachers should be paid "an awful lot more" and that their pay is not in keeping with their contribution to society.

But British capitalism, in its weakened condition, will find it difficult to grant a claim for an increase of £135 on the basic scale of all teachers, however just the claim may be (and public sympathy is right behind the teachers in this). Alan Day in the *Observer* talks of "harsh economic facts" while Short maintains "the country" cannot afford it. In fact, "the country" is finding it impossible to meet the increasing social costs of education as a whole, of which teachers' salaries are only a part.

But where Mr Short can plead economic necessity, and meet with only mild protest, for cut-backs in educational spending which have already affected school building programmes and staffing ratios, he can ignore the angry mood of teachers only at the risk of deep crisis in the social system.

The classic way to deal with this problem facing the Government would be to apply a policy of "divide and rule" to the teachers' pay claim as they have been able to do so successfully in the past, when sections of teachers, particularly older, conservative elements, have been bribed at the expense of the basic scale and their colleagues at the lower end of the pay structure. (In the present case the bribe may be offered to London teachers.)

If we can judge the new consciousness amongst teachers correctly, however, young teachers particularly have reached a point where they are not prepared to sit back and allow themselves to be sold

out by the bureaucracy without putting up a strong fight. It is unlikely that the National Union of Teachers' Executive, which has already been forced to make militant noises in response to pressure from the ranks, will find a sell-out as easy as in 1961. (Although brake signs have already appeared. For instance a motion to call out more schools on 2-week strike action after many more schools than expected had volunteered for such action, was defeated on the E.C.)

It is almost certain that the Government will apply a more sophisticated policy, attempting to introduce methods and concepts already developed in industry into education generally and teaching in particular. Under a new plan, teachers would get increases in some form, but they would make a deal with the government to cooperate in the modernisation and stream-lining of teaching.

Education provides the future technocrats, the highly-skilled labour force and educated populace that a modern capitalist economy demands. Paradoxically, British capitalism, in its present weakened form, is unable to make resources available to pay for what is essential for its own survival. It is forced to economise and so attack general educational standards. On the other hand, it will certainly attempt to extract the maximum from available resources. Education is very expensive in terms of manpower, say the bourgeois economists. Therefore we should not be surprised by any moves towards greater productivity, which—let us be clear about this—can only mean an attack on the working conditions of teachers and on the quality of education children will receive in the schools. Rationalisation of the pay structure of teachers, the reorganisation of staff-pupil ratios in schools, with even larger classes and the pooling of man-power between some schools, a differentiation between teachers' salaries based on supply and demand, where science teachers would be paid more than history or language teachers—all these concepts will be introduced, as they have been already, in an attempt to cut down on labour costs and in the last analysis, make the teachers pay with their own sweat and blood.

The attitude of socialists to any moves to apply the concept of productivity to education must be very clear. Socialist teachers working within the teachers' organisations and pressure groups must correctly analyse and fight against any attack on the working conditions of teachers, whether direct or indirect, which must inevitably mean an attack on the quality of education the children receive in the schools. (For instance, no-one can deny

the detrimental effect on children of large classes, where teachers do not have time to deal with individual pupils and are continually working under emotional stress.)

It is in this way that the present struggle for higher wages can be extended and fused with the fight for better conditions and so for a better quality in education. Teachers must look outwards into the community and extend the struggle to include:

(a) the students in the training colleges who will be teachers in a few years' time and stand lose most from any defeats inflicted now on the teachers' movement: the link-up has already begun with militant support for the teachers' pay-claim coming from many students, but it needs to be organised and structured.

(b) the trade union movement which should campaign for active support of the teachers' demands, and locally inform and mobilise the parents of those children who would be the main sufferers from any deterioration in educational standards—the working class. If the present struggle takes on all the signs of becoming a protracted one, teachers should organise public meetings to explain their case.

The implications of Government policy on education must be analysed and explained patiently by all socialist teachers down to the last detail of planning in the classroom. The present struggle for better pay should not be considered as an isolated issue, but must be seen in the context of the attack on educational standards generally.

Joan Grundy

Bolivia: Release the prisoners!

La Paz

With respect to the recent developments, the La Paz Regional Committee of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario [Revolutionary Workers Party, the Bolivian section of the Fourth International] states the following:

1. The nationalisation of the Gulf Oil Co. is a triumph for the Bolivian people and its revolutionary sectors. It is a battle won in the war of national and social liberation that the Bolivians are waging against capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression.

In saluting this popular victory and declaring our support to it, we Trotskyists remind the people that this anti-imperialist triumph is bound up with the struggle of the Nancaburu guerrillas, with Che Guevara, Inti Peredo, and their comrades. It is a result of the struggle of these fighters, who, in March 1967 and later, said, "Enough imperialist exploitation!" and by their example and their heroism touched a responsive chord in our entire Bolivian fatherland.

2. The expulsion of the Gulf Oil Co. is a step forward. But the struggle of revolutionists does not end there, because no other road to civilisation and progress for the peoples is possible but the one that leads through socialist construction.

If the capitalist system is retained, if the oppressive structure continues with the bourgeoisie in power, imperialism will find ways to pervert this conquest and integrate it into its machinery, as was the case with the measures enacted under the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement] Regime.

Therefore, we call upon the Bolivian masses to mobilise and close ranks around the consistent revolutionists, who, arms in hand, opened up the road for the liberation of Bolivia. We call upon the masses to remain alert against the machinations of the defenders and puppets of imperialism and those others who would substitute tinkering and piecemeal measures from above for the great revolutionary march of socialism which is generated from below.

Every step forward, every triumph, must be consolidated; but we cannot stop there, we must go forward.

3. The struggle against imperialism in Bolivia has its martyrs, its heroes, its victims. To those who gave their lives, like Che Guevara, Inti Peredo, and their companions, we pay grateful homage in this hour when the people have dealt a blow to imperialism.

But for the victims of this patriotic struggle, who crowd the prisons, we demand unconditional release. If we are going to fight imperialism, it makes no sense to continue persecuting and imprisoning the best anti-imperialist fighters.

Together with the revolutionary people, we demand the immediate release of Felipe Vasquez, J. Moreno, Cordova, Chambi, Ortega, Pereja, Orosa, and all the revolutionary patriots imprisoned in the Panoptico de San Pedro.



HUGO
GONZALAS
MOSCOSO

At the same time, we demand the release of Leyola Guzman, Tertu T. de Orasa, Geraldine de Coronada, who are being held in the Obrajes Women's prison; Regis Debray and C. Bustos who are in the military prison in Camiri.

Together with the revolutionary people, we Trotskyists demand instant cessation of the furious persecution and the attacks on the liberty of the general secretary of the POR, Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, and all our national leaders.

The release of the revolutionary fighters will also be a victory over imperialism!

For the La Paz Regional Committee of the POR:
Jose F. Mirabel M.; Juan M. Alegria L.; Macario Plata Siles.
17 October 1969

Discussion on the origins of the "International Socialism" group

I would like to correct one or two of the historical inaccuracies that appeared in Dave Windsor's article criticising the International Socialism group. He repeats the same calumnies and falsifications as the *Workers' Press*. Both claim that the *Socialist Review*, which was the precursor of IS, came into existence when "some members of the British Section of the Fourth International wavered and opposed the policy of defencism of the Soviet Union, China and North Korea".

This is not true. As a former member of the RCP, let me tell you, from my own personal experience, what happened. Some of us had rejected, for some considerable time, Trotsky's views on the Soviet Union. I had, for example, written an article in the socialist discussion journal *Left* (November 1947), in which I suggested that Russia was state capitalist. The following year, Cliff published a long internal document advancing the same position in a more detailed way.

We were told that we had the right to hold our views, trying to persuade the majority of the validity of our position. The RCP leadership argued it was merely applying, in British conditions, the policy that Trotsky advocated in the Socialist Workers' Party in 1940. He had never favoured a split on the question of the class nature of Russia; even if in a minority, he thought James P. Cannon & Co. should show they had faith in their ideas by staying within the organisation and fighting for them.

But tolerance and internal democracy ended with the beginning of the Korean war. The Trotskyist organisation, now led by Gerry Healy, dispensed with such niceties. Discarding Trotsky's view, it deliberately engineered a split with those members who disagreed with its line on Russia. For instance, I was expelled from the Manchester branch without hearing the charges against me or even being invited to the meeting.

From the foregoing, I think it is clear Dave Windsor is wrong on two counts: first, many of us took an anti-defencist position well before 1951 ... in other words, it wasn't the Korean war, as he suggests, that made us change our minds; and, secondly, that revolutionary unity was shattered by Healy's expulsion ... we had no alternative but to start our own organisation.

But the most ludicrous of Dave Windsor's accusations is that somehow or other, by forming the *Socialist Review* group, we were succumbing to the pressure of imperialism. In fact, the opposite was the case. Our line was far more clear, incisive and revolutionary than that of the official Trotskyist group. It was publishing the *Socialist Outlook* at that time, with contributors like Bessie Braddock, Harold Davies (who is now Harold Wilson's private parliamentary) and George Craddock MP.

Bessie Braddock and Gerry Healy may seem to be strange bed-partners ... at least, we can console ourselves that there was no sexual impropriety between them. Nevertheless, the political fruits of their liaison were quite obscene. The *Socialist Outlook*, of 3 October 1952, had the front page headline: "BEVAN GIVES THE LEAD THAT WORKERS WANT". Later, after Bessie Braddock had ended the affair, *Socialist Outlook* still continued to

court left parliamentarians. The issue of 14 May 1954 had the headline: "BEVAN AND MORRISON. It is a Difference of Principle says G. Healy".

The journal also spread other pernicious illusions. Disregarding the class relationship of forces, it believed that, by a little pen-wagging, the Conservatives could be ousted. *Socialist Outlook*, of 27 November 1953, had the front-page banner headline: "THE TORIES MUST RESIGN. Let's have a Petition to Get 'em out!"

In contradistinction to such inanities, the *Socialist Review* maintained a principled, revolutionary line. It had no weekly parliamentary column from Harold Davies MP. It never jumped on the Bevanite bandwagon. Indeed, *Socialist Review* attacked the *Socialist Outlook* for sowing reformist illusions (see, for instance, the issue of November 1952, where I say it "is idiotic fantasy" to claim "Bevan gives the lead the workers want".)

Now I would like to ask Dave Windsor: Does he really think we should have been selling *Socialist Outlook* in the early 'fifties? As one who firmly believes in the truth of Karl Liebknecht's dictum about the anti-war struggle ... "the enemy is at home" ... I would argue that we of the *Socialist Review* group pursued the enemy at home during the Korean war in all his guises (including the left parliamentary one) with far greater consistency than any other tendency.

Yours fraternally,
Raymond Challinor

DAVE WINDSOR COMMENTS

Raymond Challinor criticises me on two points:

(1) that I misrepresented the politics of the origin of the International Socialism tendency; and

(2) that the impression I gave that *Socialist Review* was capitulating to anti-communist pressure was incorrect because that paper had a better record than *Socialist Outlook*.

Let me first say that I never intended to say that the *Socialist Review* comrades adopted their viewpoint just because of the pressure of the Korean war. That is quite beside the point. What I do argue is that it was the pressure of the anti-communist propaganda connected with the Korean war which led them to abandon the defencist position in theory and practice.

Let me say in passing that the key question differentiating Trotskyists from the various tendencies like International Socialism, the Shachtmanites, etc., is *not* the definition of the Soviet Union. Trotsky explained this many times. He even said that it would be possible to make a semantic concession on this point. On the contrary, the key question is that of whether one is a defencist or not.

If state capitalists are consistent they will draw the conclusion from their analysis that all the gains of the October revolution have been lost and that therefore revolutionaries have no duty to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism. The logic of this position leads them to deny that we should be on the side of other

workers states against imperialism. This is why the difference between Trotskyists and "state capitalists" is a principled one. According to the Trotskyist view that the Soviet Union, China, Yugoslavia, Cuba and Eastern Europe are workers' states of one form or another (deformed or degenerated, etc.) it is a question of class loyalty to defend them against imperialism.

I am not disputing in any way that The Group, as it was known then, under the leadership of Healy and Lawrence (did Challinor forget that?), acted badly in their treatment of the state capitalist minority (among others). However, it is well-known that members of that minority had publicly recorded themselves against 100% unconditional support of the Korean workers' state against U.S. imperialism—in Birmingham Trades Council, for example.

It will not be profitable for readers of *International* to be treated to a regurgitation of a 20-year-old organisational dispute. It is a pure red herring for Challinor to pose the question thus. The real test of the politics of the state capitalists is what they did once they set up their own organisation.

The public platform of the state capitalists was, of course, their own journal *Socialist Review*. I am certain that Raymond Challinor will not try to say that the contents of this journal were determined by his (or anyone else's) bureaucratic expulsion from the Group.

In issue number one, Bill Ainsworth was very clear about the paper's position on the Korean war:

"Since the outbreak of the war in Korea, the *Socialist Outlook* has campaigned for full and unconditional support for the Stalinist forces in Korea ... this attitude is, of course, fundamentally identical with that of the Stalinists and their fellow-travellers. Consequently, we consider it our socialist duty to urge all those whose socialist hopes were raised when the *Outlook* was launched in 1948, to enquire now as we intend to do—whither *Socialist Outlook*? ..." This was followed by a long attack on *Socialist Outlook* for, among other things, not criticising the North Koreans as much as it did the South Koreans.

In the early 1950s the Korean war had virtually the same international significance as has the Vietnam war in the late 1960s. A defeat of the Koreans, which would almost certainly have been followed by the invasion of China, would have been a first-rate disaster for world revolution. The defeat of the American-led forces, although it was not decisive, was a tremendous impulse for the world revolutionary forces. British troops were fighting alongside the Americans: it was therefore mandatory for revolutionaries in this country to give "full and unconditional" support to the Korean and Chinese struggle.

Socialist Review, as innumerable quotations from its columns will prove, was on the wrong side of the barricades in this key question.

Raymond Challinor makes great play with the fact that the official Trotskyists were publishing a paper which could contain articles by people like Bessie Braddock et al.

Some basic points have to be made on this question. First of all, *Socialist Outlook* was an entry paper. Its aim was to regroup a viable left wing in the Labour Party to give a structured response to the growing rightward drift of the Labour Party. On the whole, I am of the opinion that under the circumstances prevailing at that time it followed a fairly correct policy. That it was too uncritical of Bevan can be accepted—the leadership of the Fourth International criticised Healy on this point at the time (internally, this was before Healy broke with the Fourth International).

I am sure that Raymond Challinor is very well aware of the reasons why Trotskyists adopted the entry tactic in those years. He himself—and I do not criticise him for this—became a Labour Par-

ty candidate as part of his entry work. Moreover, the *Socialist Review* group practised entry and transformed their paper into a de facto entry paper.

In fact, the *Socialist Review* on occasions went farther than the *Socialist Outlook*. Thus Raymond Challinor, in a front-page article in the very same issue he refers to in his letter (November, 1952) says:

"... We, on the other hand, are confident that our demands, such as further nationalisation, workers' control of industry and independence from both imperialist war camps, will ultimately—and democratically!—gain majority acceptance within the (Labour) party. Then, on the basis of such a socialist policy the workers can go forward to the final victory of socialism."

Readers of these lines can be forgiven if they detect a sign of "reformist illusions" in these words. To argue that the Labour Party can be won for socialist policies and that on the basis of these policies the workers will go forward to the "final victory of socialism" sounds suspiciously like what the Tribunitaires are saying today.

Raymond Challinor understood the necessity of "deep" entry in the early 1960s. Writing in the March 1961 issue of *Socialist Review*, as Labour Party councillor in Newcastle, Staffs, he complained bitterly that the Labour Party NEC had "unilaterally, without first seeing whether the Liberal or Tory Parties intended to suspend theirs", cancelled a conference for Labour Groups on Local Authorities. But of greater interest to me is his reference to the "forthright Harold Davies of Leek" losing his parliamentary seat—this was written several years after the proscription of *Socialist Outlook* by the Labour Party.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s one could find the names of Cllr. Peggy Duff, Eric Heffer, Sid Bidwell, and Stan Nowens quite regularly in the columns of *Socialist Review*. For a period there was even a regular column by Peggy Rushton, the then secretary of the Movement for Colonial Freedom; even Bill Jones put in an appearance. In those days it was customary for a writer in *Socialist Review* to state—almost like a soldier giving his name and number—his Constituency Labour Party, and very often, the appellation "prospective candidate for ..." appeared. I am not suggesting that any of this is wrong per se, but there is an old saying about people in glass houses ...

Who then is guilty of "historical inaccuracies"? International Socialism group members seem to be very apprehensive about a discussion of their history. Despite one rather half-hearted attempt in an editorial in *International Socialist* they have never really tried to explain why they adopted one position on Korea and another on Vietnam. Instead it seems to me that they would like to forget their origins. This is a very bad sign in a political tendency—it is very dishonest, for instance, for Duncan Hallas to give a potted and highly inaccurate and biased account of Trotskyism in the 1950s without even mentioning the coming into existence of the *Socialist Review* group (in the October/November issue of *International Socialism*).

The purpose of my article was not to delve into history but to try to draw out the politics of the International Socialism group by putting them in their historical context. As Marxists we realise that it is not only important to analyse where a political tendency stands at a particular moment. To understand it fully we need to examine its origins and where it is going. On this basis we can expect and understand such incidents as the disgraceful behaviour of Chris Harman at the Ho Chi Minh memorial meeting.

There are signs that increasing numbers of members of International Socialism are beginning to understand that something is basically wrong with their organisation. It is to be hoped that they realise that the source of this weakness is in their theory of state capitalism and the main conclusion (non-defencism) that they draw from it.

Czechoslovakia & Unity of the Left

Text of leaflet distributed to delegates to 31st Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain by the International Marxist Group.

The 1969 pre-conference discussion of the Communist Party of Great Britain has been the most bitter in its history. All over the country the party is divided on the question of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The columns of *Comment* and the *Morning Star* have been filled with letters for and against the leadership's position on the invasion. It is an open secret that the work of the party, especially in the industrial field, has suffered from this conflict.

Those who have opposed the leadership's line have sought to blame the party's "lack of internationalism" (their quaint phrase for opposition to the invasion) for the decline in membership and the difficulties of the *Morning Star*. Those supporting the leadership have pointed to the damage done by the invasion to the party and say that even more would be done if it came out in support of the Russian-led invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The International Marxist Group believe that neither the supporters nor the opponents of the leadership have the answer to this problem.

First it must be said that we, together with virtually every other section of the left, completely condemn the invasion. We support the right of the Czechoslovak people to self-determination and to choose their own leaders. Saying this in no way implies uncritical support for Dubcek & co.; there is no doubt that the policies of Otto Sik would have led to greater differentials in wages and unemployment. The latter, of course, is very different from the restoration of capitalism. On the other hand, we feel that the condemnation of the invasion by the leadership of the CPGB fails because it is not linked to analysing the reasons for that invasion.

This is why opponents of the condemnation have been able to gain ground. The *Palme Dutt*s, *Sid French*s & co. have also been able to link that condemnation to an increasing drift to the right by the leadership. For these reasons many industrial militants in the party support the opposition to the leadership.

Furthermore, your leadership is extremely vulnerable because of the whole-hearted support it gave to the Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956, to say nothing of its support of the Russian lea-



Soviet tank in Prague

ders' campaign against Yugoslavia (to the extent of publishing a book by James Klugmann which condemned Tito as a police agent and fascist!) The invasion of Hungary was indeed, in some ways, a worse crime against socialism. Dubcek, so far, has at least not suffered the fate of Nagy and Maler.

Just to oppose the Russian-led invasion of Czechoslovakia without making a fundamental examination of how this could happen plays into the hands of anti-communists.

Socialists and Marxists have always accepted that wars, aggression, etc. are the products of capitalism. To say that one "socialist" country can commit the crime of invading another "socialist" country without saying that something is basically wrong is to place a question-mark over our whole conception of the socialist future of mankind. Did Lenin and the Bolshevik party make their revolution to create a state which would, 51 years after its inception, commit such a crime? Are you, today, working for a socialist Britain which, decades after its establishment would, for example,

THE INCONSISTENCIES OF "STATE CAPITALISM"

by ERNEST MANDEL

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invade socialist Belgium? To pose these questions demonstrates the gravity of the problems facing socialists when they consider the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

An analysis has to be made of this event in Marxist terms; if we cannot do this we implicitly reject the Marxist method. We cannot take refuge in "psychological" explanations (the fears and misconceptions of the Russian leadership). This explanation rejects the Marxist method for the bourgeois theory of an individualistic explanation of historical events. It is also a very gloomy theory: what guarantee have we that future socialist countries, including Britain, will not be led by leaderships with paranoid fears?

We ask all members of the Communist Party to consider the Trotskyist explanation of this phenomenon; one which does not reject Marxism nor take refuge in the psychology of Russian leaders.

This theory states that the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, together with all the other crimes of the Soviet leadership, can be explained in terms of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalin. The essence of this view is that because of the isolation of the Russian revolution and the economic backwardness of the country conditions were favourable for the rise of a bureaucratic caste. This caste, by getting control of the party and the state apparatus in the fight against the left opposition, usurped political power in the Soviet Union. Since its victory, the Soviet leadership, whilst resting on nationalised property relations, has defended its own privileges at the expense of the interests of the Russian working class and world revolution. We do not accept, as some do, that the rise of this bureaucracy was "inevitable" or even progressive. Had the left opposition won its fight, policies would have been pursued which would have rapidly ended the isolation of the revolution.

This theory has nothing to do with the anti-communist idea of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. We believe that just as socialists must always defend trade unions, even if trade union bureaucrats control them, so long as they remain workers' organisations, so socialists must always defend the workers' states against the attacks of capitalism. However the task of communists is not to blindly follow these bureaucratic leaders; on the contrary they should be criticised constantly and the workers of these countries should be assisted to overthrow the bureaucrats.

Looked at from this point of view, we can see that the Russian leaders invaded Czechoslovakia because they were frightened of the Czech example inspiring the workers and intellectuals of the Soviet Union. Just as the Czech students and workers managed to get rid of Navotny and the worst aspects of the repression, the Russian people would be encouraged to struggle against their bureaucratic leaders. Hence the invasion.

Once this theory of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union, best explained in Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, is grasped, such monstrous crimes as the Moscow trials, the forced collectivisation of Russian agriculture, the treatment of Yugoslavia, the purges in Eastern Europe, the invasion of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the Sino/Soviet dispute, etc., are explicable. In each case what is involved is not the aberration of a particular Soviet, Chinese or East European leader, but a case of these leaders, representing social forces, putting their own privileged bureaucratic interests before those of socialism and world revolution.

But more is involved for British communists.

Members of the British Communist Party must often ask themselves why it is that their party—despite the obvious devotion and

militancy of its members—has been so unsuccessful after nearly fifty years of struggle. Despite the great advances of world revolution in this period and despite the resources of the party (having a daily paper for nearly 40 years, for instance) the CPGB remains a relatively small group. In the past half-century there have been four Labour Governments which have attacked the working class; British Toryism was utterly exposed by the second world war, and yet today the Communist Party's influence in the working class is certainly no greater than when it was formed; its influence among young workers and students is less. To blame all this on to capitalist propaganda is to say the fight is unwinnable.

Again we believe that this state of affairs can be explained by the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union.

When Stalin conducted his struggle against the left opposition he also gained control of the third international for the bureaucracy. Systematically the leaderships of the world's communist parties were changed or bludgeoned until they carried out the wishes of the Soviet leadership. It is worth noting that Palme Dutt played a leading role in replacing the original leadership of the CPGB with Russian nominees in the 1929-31 period. This is the basic explanation of all the shifts, zigzags and 180-degree turns of the communist parties. This is why your party could change its policies so drastically on such questions as the attitude towards the Labour Party, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the second world war, etc. It is the explanation of why your party's leaders could throw Marxism-Leninism out of the window by adopting the "peaceful road to socialism" when this suited the "peaceful co-existence" policies of the Soviet leadership.

Because of this behaviour big sections of the working class do not trust the CPGB—they regard it as a party which does not decide its own policy. There are, moreover, thousands of people who have been members of the party but, whilst retaining left-wing ideas, oppose the party because of their experiences.

Whilst the policy of following the Russian leadership blindly is beginning to change, the reformist policies flowing from that stance are still adhered to. Members of the CPGB should demand a return to the teachings of Lenin on revolution, as outlined in his *State and Revolution*. These ideas have been absolutely vindicated: nowhere in the fifty-odd years since this book was written has the working class won state power by peaceful means; on the contrary where capitalism has been destroyed it has been through revolutionary action.

Today there are big forces on the left, especially among the revolutionary-minded youth, which reject reformist illusions. The future of members of the CPGB lies in unity with these forces rather than "dialogues with Christians" and holding the hands of Tribune MPs. We appeal to you to work in your party for a united front of revolutionary forces:

**for complete nationalisation with workers' control;
against all anti-working class policies of the employers and Government;
for solidarity with all national liberation and socialist movements—especially the Vietnamese and Palestine revolutions;
for a Britain with a socialist foreign policy—against imperialism and in alliance with all anti-imperialist forces.**

Such a front could be built which would be smaller but more effective than more amorphous formations. Such a front does not mean full programmatic agreement: the success of the VSC proves this. If the present discussion in the CPGB assists in clarity on such questions, it will have been positive.

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