

The Newsletter

WEEKLY ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

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B/OSSL FILE

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MARCH

WITH THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS
AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR

From MARBLE ARCH

SUNDAY, JULY 18 1.30 p.m. Coaches from all areas in London

**US imperialism
Get out of Vietnam!**

**Victory to the
Vietcong!**

Expose Wilson!

Demonstrate on July 18!

'Tribune' and Vietnam

DEFEAT IMPERIALISM IN VIETNAM!

**CALL BY SOCIALIST
LABOUR LEAGUE**

EVERY socialist must welcome the successes of the national-liberation fighters in South Vietnam. A victory for these heroic workers and peasants over U.S. imperialism and its puppets will be a major blow against the enemies of the labour movement throughout the world.

The Labour leaders conspire with these enemies to try to help extricate them from their difficulties. Wilson's 'peace mission' had this as its object.

His pretended concern about 'peace' is exposed for what it is by his continued support for every brutal atrocity perpetrated by the imperialists against the Vietnamese people.

Those pretended 'lefts' who talk of the need for a 'negotiated settlement' and the re-call of the 1954 Geneva Conference, are only covering up Wilson's treachery.

Brockway and his associates try to prevent a real struggle against the government's pro-imperialist line by calling for 'mediation' between the Vietcong and the Americans.

In this they are abetted by the so-called Communist Party. After a fortnight's junketing in Hanoi, John Gollan, secretary of the British Communist Party, welcomes the campaign of Brockway and Silverman, which refuses to take the side of the Vietnamese revolution.

Despite all their suffering and hardship, the workers and peasants of Vietnam press on towards victory. Their struggle is ours also.

Socialists must fight for the defeat of the Labour government on the question of the Vietnam war. It is a pro-imperialist government.

We must fight to weaken the ability of the British capitalists and their servants in the Labour government and call on our American comrades to do the same, so that the Vietcong will have more victories, so that the American, British and Commonwealth forces in Vietnam and South-East Asia will be defeated.

We welcome every victory by the Vietcong against these forces because that will weaken the capitalist enemy here at home as well as in Asia.

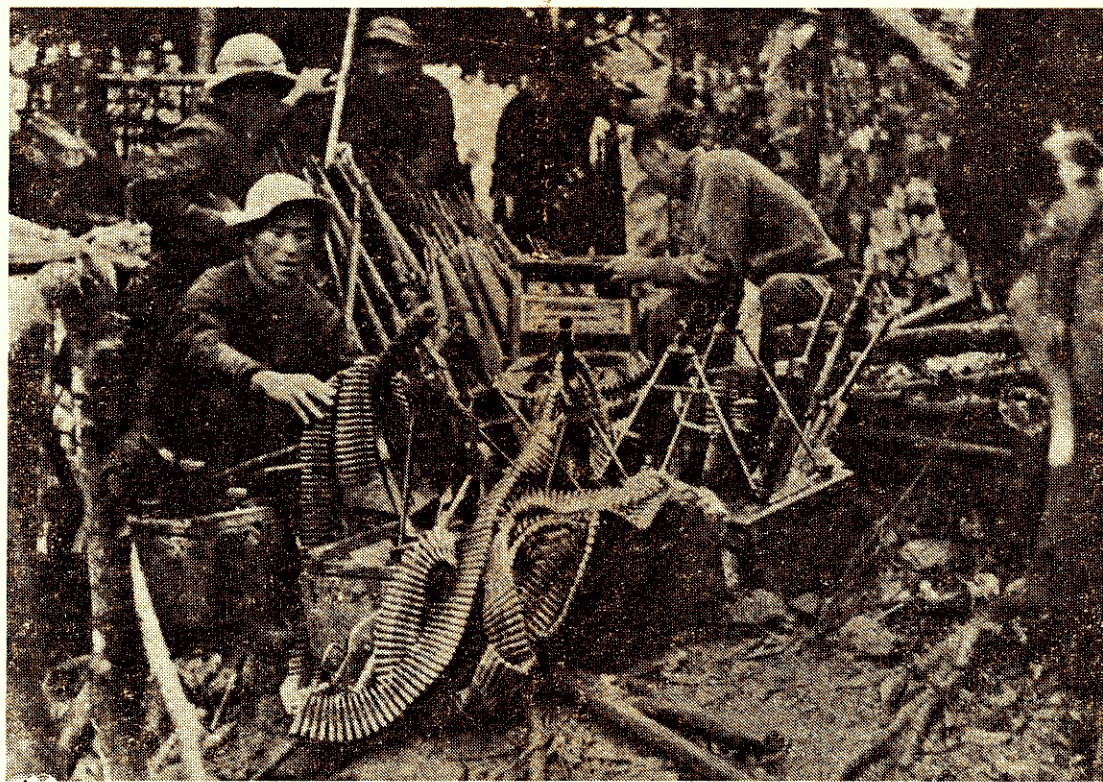
In these struggles, inspired by the fight of the Vietnamese people, we shall build a Marxist party in Britain, as part of the Fourth International, which will break the stranglehold of the Wilsons, Brockways and Gollans on the working-class movement, and smash imperialism once and for all.

The Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League calls on all sections of the movement to support the demonstration called by the Young Socialists on July 18.

The compromisers who would rob the Vietnam liberation forces of victory must not be allowed to mislead the growing opposition to imperialist action in Asia, and to the imperialist puppet, Wilson.

Statement by the Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League

July 3/4, 1965



Vietcong examine an arsenal of captured American weapons.

Hysterical hypocrisy from fake lefts

By John Crawford

THE editorial in last week's 'Tribune' shows very clearly the real meaning of the kind of politics peddled in that journal.

With an emphasis almost amounting to hysteria it says: '... the Vietcong, the Chinese, and perhaps even the bomb-battered North Vietnamese, draw the wrong conclusion—the conclusion that given time and resolution on their part, the Americans can be driven into the sea and a total victory gained. ... It won't happen.'

This principle dominates the thinking of these gentlemen: imperialism is invincible.

The bosses will always be bosses. Talk socialism now and again if you like, but never imagine that anything will come

of it.

That is why, to the applause of the Stalinists, Foot, Silverman and Brockway, and their like, talk about 'peace' in Vietnam. That is why the possibility of a victory of the Vietcong terrifies them.

That is why they will still attempt to cover over Wilson's betrayal of the labour movement.

For years they acted as a safety valve for rank-and-file discontent with the Labour leaders. Instead of a real analysis of the class position of the right wing, they offered piece-meal criticism, and that only when there was no danger of having to take responsibility for acting on it.

They blunted the edge of every attack on imperialism, substituting bucketfuls of sentiment about the sufferings of the colonial peoples for the slightest support for a real fight to end them.

Anyone who still reads 'Tribune' each week can discern several stages in the evolution of its attitudes to Wilson.

From the 1963 Labour Party Conference until after the election, we underwent the period of prolonged applause.

Each piece of feeble demagoguery from the leader was greeted as a major contribution to socialist thought.

Then, as the election promises fell thick and fast, 'Tribune' was silent on a growing list of topics

DELEGATES to the Transport and General Workers' Union conference at Portsmouth this week, passed by an overwhelming majority, a resolution calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Vietnam and for the Labour government to dissociate itself from U.S. policy over Vietnam.

The resolution said: 'That this conference, recognising the need for the government to do all in its power to promote peace in Vietnam, urges the government in its capacity as co-chairman of the peace conference of 1954 to call for the removal of all foreign troops and to dissociate itself from American policy over Vietnam and to continue to press for immediate peace talks.'

In this issue of The Newsletter we state clearly our position on the role of the Labour government and 'peace talks'. But we are sure that the tremendous feeling over the Vietnam issue expressed by the TGWU delegates is indicative of the opposition throughout the labour movement in Britain and the rest of the world to imperialist aggression in South-East Asia.

from pensions to South Africa. Next came some months of pleas and sighs. If only Harold Wilson would see the error of his ways. ...

Now, when the role of the government is too obvious to hide, they have to try to head off the opposition by making a few critical noises.

But while Foot may occasionally condemn Johnson's policies (referring as little as possible to those of his friend Wilson), the essential function of each criticism is to cloak an apology.

In fact, the campaign for a 'peaceful settlement' in Vietnam is an essential part of Wilson's efforts on behalf of imperialism. It follows a regular pattern:

(Cont. page 4, col. 6)



Fenner Brockway



John Gollan

Young Foyle's strikers close to victory

VICTORY is in sight for the 70 strikers at Foyle's bookshop, London, who are now approaching the second month of their strike.

At a meeting on Tuesday between the management and the union, at the Ministry of Labour, Christina Foyle came forward with proposals which, though unacceptable, are a big comedown on her part. For two months she has struck rigidly to a 'no discussion' attitude.

The strikers are demanding a proper wage-for-age scale plus higher commission rates and a higher basic rate for office staff who cannot earn commission.

Foyle's are now offering £11 at the age of 21 for men and £9 10s. for women, a £1 and £1 10s. increase respectively. Christina Foyle said she would come forward with a scale for office staff at a further meeting at the Ministry on Thursday.

The strikers are still demanding increased pay, equal pay for men and women, a raise in commission, reinstatement and no victimisation.

Through their tenacity and unity the young strikers—many from overseas—have almost broken through to an important victory, not only for themselves, but for the many thousands of unorganised shop workers throughout Britain, who must

now become organised in the trades unions and Young Socialists.

It is believed that Foyle's have made a heavy financial loss during the strike—estimated by some to a drop of over one-third—and the Foyle's book clubs have been paralysed by the support for the strike from postmen.

Christina Foyle has hung on grimly but has failed to crush this strike.

The likely victory has come about despite union officials, who have been pushed along by the strength of the strikers to make the wage demands, and flaunt the 'paper' decision of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers conference to back George Brown's wage freeze.

STOP PRESS:

Late on Thursday, Christina Foyle agreed in negotiations to take back all the strikers, including Marius Webb, the 22-year-old strike leader. She offered a further 10s. to the top two age wage rates. She will not grant any extra commission or pay scheme for office staff. The demonstration planned by the strikers for Thursday evening was called off by union organiser Callinan, because 'it might embarrass negotiations'. The strikers were to meet on Friday morning to decide whether to accept Foyle's conditions.

Ealing Young Socialist expelled

TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD Ray Musgrove, a London Transport bus driver and active member of the Young Socialists, was expelled from the Ealing Labour Party this week.

Musgrove was told that he had been expelled—by 14 votes to six—for distributing leaflets opposing the Wilson government. In fact, Musgrove has fought consistently for the policies of the Young Socialists, and while being questioned at the General Management Committee inquiry, found several Labour Party members agreeing with his position on Vietnam.

Among the six who voted against his expulsion were trade union delegates.

Musgrove had been a member of the Labour Party for seven years and stood for the council in Ealing in 1961.

Government of officers in Algeria

By CLIFF SLAUGHTER

ON Monday, July 5, third anniversary of Algerian independence, Colonel Boumediene broke his silence on the composition of the new government. Since the removal of Ben Bella in the coup of June 19, Boumediene has repeatedly said that he had no political ambitions, and that some non-military figure would become head of state.

In fact Boumediene has now been pronounced Prime Minister. This military man leads a government composed almost in its entirety of other military men.

As last week's Newsletter pointed out, political control has been taken over by an army trained outside the liberation struggle which expelled the French. A small group of officers, with only one or two individuals from the Ben Bella government, now rules the country.

None of the exiled or previously deposed right-wing leaders have been persuaded, apparently, to act as front men for the Boumediene clique, whose strength at the moment is probably entirely dependent upon the support they receive from world imperialism.

No doubt the political 'personalities' are extremely unsure of the stability of the new regime, and are afraid of direct army rule which will provoke popular revolt, especially in the present conditions of large-scale unemployment and land-hunger.

NO CLARITY

Boumediene's political declaration on the occasion of the independence celebrations did a little to clarify still further the nature of the new regime. Apart from the now standard description of Ben Bella as a personal dictator, Boumediene's speech stressed the need for work and discipline.

This is ominous, especially when read in conjunction with his reported address to an audience of policemen some days earlier in which he called for action against 'revolutionists' and adventurers.

These, he said, were largely foreigners who had gathered in Algeria to try out their theories by influencing Ben Bella and other FLN leaders.

At the same time as preparing this attack against the left and the working class, Boumediene insisted on the preservation of good relations with the French imperialists, and made it clear that he is making agreements with the most reactionary forces in North Africa.

The talk about the Maghreb

Who cares?

ALMOST daily, we hear of expulsions from the Labour Party of rank-and-file members, who, it is alleged, have done something or other to discredit the Party. But George Brown, Minister for Economic Affairs, is an honourable exception.

He just says and does what he likes. After attacking the Tories, he rushes and apologises to them. These Honourable Gentlemen in the House of Commons know Brown for what he is, a political ally of theirs within the Labour Party.

We are not so much concerned about this, as about the fact that his antics and behaviour are continuously being utilised by the Tory Party to discredit tens of thousands of ordinary sincere men and women who comprise the membership of the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Why should they be laughed at because Brown goes around acting the goat. Of course, it would be too much to hope that he will be expelled for discrediting the Labour Party. After all, in the history of this party not a single right-winger has ever been expelled, whereas hundreds of left-

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Saturday, July 10, 1965

wingers have been severely dealt with.

On top of all this, the party chiefs continuously claim that their difference with the Socialist Labour League is that they are a 'democratic party'. We know that this is a downright lie and George Brown goes on proving it.

The National Executive Committee will remain silent because in fact they are more sympathetic towards him and the Tory Party than towards the rank and file who fight for socialism.

Speak up Prince!

ONE of the misleading legends which is carefully spread around by Tory and Labour Party politicians is that Royalty stands aloof from political opinions.

Prince Phillip has now blown that fairy tale sky high. By poking his nose into Rhodesian affairs and coming down, as he must do, on the side of the most reactionary wing of colonial oppressors, he has revealed for all

to see that Royalty does have political opinions.

The Newsletter says: 'Well spoken, sir!' We hope that you will bawl out your real opinions more frequently in the future. For our part we think it is a shameful disgrace that hirelings of the establishment should seek to gag you. After all, you have never hidden your sympathies with reaction, why should the idea be developed that you have in some way been progressive in your outlook.

As a member of a most out-lived feudal institution, the British monarchy, which should have long ago been swept away, you cannot but think in the way that you do. The next step you should take, of course, is to join the Tory Party and declare that you stand, like all of these representatives of big business, four-square against the interests of the working class.

Better still, might it not be a good idea for you to persuade Elizabeth herself to declare her politics more openly. It would certainly purify the air and every worker would know, as a result, what to do in the coming struggles that lie ahead. You, like Lord Home and his tribe, will then be dealt with similarly.

BELGIUM: Nationalism versus Socialism

Centrist bankruptcy again exposed

by Cliff Slaughter

IN Europe today, new revolutionary parties of the working class are an urgent necessity. The traditional parties of social-democracy (including the British Labour Party) and of Stalinism are being revealed to the mass of workers as incapable of winning reforms, let alone fighting for socialism.

The Socialist Labour League and its international co-thinkers in the Fourth International have insisted that this construction of parties based on Marxist theory is the primary and central task of Trotskyists. Opposing us have been those grouped around the 'Pabloite' United Secretariat in Paris.

Their spokesmen, and particularly Ernest Germain, have insisted that the most important thing is to work within the left-wing or 'centrist' trends which will inevitably emerge in opposition to the right-wing leaders within the old parties.

One of their prize examples has been Belgium. There, a group of socialists around the paper 'La Gauche', edited by Ernest Mandel, worked for many years within the Belgian Socialist Party (PSB), anticipating such a 'centrist' break from the Party.

The break came rather differently from the way they expected. The right-wing leaders of the party simply told them last December that they must cease publishing an opposition paper or they would be thrown out.

Instead of conducting an all-out fight against the witch-hunt, building up their forces

declarations and abandoning the Walloon Workers' Party.

Perin and his collaborators convened last week a conference at Namur together with the Walloon Front and two smaller Walloon movements. These united at the conference into a new 'Walloon Party', into which Perin has led the whole Liège section of the Walloon Workers' Party. (He became an MP, standing for the latter in the recent elections.)

'La Gauche' says of this new party:

6 The congress refused to place socialism and the class struggle in the party programme. It refused to add the word "workers" to the name of the party. It rejected the word "anti-capitalist" to describe the proposed "structural reforms". All this speaks for itself.

Like the leaders of the right wing of the PSB, Perin, Moreau and their friends believe that the "class struggle" is out of date, they consider that "modern socialism" has nothing more to do with Marxism and the Quaregnon Charter, that ideologies should be buried

and "all Walloons united" whatever their social status. 9

Mandel and 'La Gauche' try to make the best of a bad job by criticising Perin at this late stage, and he goes in for the most frantic whistling in the dark when they conclude:

6 Don't let anybody smile too soon; he who laughs last laughs longest. The confusion born of the effort by the Perin tendency to prevent a class orientation, a left socialist orientation, to the new groups which came from the split in the PSB, is now dissolved by Perin himself. The way

is now clear for a federal congress of the Walloon Workers' Party, which will decide to group together with other left socialist forces, beginning with the Union of the Socialist Left. The new left socialist formation, awaited with mounting impatience by many militants, will finally be born, without any doubt by September. 9

Leadership has been abdicated by these people and so they play their own very definite part in the betrayal of the working class, just as they did in Ceylon, Algeria and the USA.

Once again it becomes very clear that the fight against revisionism waged in the columns of The Newsletter and in the sections of the Fourth International is no abstract debate.

We drew attention months ago to precisely these dangers, and we are confident that this theoretical struggle has helped to create the forces in Belgium which will defeat this revisionist and centrist course, setting in motion the reconstruction of the Trotskyist movement in Belgium.

Those who are really exposed by these events and by all the casuistry of 'La Gauche' are the so-called revolutionary socialists around Mandel and the 'Trotskyists' of the Pabloite 'United Secretariat'.



A meeting of the Walloon Popular Movement in Liège last year.

Six Negro youths in frame up trial

NEWSLETTER REPORTER

SIX Harlem Negro youths who have been on trial since May 3, having been held in custody for over a year, face the electric chair for a crime they did not commit.

The Harlem Six, Wallace Baker, aged 20, William Craig, Ronald Felder, Danny Hamm, Robert Rice, all aged 18, and Walter Thomas, aged 19, are charged with the first degree murder of Mrs. Margit Sugar, who was knifed to death in her New York clothes shop on April 19 last year.

Two days earlier, a group of elementary school children, accused of overturning a fruit barrow, were brutally attacked with clubs and guns by police who arrived in six patrol cars.

By-standers were also attacked—one Frank Stafford, lost an eye when clubbed with a police stick.

Baker and Hamm, two of the accused in the murder trial, were also beaten up when they asked a police officer why he was hitting the children.

The attack came at the time of the story, whipped up by the press, that a gang of 'Blood Brothers' were being trained by extremist Muslims to kill white people.

HELD FOR YEAR

Immediately after Mrs. Sugar was killed on April 19, Hamm, Baker and their four friends were arrested.

They have been held for a year, without being brought to trial, and there are claims that they have been ill-treated.

For some of the time, they have been kept in solitary confinement and it is claimed that at the beginning of May Hamm was beaten up by a guard while his hands were handcuffed behind his back. The youths have not been allowed to have the attorney

of their choice.

The prosecution's two main witnesses are Ollie Roe, a drug addict who says he was an eye witness to the killing, and Robert Barnes Jr., a petty thief and suspected addict.

It took several months for Roe to decide that he could recognise any of the accused, and when questioned about the number of youths who had run past the shop where he worked, he gave different numbers on different occasions.

'CONSIDERATION'

Barnes, in a statement, said he had been promised some consideration by the assistant District Attorney, Lehner, regarding three cases pending against him.

His story was that the youths had planned the attack while he was present, and he gave word for word conversations of a year ago.

He said that all the youths had gone to the attack together, but that his father had called him in on the way.

In earlier evidence, Barnes' father said he had seen his son with one youth at the time.

Barnes identified a knife in court which he said he had seen washed and put in Rice's bedroom, but police evidence said the knife was found on the floor of the clothes shop.

There was a complete contradiction between his evidence of what he was told happened in the shop and the evidence of Mr. Sugar.

'RIGHT' ANSWERS

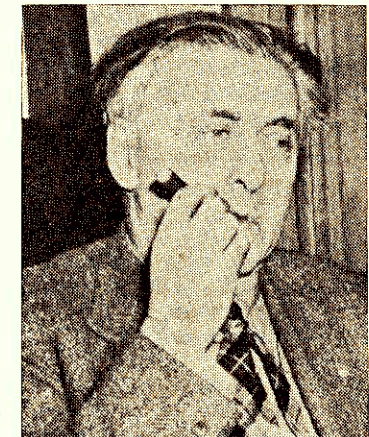
As 'Challenge', weekly newspaper of the Progressive Labour Party, commented:

'Barnes has reasons other than the noble ones which some will ascribe to him. He and Ollie Roe have something in common; they both are in trouble and hope to buy their way out with the "right" answers at the right time.'

This outright and blatant frame-up is part of the wholesale attack by the police and courts on behalf of the capitalist class on youth all over the world. The capitalist class still fears and hates youth who will not accept the conditions in which they live and work.

The whole struggle of youth internationally was adequately expressed by one of the six in a parting shot as he was led from the court:

'There is a way to freedom and courts and judges don't know the way.'



ONE of Stalin's chief literary hacks, Ilya Ehrenburg attempts to cover up his subservience to the bureaucracy in the latest instalment of his memoirs, being printed in the Soviet literary magazine, 'Novy Mir'.

Speaking of the period of the Moscow Trials, he says:

TRIALS PERIOD

'In 1937, I was only aware of certain isolated crimes. Like so many others, I tried to whitewash Stalin in my own eyes. I attributed the mass executions to the struggles which were going on in the middle of the Party. . . .

Franco-German discord threat to the Common Market

by Tom Kemp

THE Common Market has been shaken to its foundations by what amounts to a French threat to break it up.

Although the question of agricultural prices was the immediate occasion for the blow up in Brussels last week, the differences between France and her five partners obviously lie much deeper.

Not that the agricultural issue is of no importance. French agriculture desperately needs a wider market and it is still a lagging section of the economy. Moreover, peasants comprise a still sizeable section of the electorate.

De Gaulle's sharpness can only be understood in relation to the history of the Common Market.

In the fifties the political custodians of West European capitalism saw that if the system which they represented was to survive, something had to be done to break down the restrictions on the development of the productive forces represented by the old state frontiers.

U.S. investment

Washington was also interested in closer European unity as a barrier against the threat of social change and as part of its strategic policy in Europe. Behind this was the need to establish a stable field for investment and trade.

The Common Market began by the reduction of tariffs between the member countries, moving on to the establishment of a single tariff for the whole area.

But the Rome Treaty of 1957, which brought it into being, envisaged also a general

and systematic movement towards economic and political integration. This involved the surrender of control over certain aspects of policy by the participating states to a central authority.

Although European statesmen paid a great deal of lip-service to European co-operation, they continued to see the principal question as that of furthering the national interests of their own bourgeoisie.

While in the age of modern technology the national state has become an anachronism, the attempt by the bourgeoisie to carry out what is an historic task of the working class—the abolition of national frontiers—is bound to be abortive.

Inadequate area

To begin with, the territory of the Six member countries was not in itself an adequate basis for the development of the productive forces. Then the material interests of the national ruling classes still expressed themselves through the historical states.

From the moment of its inception, therefore, the Common Market became an area of struggle between the participating states as well as for opposing or bargaining with states outside it.

At first, for example, the British Conservative government, unconvinced about the success of the Common Market and not sure that its policy could be shaped to British needs, remained outside.

By the time it changed its mind, de Gaulle had consolidated his power in France with a worked-out policy for ensuring French hegemony in Europe, using the Common Market as a means.

Monopolies' alliance

This laid the basis for a close and profitable alliance between the big monopolies of France and Germany—an



De Gaulle: wooing Germany

alliance which continues to this day.

West Germany, in any case, remains by far the most powerful industrial component of the Market, but Bonn's interest remained very much bound-up with the preservation of the so-called Western Alliance.

When France came into open confrontation with the USA, Franco-German relations cooled. Bonn preferred to be

America's soundest ally on the continent rather than play second fiddle to France.

Germany's alliance with France strengthens her position in Europe but cannot satisfy her appetite for markets and for capital exports. In any case Germany's trade with the Common Market countries is less than 40 per cent. At the same time German big business co-operates with U.S. finance and industry on a large scale which gives German industry access to new productive techniques and scientific innovations.

The revamping of American defence strategy and the conflict with de Gaulle over the Multi-Lateral Force has given the German ruling class a new opportunity to press its claims for European hegemony and, incidentally, nuclear weapons without which it will remain a third-rate capitalist power.

No surrender

The question of the surrendering of national sovereignty to Common Market institutions fits into this pattern. De Gaulle is unwilling to surrender any shred of French sovereignty because this would make French policy dependent upon countries susceptible to American pressure. For de Gaulle, the Common Market is useful as a bloc which could stand up to the USA, and further French interests.

If it cannot be this, then it becomes a danger which has to be countered, or perhaps destroyed.

Whether it is possible for de Gaulle to proceed very far along this road is an open question into which enters all the contradictions of imperialism at the present stage.

In many ways French capitalism is not well placed for

carrying on an independent policy in opposition to the USA. It is industrially weaker than Germany, as well as being much weaker than the USA.

American investments in key sections of French industry are of growing importance. Many French enterprises are now handicapped by a lack of reserves for the expansion and re-equipment demanded under present conditions of intensified competition.

Dollar octopus

American big business is not limited in this way and has been more active in France than in any other continental country in buying its way into the control of industry. This extending grip of the U.S. dollar octopus is disagreeable to de Gaulle and to sections of French business.

Although de Gaulle holds few cards, he clearly hopes to take advantage of the present entanglements of American imperialism and of its weak balance of payments position.

Leading organs of the French press comment astutely on the policy of Johnson.

French foreign policy pursues a determined anti-American course.

De Gaulle threatens to use France's present monetary strength to halt the dollar invasion. Resistance to carrying forward the Rome Treaty seems to flow from the same general policy.

The situation thus remains extremely unstable.

Against a background of gathering economic problems, the contradictions between the different capitalist interests become sharper. The Common Market, instead of proving a solvent of conflicts, only becomes an additional field in which they find expression.



LA GAUCHE

organe de combat socialiste

in struggle against the right wing, they simply walked out of the PSB.

Along with them went a sizeable group of Walloon nationalists (advocates of separate federal rights for the French-speaking section of the population). Out of this action came a new party in Wallonia, the Walloon Workers' Party, alongside the new 'Union of the Socialist Left'.

This break was hailed by the Pabloites as a great step forward. They tried to obscure the fact that a number of the most prominent Walloon leaders in the new party, and particularly Perin, were opposed to the perspective of a revolutionary workers' party.

They ignored the criticisms of The Newsletter to the effect that these leaders were simply using the separatist movement in order to lead the workers to non-socialist politics and even to the extreme right. Instead, they allowed the workers under their influence to take at face value the cynical agreement of Perin to the 'socialist' slogans of the new party.

Now 'La Gauche' (July 3) carries as its front-page lead article a denunciation of Perin, and the Walloon leaders close to him, for going back on these

THE capture of a number of provincial capitals by the Vietcong, despite increased military activity and aerial bombardment by U.S. imperialism, shows clearly that the struggle in South Vietnam is approaching a climax.

Capitalist commentators and sections of the U.S. ruling class are very nervous that the U.S. has lost the initiative in South-East Asia, and the manifest failure of the Wilson 'peace' mission indicates the military-diplomatic imbroglio, from which there is no escape.

Everything that is happening in this tortured country vindicates the words of General Giap that 'no reactionary force in the world can prevent 30 million people of our country from carrying out their sacred aspiration. . . .'

A survey of recent and past events will show why this is true.

When the infamous Geneva Agreement was signed, the U.S. government refused to be a party to it and Eisenhower, the President at the time, declared:

'The United States has not itself been party to, or bound by, the decisions taken by the conference.'

U.S. move in

Even before the conference was convened U.S. imperialism began to move in in the wake of the French and replace the French puppets with U.S. ones. Prominent amongst them was Dinh Diem.

After the conference the U.S. government began feverishly preparing to create the military and diplomatic framework for intervention in South-East Asia.

In September 1954 the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) was set up with the explicit purpose of 'defending' South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

At the same time, U.S. aid was sent directly to the Diem regime, rather than being channelled through the French.

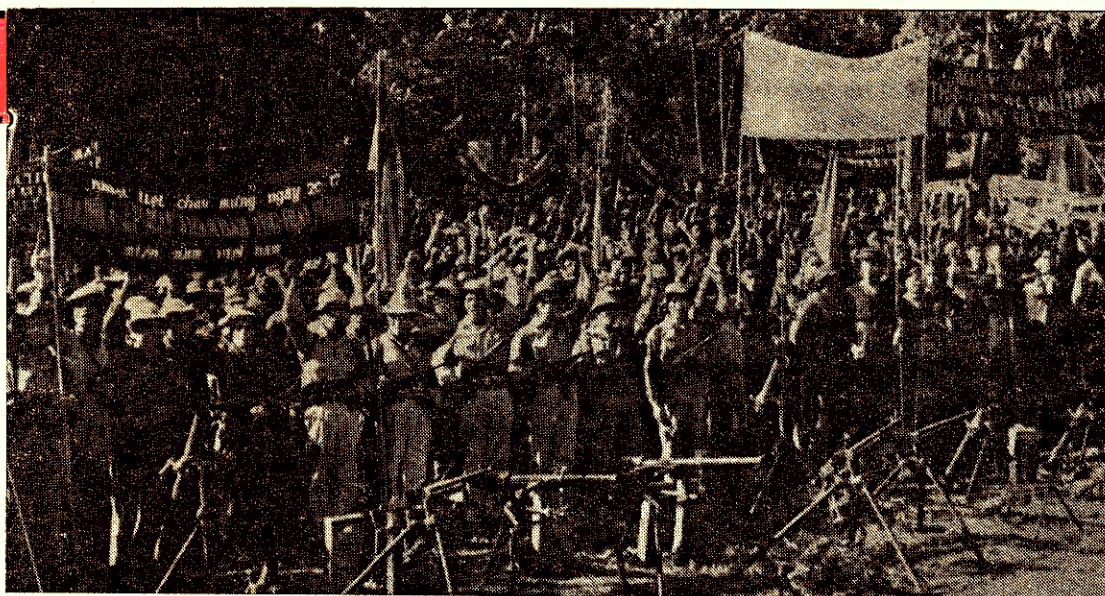
In the early part of 1955 French political domination in South Vietnam was replaced by the U.S. in a bloody conflict with the Binh Xuyen group and the Cao Dai religious sect. The training of the South Vietnam Army was taken over by the U.S., and the Diem government was strengthened.

Diem, having consolidated his power with powerful U.S. financial and military backing, proceeded to unleash a wave of white terror against the areas evacuated by the Communist forces.

Police and para-military units equipped with portable guillotines and other instruments of torture toured the rural areas terrorising the peasants and forcibly handing back the land which had been

VIETNAM

From years of experience in their struggle against imperialist aggression, the Vietnamese people have refined their methods of guerrilla warfare. Here MICHAEL BANDA explains these developments against their historical background.



A section of the ever-growing South Vietnamese Liberation Army.

The Vietcong met terror with terror. Hundreds of district officials and local commanders were shot or assassinated. Rural administration crumbled, then collapsed.

Even the British government began to get worried. In 1961 British authorities in Malaya despatched over 55,000 rifles and small arms and over 700 armoured vehicles to Vietnam. As a further gesture of solidarity a police mission headed by General G. K. Thompson was sent to Saigon to advise and instruct the Diem regime on how to repress the Vietcong.

New tactics were worked out, each one as hopeless as the previous. The 'strategic hamlets' and the spraying of crops with toxic chemicals were some of them.

In mid-1961 the U.S. government made an agonising reappraisal of the war following the trip of Vice-President Johnson to Saigon in May. Special attention was paid to 'anti-guerrilla' war, a form of war which is new to the United States.

'They can shoot people, but they can't shoot the bees'

distributed to the peasants by the Communist Vietnamese.

This brutal repression was cloaked under the euphemism of 'Agrarian Reform' and with such demagogic slogans as 'give property to the proletarians'.

In early 1956, under the notorious ordinance No. 6, concentration camps were set up throughout the country into which were herded thousands of former resistance fighters and progressives. The press was gagged.

Diem, with the tacit support of the U.S., repudiated the provisions of the Geneva Agreement, which stipulated the holding of nation-wide elections to decide the unification of Vietnam, and organised his own rigged elections for a bogus 'National Assembly', which endorsed a reactionary constitution.

Army increased

Russia and Britain, the co-chairmen of the Geneva conference, who were supposedly responsible for the implementation of the Geneva treaty, did nothing to stop Diem's activities, even when prominent leaders of the puppet army threatened 'to march to the North'.

That U.S. imperialism was determined to organise such an aggression was revealed by the continued increase of U.S. military personnel (from 200 to 2,000 in the first two years) and the massive build-up of the South Vietnam Army to an effective strength of 150,000, as well as the organisation of many other para-military forces.

To facilitate its plans against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (the Northern government), the Diem regime began to build a network of strategic roads, linking the bases in the plains with the high plateaux of central Vietnam—this is

one of the main strategic bases of U.S. imperialism in South-East Asia.

The road system was meant to embrace Laos and connect up with the strategic highways already constructed in north-east Thailand.

This road system was also seen as part of a more general plan to develop the natural resources and exploit the hydro-electric power of the Mekong Valley—the biggest and most fertile rice-growing region in Asia.

To supplement the road system, a complex of military strong-points, misleadingly called 'agricultural strong-points', running from the western plateaux through the Plain of Reeds and Ca Mau in the South, were erected.

The idea behind this was the encirclement of the popular resistance forces. The fact that a similar strategy, followed by the French in Northern Vietnam, proved abortive did not impress Diem's U.S. advisers very much. Today most of these forts have fallen to the Vietcong, while the rest, such as Kontum and Pleiku, are threatened by massive assaults.

Today we hear much from centrist and pacifist circles of a return to the status quo ante-1954 and Geneva. 'Tribune', for example, prefers 'peace' to victory.

'No alternative'

From their cosy sanctuary in the Strand these sanctimonious rascals say:

'There is . . . no safe, let alone humane, alternative to a negotiated peace.'

The facts speak otherwise. The present war is the direct and logical outcome of the 'negotiated peace' of 1954.

Not only were war preparations and systematic repression of the people made possible by the terms of the Agreement, but these measures were actually facilitated by the presence and activity of the International Commission for Control and Supervision set up from the Geneva conference.

In May 1958, for example, the Commission sanctioned, by a majority vote (the Poles alone opposing), a resolution permitting uncontrolled introduction of U.S. war materials into South Vietnam to replace the material taken by the French troops when they evacuated South Vietnam in April 1956.

And what did the Commission do when the Diem regime fatally poisoned more than 6,000 people at the Phu Loi concentration camp in December 1958? It said nothing and did even less!

In the same year more than half a million people demonstrated in Saigon-Cholon

against unemployment, excessive land rents, and the continued division of the country. The Commission, however, remained quite impervious to all this.

The most brazen act of collusion of this contemptible tool of the U.S. was its tacit acceptance of the Seventh Fleet in Vietnamese waters.

The Seventh Fleet is the largest naval armada in the world and there is nothing pacific in its function. It consists of five operational groups comprising 125 warships, including the largest nuclear aircraft carriers and 650 planes, all in all, over 64,000 men. In addition, there are attached to it large marine units.

Fully equipped

This unconventional force is equipped with the latest supersonic strike aircraft armed with nuclear bombs.

It is capable of remaining at sea for three months without returning to its many bases in the Pacific ocean. It is this fleet that has enabled Chiang Kai-shek to hold on to Formosa.

The same fleet helped destroy hundreds of Korean coastal towns and villages during the Korean war. In 1962 it was used to intervene in Thailand during the Laos crisis, and after the overthrow of Diem in 1963 the menacing shadow of its guns was cast over the Saigon coast.

Now, secret negotiations and surveys are going on to enable this fleet to operate in the Indian Ocean as well.

In the face of this massive and calculated provocation, the Control Commission remained mute. Perhaps 'Tribune' could tell us why.

By 1959 South Vietnam was in the throes of a severe economic crisis.

Ten thousand out of 15,000 weaving looms were idle. Over 10,000 sugar mills stopped working. Unemployment soared, evictions multiplied and huge movements against increased taxation, conscription and illegal detention developed.

More repression

Diem's answer to popular resentment was increased repression and added military expenditure.

One hundred and four new airfields were built, even the new Saigon-Bien Hoa motorway is, in fact, a 32 kilometer long airstrip which can be used by heavy bombers!

Nine new naval bases were constructed and the armed forces were augmented considerably.

Against this vast ordnance, the peasants and workers, at first, counterposed the most rudimentary weapons and immense courage.

Madeleine Riffaud, the

liberate their country and unify it.

In 1959 the long simmering wrath of the peasants and workers exploded into open revolt. Peasant uprisings and sporadic, but severe, fighting broke out throughout South Vietnam. Many units of Diem's crossed over with their arms to the side of the people. Diem's grave was being dug.

In 1960 the movement to liberate the country spread to every province in South Vietnam.

For the first time the backward national minorities of the Western Plateaux of Central Annam openly rebelled against the government. Elsewhere spontaneous attacks by the peasants destroyed hundreds of so-called 'prosperity zones' (a synonym for military occupied areas).

In many towns huge demonstrations of Buddhists demanding freedom of worship took place. (The Diem regime, which was Catholic, tried to suppress and discriminate against the Buddhist majority.)

Blind eye

And, once again, the International Commission turned a blind eye to further intrusions by the U.S. In April 1960 it sanctioned the introduction of more U.S. military personnel at a time when Diem's regime was wracked by crisis and abortive coups.

In December 1960 the civil war reached a new stage with the formation of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front (Vietcong), a coalition of anti-Diem parties and groups.

The main planks of the Liberation Front were: overthrow of the Saigon government, establishment of unified democratic government, preservation of minority rights, independence, unification of the country and 'neutrality'.

Guerrilla warfare was waged on an extensive scale by the Vietcong. In the initial phase, the Diem regime launched a series of offensives against the liberated areas. The orgy of terror commenced by his army drove thousands of peasants to support the Vietcong.

'Master plan'

Finding themselves hopelessly out-fought and out-manoeuvred by the Vietcong, the U.S. sent a special mission, led by E. Staley, to Saigon.

His main recommendations were to pacify the South in 18 months by beefing up the army and establish bases in North Vietnam for sabotage and terror.

In the latter part of the year Kennedy sent General Taylor (chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) to Saigon on a fact-finding tour.

Result: enormous increase of U.S. arms and men in South Vietnam, and a deeper crisis of the Diem regime. From this trip there emerged the master plan—the Staley-Taylor plan—for the subjugation of Vietnam.

In order to strengthen its command over the resistance forces and counter pro-French and petty-bourgeois forces and ideas in the Liberation Front, the Communists, in January 1962, set up the South Vietnam Revolutionary People's Party, which called itself the party of the 'working class and toiling people of South Vietnam. . . .'

In its statement of policy it significantly omitted any mention of 'neutrality', but spoke instead of contributing 'to the defence of world peace'.

After Taylor's visit a veritable war of extermination was launched against the people. In 1962 alone 28,000 mopping-up operations, large and small, combined with intensive air raids (whose main ingredient was napalm) were carried out.

U.S. mistaken

A new form of warfare, helicopter-borne infantry, and amphibious armoured carriers, was introduced. At the same time the herding of the population into 'strategic hamlets' was stepped up.

This was the Staley-Taylor plan in action, but if the U.S. thought they had won the war they were sadly mistaken.

After a few months, the Vietcong recovered from its initial defeats and developed new techniques of fighting the helicopters—techniques which

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EHRENBURG ADMITS 'WHITEWASHING' STALIN

By a SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

It was not immediately that I could decipher the role of the sage of sages (Stalin). . . .

'The methods of poisoning, denunciation and the ruthless murders suggested by Machiavelli and perpetrated by Medici and the Borgias are inadmissible in a Communist State.'

Having voiced his opposition to such methods, he then says:

'I have never considered silence a virtue. Of course, I was aware of many crimes, but to stop their perpetration was beyond my power. It is only too obvious: people infinitely more influential could not stop them either.'

SPOKE OUT

In fact, he claims, he did speak out—nearly 20 years after the Stalin purges in January 1953, just before Stalin's death.

He claims he was asked to denounce 'saboteur doctors', arrested by Stalin, at a prize-giving ceremony, at which he would receive the Stalin prize.

But, at the ceremony, he says, he was 'inspired by current events' to say: 'I want to evoke those artisans of peace who are persecuted, tortured, hounded. I want to evoke the obscurantism of prisons, the inquisitions, the tribunals.'

OPPORTUNISM

It is not clear what 'current events' so 'inspired' him to make such a statement.

Whatever they were, Ehrenburg has only demonstrated more clearly the opportunism of the writers and intellectuals who attempt to perpetuate Stalinist methods within the Communist Parties of the world, in order to safeguard their own positions.



Vietnamese People's Army gunners prepare for U.S. air raids.

