

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Volume 9 No. 13 March 27th 1968

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our
last
issue

WORKERS CONTROL

AND THE
BUDGET

8, TOYNBEE STREET LONDON E.1.

CONTENTS

Page	1	Editorial.	Page	2	Workers' Control notes.
"	3	Workers' control notes.	"	4	The politics of March 17.
"	5	The politics of March 17.	"	6	Our last issue.
"	7	Scottish V.S.C.	"	8	Political notes.
"	9	Greek protest rally.	"	10	Has Colletts banned <u>Granma</u> ?
"	11	Seminar on neo-colonialism.	"	12	No deals with Smith.

WORKERS' CONTROL AND THE BUDGET

According to the organisers this year's workers' control conference in Nottingham looks like being the most successful yet. We are told that some 270 delegates - the majority of them being from trade unions organisations - had registered at the last count. Previous experience shows that there is always a last minute rush so it should be well-attended indeed.

The conference could scarcely be more timely, coming as it does just after the vicious anti-working class budget and on the eve of fresh anti-trade union legislation. It is to be hoped that the conference will assist in the mounting of a counter offensive by the working class against the Labour Government's right-wing policies.

The concept of industrial democracy is one which is both appropriate to the situation and relevant to the kind of strategy which would be required for such a counter-offensive. Old-style wages' militancy, whilst it is to be entirely welcomed and encouraged, is inadequate in our present situation. In a period of intense inflation - which is what we will face for the rest of this year - wage increases, even when they can be won, will be eaten up. The concept of workers' control must embrace control over the system of wages assessment. If the Government is serious about its promises to control prices it cannot object to a sliding scale of wages to automatically compensate for increases in the cost of living.

The budget measures, despite Jenkins' promises, will lead to the closing of factories and other work places. It will thus intensify and increase the effects of numerous mergers and rationalisations. Quite apart from increasing unemployment, all this is a terrible threat to union organisation. Naturally from their point of view, the employers will seek to use any closures or reorganisations to weaken union organisation and to break up shop stewards committees where militants are well-established - they would be foolish to do otherwise. Workers' control must mean control over hiring and firing and an all-out effort to prevent any unemployment at all. Whenever the employers speak of sackings or redundancy, the workers must demand the opening of the books to first of all verify whether the employers are speaking the truth. They must insist on the shop stewards committees controlling the situation with the priority of a policy designed to avoid at all costs any unemployment.

Workers' control and industrial democracy are concepts which must be clearly defined. The Wilson Government is quite aware of their appeal and has sought to use them to cover up its anti-working class policies.- it does this essentially by trying to smuggle in workers' participation in the guise of industrial democracy. This is not the only example of the mis-use of the term: a recently published book is entitled "An experiment in industrial democracy;" it is not until one reads the sub-title that one is
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Workers' control and the budget continued/

aware that it is a history of the so-called John Lewis partnership. What is the key which enables us to distinguish between these various types of "industrial democracy"? There is one decisive criterion: do the advocates of industrial democracy seek to organise a struggle for workers' power?

Thus workers' control and our idea of industrial democracy must always be linked with living struggles. This especially so in the present period when an offensive against the workers is being waged by a Government which calls itself Labour and which postures as being democratic socialist.

Anyone who advocates industrial democracy and workers' control today must at the same time advocate a struggle to the finish against the present policies of the Government as exemplified by the Budget. The linking of these struggles to the anti-capitalist strategy intrinsic to workers' control is the most important question facing the left in Britain today.

Vietnam Solidarity Campaign Notes

from Mike Martin

Now that the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign has emerged victorious from the March 17th campaign, it is desirable that we begin to assess the gains which have been made, and harness the political capital of the recent period in organisational terms.

With this in mind V.S.C. has called a 'report back' meeting at which it will be possible to discuss the experience of the Demonstration and consider in general terms the period ahead of us.

Details of the meeting are as follows;

Place Toynbee Hall. Commercial St. London E1.

(near Aldgate East Tube Station)

Time 7-30p.m. on Thursday April 4th.

Speakers include Tariq Ali and Pat Jordan.

As many readers of The Week will be aware one of the factors preventing V.S.C. from taking full advantage of the opportunities now opening up is the lack of money. This in turn means that we are confined to an extremely small office and lack basic equipment. Any Week reader who supports the aims of V.S.C. is invited to send a donation to our mailing address

22, Sarre Road
London N.W.2.

With the Labour Party taking an interest in "industrial democracy" it has almost become respectable to become an advocate of workers' control. Of course, many of those espousing industrial democracy are careful to make sure that the discussion goes no further than that of considering various methods of participation, with essential control, especially investment decisions, firmly in the hands of traditional bosses. However, some people call themselves advocates of workers' control when they do little to encourage workers' control of the organisations to which they belong.

To take a typical example: how can a man be serious about workers' control if he is appointed a trade union official for life? He could only justify his position by waging a struggle in his union for a changing over to regular elections. How many unions have regular elections for their officials as does the AEU/FW? Surely it is elementary that workers' democracy incorporates the great principle of the Paris Commune: the recall and regular election of officials. How else have ordinary workers got any guarantee against the soft life of office corrupting their representatives? The permanency of appointment, linked with the huge differences between the salaries of trade union officials and ordinary workers, lays the basis for caste interests and the development of an uncontrolled bureaucracy in the union movement.

Another important feature of all workers' organisations - political and industrial - has been the devaluation of conference decisions. The case of the Labour Party is well-known but there are many other examples. Moreover, some unions do not even have annual conferences. In other cases the subjects for discussion are strictly limited.

Advocates of workers' control should ensure that in their own organisations the twin principles of the recall and regular election of officials, and the sovereignty of democratically controlled and convened conferences are paramount.

Lastly, someone should do a paper on workers' control over the workers' control campaign. Not that I have any complaints - the organisers do a fine job with no compensation other than the knowledge that they are doing something useful. However, if the workers' control movement is to give a lead in the democratisation of all aspects of our life it must evolve organisational forms which reflect its purpose. We should get to grips with the problem of ensuring that all the supporters of the campaign feel that they have taken part in the formulation of policy. Could I suggest that between now and the next conference there is a discussion on this question?

IMPORTANT NEW PAMPHLET ON BRITISH COMPLICITY

"Vietnam, United States and Britain" is the title of a pamphlet prepared by a group of Americans in Britain. It examines in some detail the question of British Complicity in the Vietnam War with special reference to British firms producing for the American forces.

It is available at 2/9d post paid from 8, Toynbee St. E.1.

Much has been written about the March 17 demonstration dealing with it in content and in detail. However, in view of the many reactions it evoked, it is necessary to try to put it in a wider context and see if there are any general lessons to be learnt for the socialist movement as a whole.

The press, radio, television carried the most hysterical reports as did cinema newsreels. We can hardly explain it as being due to pure sensationalism. There were many other competing news stories: the gold crisis, the resignation of George Brown and the Budget. We also have to look at what was said from a political point of view. The British ruling class is facing crisis after crisis and has been compelled, through the medium of the Labour Government, to make attack after attack upon the working class and other sections of the community. So far, resistance to these attacks have been minimal but the "powers that be" must be worried. Such demonstrations as that of March 17, with its lack of "respect" for law and order, could provide a dangerous example. Throughout this century it has been noticed that ferment amongst the youth and the students has been the precursor of generalised discontent and social struggle. Furthermore, our ruling class must have noticed that in nearly every advanced capitalist country street battles with the police have become a common, almost everyday occurrence! It must view with considerable alarm a similar state of affairs in London.

But this is not the only factor which provoked the press. Those of us who had considerable contact with the press immediately after March 17 noted that despite all our statements to the contrary, newspapers continued to refer to the "violent peace lovers." We, time and time again, pointed out that V.S.C. was not a "pacifist" organisation, but still this label was applied to us. We formed the conclusion that this was done: (a) to discredit us in the public eye; and (b) to hide from people the fact that there is now developing in Britain a politically mature movement in support of the Vietnamese revolution. Those who claim that the violence did harm to the anti-war movement in this country should ponder these facts. The press, Mr. Wilson and the American Embassy are unanimous in "not minding" a peace movement which confines itself to a general call for "peace". However, when it comes to a movement which takes the side of the Vietnamese people they become hysterical.

It should also be noted that the demonstration took place after a polemic inside the Left, a polemic waged by various organisations against the demonstration and its political line. We have already answered the main antagonists in the special issue of The Week but we need to look at what these people said after the events of March 17. The Communist Party, through the Morning Star, was generally favourable and has argued strongly against establishment figures who were speaking of banning such activities. In one editorial, the paper referred to the fact that it had political differences with the organisers of the demonstration but said that it still opposed the witch hunt. It published a number of letters, only a few of which were critical of the demonstration, complaining of police brutality. However, the Communist Party has yet to come clean: it still hasn't retracted the attack made via the Betty Reid article in Comment; neither has it attempted to assess things politically. For instance, nowhere has it explained the contradiction between its argument in Comment that by backing the solidarity position one narrows the movement and the fact that March 17 had five or six times as many people as March 24, the YCND demonstration, and that, moreover, there was a far wider represent

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ation on the former demonstration. All this, we might add, despite the fact that the Communist Party through the Morning Star mobilised extensively for the March 24 action.

The Socialist Labour League, through its now twice-weekly Newsletter, attacked the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign extensively. Members of the Socialist Labour League actively campaigned in the universities and colleges against participation in the March 17 demonstration. We are told by members and ex-members of the SLL however, that despite this many Keep Left Young Socialists took part. The SLL campaigned as hard as it knew how for its own counter-demonstration for March 24. Supporters of The Week counted the number of people (in many cases arriving on coaches with less than 10 people on board) who took part in the March 24 SLL demonstration: less than 300. This compares with a minimum of 25,000 on March 17. Perhaps this is why the Newsletter confined its comments on the March 17 mobilisation mainly to an account of court cases and police brutality. It is significant that the only politics that this paper tries to introduce is an attempt to smear me by using the comments of a police commissioner. Left-wingers will draw their own conclusions about this "ultra-revolutionary" paper so fond of accusing others of selling out and betraying, using the words of a policeman against a political opponent. A sad case of "sour grapes."

Peace News, in its issue after the demonstration provided material for those who want to finger the demonstration and its organisers, and quoted remarks attributed to Tariq Ali by the capitalist press to attack the demonstration without making any attempt to verify them. We think, that unless this paper drops this line many people will follow Malcolm Caldwell in disassociating themselves from it.

So much for the tendencies which opposed March 17. Despite their sectarianism, it is entirely in the interests of the movement against the war in Vietnam for all of us to endeavour to draw these people into a united front in support of the Vietnamese people. Many of the thousands on the March 17 demonstration were rank and file members of these organisations or supporters of their journals. We are convinced that these people will be campaigning for a change of line.

What was, then, the general effect of the March 17 demonstration? Different sections of course, reacted in different ways and the general effect was that of polarisation. The militants were heartened (we have many, many indications of this - we are convinced that VSC is going to take the place of CND as providing a place for thousands of unattached militants to operate); soggy centrists were horrified (Bill Hamlin was terribly upset about poor policemen who had to lose their days' off because of "hooligans") and the right was provoked. But in meaningful political terms the effect on the Left was the most important: throughout the country everyone who is opposed to the policies of British and American imperialism knows that there are people willing to fight these policies. In a more general sense, the demonstration has shown millions that there is a militant anti-war movement in this country; the demonstration must have replaced football as the main topic of discussion on Monday morning in the factories and other places of work. We do not, of course, wish to exaggerate the amount of public support for the demonstration but the fact that millions discussed the issues is a healthy thing in and of itself. This fact alone creates a milieu for a fight for our ideas.

OUR LAST ISSUE

This is the last issue of The Week, in its present form. As we explained a few weeks ago, the team which has been producing the journal has decided that it would be more beneficial and appropriate for them to produce a new monthly printed journal, International.

There is a place for a journal doing the job which The Week has done and we look forward to the day when it will be possible to bring out a weekly printed organising journal for the Left. However, we are pleased with the work which we have done through The Week and we are sure that the new journal will make an even bigger contribution.

The history of The Week has been a history of struggle. From its very first issue until now it has always been in opposition to the right-wing, doing all in its power to assist in the living struggles of the working class.

Some of this has brought about permanent changes in the British political scene: witness the creation of the workers' control campaign and the launching of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. Just as important is the fact that The Week has brought together a national network of activists who are ready to go into action on all vital issues.

We will through various united front organisations be keeping in touch with all those who have collaborated with us in our various campaigns.

Our new journal, International, will be designed to help to clarify the important political problems which face the Left in Britain today. We confidently expect all those who helped us with The Week to collaborate in this work. We will be organising a great deal of discussion around our new journal in the form of meetings and conferences - anyone interested in this side of things please contact us.

HELP THE LIVERPOOL BUSMEN from a special correspondent

Liverpool busmen have now been on strike for some three weeks in support of their wage claim.

In view of the way the previous struggle of municipal busmen petered out after the union decided upon action through the courts it is vital that the Liverpool busmen win their fight. In sticking out so long they have been inspired by the example of the Liverpool dockers who had a fair degree of success in their struggle late last year.

On Wednesday March 27, the Liverpool busmen rejected a plea to go back to work. They furthermore decided to conduct a national campaign in support of their struggle. They are in the process of planning a national tour by their spokesmen to explain their case. They also decided to launch a national appeal for financial support.

Donations, enquiries about speakers, etc. should go to:
P. King, 35 Bradley Road, Liverpool 21.

SUCCESSFULL VSC DEMONSTRATION IN AYR

Approximately 50 pickets greeted the Prime Minister when he arrived at the Dam Park Pavilion, Ayr, on Saturday 23rd March to address a Scottish Labour Party Rally. They carried placards calling for support for the National Liberation Front and demanding that the Labour Party carry out its Conference decisions on Vietnam. A special leaflet was distributed to the delegates. The picket was organised by the Glasgow Branch of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. Later a number of hecklers were ejected from the hall when they raised the issue of Vietnam.

GLASGOW VCS'S 'VIETNAM WEEK'

Glasgow VSC organised a Vietnam Week from 16th-23rd March. The object was to respond in a constructive fashion to the call of the NLF for activities to commemorate the first anti American demonstration in Saigon on March 19th, 1950. The week was preceded by a period of intensive fly posting during which 500 hand made posters were stuck up prominently along thoroughfares in the city. These called for support for the NLF as well as advertising the various events projected. Attempts to hold open air meetings on three days were all frustrated because of rain as was a poster parade of the town centre on the 23rd. However, during the course of the week 10 000 of the specially produced leaflets were distributed at subway stations, busstops, etc. Monday and Tuesday nights saw film shows held in the Trades Council Club and on Wednesday night a public meeting there was addressed by Laurence Daly, Scottish Secretary of the NUM and Tom Hyslop, Provost of Denny. Each of these events attracted audiences of over forty.

On the Thursday night members of the VSC distributed material at a folk song night at which a member of the Stop-It Committee was performing and Matt McGinn made a statement and sang some songs on our behalf. Saturday saw a demonstration organised belatedly by the BCPV who had earlier rejected our attempts to form an ad hoc committee to run joint activities. The official title of the march was 'Mourn and Act' and it was to consist of silent demonstrators dressed in black preceded by one banner stating that we were mourning for the dead of Vietnam. However, in spite of continuous rain, the character of the 1 000 strong demonstration was somewhat changed by the intervention of VSC supporters. The march was studded with Liberation Front flags and large sections of it chanted solidarity slogans in spite of the attempts of the marshals to suggest that we were breaking the supposed 'united front'.

Perhaps the most encouraging feature of the week is the new support which has been coming in for VSC daily. The Secretary reports her telephone frequently ringing with enquiries and donations to assist the activity have been forthcoming from many quarters. It is clear that the activities in London helped to increase people's determination here - a genuine case of 'socialist emulation'. But it also clear that the longer the war continues the more correct does our political position appear to be. The great success of the Tet offensive was most important in this respect. Increasingly therefore the VSC can be seen as the leading body in the anti-war movement in the west of Scotland.

POLITICAL NOTES

By Dave Windsor

MALCOLM CALDWELL BREAKS WITH PEACE NEWS

The following letter appeared in the March 22nd issue of Peace News: 'Your editorial piece (March 8), "Sham solidarity" is a disgrace. After many years of association with Peace News as reader and contributor, I wish publicly to sever that connection herewith. Please do not renew my subscription.'

Malcolm Caldwell.

CAPITALISM IN ACTION

The following news item appeared in the March 25th issue of the Daily Mirror under the heading "Massacre of the pigs to keep up prices" from Brian Hitchen, New York: 'Hundreds of pigs have been shot in trenches, then covered with quicklime - to keep up the price of pork. Pig framers in America's mid-west states each sent one or two pigs to the mass killing to beat the effect of a glut in the pork market. The National Farmers Organisation planned the slaughter to reduce the supply of pigs and drive up the price to farmers by 4d a pound.

Pigs were herded into trenches, hundreds at a time, and shot dead. Farmers shovelled quicklime and earth on top of the carcasses. But yesterday the Farmers Organisation changed tactics. They took 148 pigs from Illinois to a prison farm in Missouri. The animals will be slaughtered there - but the pork will be given to poor people in the city of St. Louis. Farmer Gerald Mollett of Highland, Illinois said: "This is a better deal than just killing the pigs. It might demonstrate to the people of this country that the poor feed the poor.'

US may resume Greek military aid

Financial Times report

State Department officials believe that they have detected several encouraging developments in Greece over the last month, and there is a possibility that full-scale US military aid may be renewed by fall. But responsible officials here are still cautious about assisting Greece despite the recent publication by the Military junta of a new political constitution.

State Department views came to light during background discussions at a foreign policy conference for various non-governmental organisations and also in subsequent interviews with US officials. The officials said that the US had exerted influence through diplomatic contacts with the military junta, along with other NATO nations, and was pleased that progress had continued towards a return to democracy since the junta seized power April 24 1967.

A key date now is September 1, 1968, when a plebiscite will be held to approve or reject the junta's draft constitution. Officials say that if the constitution is accepted, the chances for resuming US military aid to Greece will be greatly improved.'

APRIL 21ST GREEK FREEDOM RALLY

We have been asked to publish the following appeal:

'April 21st, 1968, marks the black anniversary of the military junta's take-over in Greece. The regime has spent the last year tightening its grip on the country: by appointing its own men to key positions in all areas of public administration, and by making the "oath of loyalty" a pre-requisite to the right to work.

In the recent report of Amnesty International it stated, "The Security Police and Military Police are unrestricted today in Greece. Since, in Mr. Pattakos's words, "the law sleeps", the police may arrest anyone, in any place, at any time, with no obligation to charge him or inform anyone of his arrest". From the details given in this report, it is no exaggeration to state that the methods employed by the Greek security police, including torture, sadism, and blackmail, have not been paralleled in the western world since the heyday of Nazism.

Resistance to the regime within Greece grows stronger. Two major resistance movements, Democratic Defence and Patriotic Front, organised by representatives of all political parties, outlawed since last April, are working together for a common aim the establishment once and for all of true democratic government in Greece. The hope for Greece rests at the moment with DD and PF, but they must be able to rely on support from democrats all over the world.

All those in this country who are outraged by the military regime's very existence, let alone their barbarous methods, and who wish to express their support for the Greek resistance movement, will have the opportunity to do so at a Rally to be held at Trafalgar Square on Sunday 21st April at 2.30pm. This will be followed by a march via Downing Street to the Greek Embassy - letters of protest will be delivered at both.

The actress Melina Mercouri will be coming from New York specially for this demonstration, and will speak at Trafalgar Square; together with Greek Democratic Movement leaders, and invited representatives of the political, trade-union, religious, academic, and artistic worlds. It is hoped that the BBC Greek Service will record the voiced approval of all those present for a resolution condemning the military regime and expressing solidarity with the Greek resistance movement. This will later be broadcast to Greece.

This letter is being sent to many organisations in this country, all of which enjoy a freedom that their equivalents in Greece are denied. We hope that your members will support this demonstration in large numbers, and that we can rely on you to publicise the event. Posters and leaflets will be available very shortly, and will be sent on request. A later bulletin will be issued, giving details of all the speakers at Trafalgar Square, and of other events planned for the weekend of 19th-21st April. Should a suitable occasion arise before the rally, we would like to send one of our speakers to address your members on this subject.'

The Week urges all its readers and supporters to attend this rally and make it widely known throughout the movement. We are not completely in agreement with the political implications of everything that is said in this appeal and will be making our views known to the participants. We believe that Greece is ripe for a struggle for socialism and that the role played by NATO and US imperialism has to be understood if we are to draw all the necessary lessons from the Greek tragedy.

HAS COLLETS BANNED GRANMA?

We received the following letter from Five Continents Books, 17 Estelle Road, London, N.W.3.

'In addressing this letter to your periodical we wish to acquaint your readers with a situation that has arisen between us (Five Continents Books) on the one hand, and Messrs. Collet's London New and Second Hand Bookshop, 66 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2., on the other. The central point of disagreement happens to be based on the question of a wider distribution of GRANMA (the English language Cuban weekly).

Responding to the fast growing demand for GRANMA we have been obtaining bulk quantities of this weekly. Meanwhile, negotiations between ourselves and a number of newsagents and booksellers have been favourably concluded. However, one refusal to accept GRANMA merits attention. A significant refusal! It comes from no one but the above mentioned bookshop. Many of your readers, no doubt, have patronised Collet's London New and Secondhand Bookshop for its considerable range of papers, journals and books which are mainly concerned with Socialist ideas. It seems, perhaps, that in the thinking of persons concerned GRANMA cannot be categorised as a socialist newspaper?!

Messrs. Collet's London New and Second Hand Bookshop have other excuses. They fear having to face libel charges should they handle GRANMA. It seems, according to their spokesmen, the contents of this paper would annoy Authority here in Britain!

We ask your readers to make their own conclusions after reading some copies of GRANMA available through the usual booksellers or direct from us.

Thanking you for the courtesy of your columns.'

CND REQUIESCAT IN PACE

by Bob Turpin

The YCND 'demonstration' of Sunday March 24 was a soppy, sloppy affair. Watching the sombre procession of U Thantists towards Downing Street I was immediately reminded of a convocation of Cistercian monks returning to devotion after a day's mushroom gathering. What were missing were the prayers and incantations. But the funereal atmosphere of the procession was wholly relevant. For on the afternoon of March 24 the blessed remains of holy pacifism were laid to rest at the Cenotaph, or somewhere in that region. Old Mother CND and her progeny YCND have departed this world, though doubtless from time to time the CP will invoke the ghosts, amid a loud clattering of chains.

Yet in Monday's press YCND got the best coverage in years. We expected this. It is now part of the policy of the British press to undermine the solidarity movement by presenting the CND as ultra-respectable (or how to protest politely) and VSC as the leadership of the 'irresponsible' fringe. What will happen (or so the bourgeois press hopes) is that the more 'respectable' elements in the solidarity movement will be taken in by the apparent new lease of life of CND, the prominent publicity, etc and will go running back to the ever open arms of Momma Pacifism. But this bourgeois notion pre-supposes that the new militancy is a child of 'frustration' - frustration from not being listened to, frustration from being regarded as a spoilt child rather than as 'someone with a grievance'. This of course is attempt to represent the solidarity movement as

a rabble of mods and rockers, and refer to us as people with a grievance is to encourage anti-student hysteria by showing us a crowd of selfish, moody adolescents with chips on our shoulders. They completely ignore the phenomenon that now confronts them. The phenomenon of the new militancy, a positive political development engendered by a realisation of the true nature of the Vietnam war. This is a political awakening and represents a new and formidable force in British politics.

Returning very briefly to Sunday's demonstration, it is interesting to note the various estimations of the number which participated. The Telegraph estimated 5 000; the Times and Mirror, 3 000, but the Daily Mail quite confidently estimated 10 000! If there were 10 000 in Trafalgar Square on Sunday then the number on the 17th March must have been in the region of 50-60 000!

SEMINAR ON NEO-COLONIALISM*

March 30th (Saturday) 1.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.

General session

U.S. Imperialism and its dependence on Tricontinental raw material sources; Speaker: Malcolm Caldwell.

The relationship between the metropolitan workers and the Tricontinental peoples; Speaker: Mrs. H. Edwards.

Culture and neo-colonialism; Speaker: H. Bains.

Neo-colonialism - some aspects; Speaker: A Balakrishnan.

Asian session (6.00 p.m. - 10.00 p.m.)

The role of foreign capital in India; Speaker: Dr. B. Das Gupta.

Pakistan since independence; Speaker: M. Ishaque.

Neo-colonialism in South East Asia; Speaker: A. Dastan.

March 31st (Sunday)

Africa session (1.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.)

Neo-colonialism in Western Africa; Speaker: V. King.

North Africa and the Middle East; speaker: M.E. Mughery.

Neo-colonialism in East Africa; Speaker: P. Otai or O. Kambona.

Neo-colonialism in Southern Africa; Speaker: J. Kozonguizi.

Caribbean and Latin American session (6.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.)

Neo-colonialism in the British Caribbean; Speaker: West Indian Students Union.

Neo-colonialism in Latin America; Speaker: T. Leander.

At Trinity Church Hall, Kingsway, London W.C. 1. opposite Holborn tube.

* organised by the Spirit of Bandung Committee.

Once again the Labour Government is on trial. Its record over the last three years is that of betraying one socialist principle after another. For many the end of the road came when it rushed through the racist Commonwealth Immigration Bill through both Houses of Parliament with indecent haste.

Now the issue is Rhodesia, and the Labour movement - Trade Unions, Constituency Labour Parties, Co-operative societies, every section of the Movement must make it clear that betrayal here will be the end of the road. The Tories in Parliament, in the Press, and on the public platforms, are mounting the same sort of campaign as they did over the Kenya immigrants, attempting to force the government into panic reactionary action. They use the lives of Africans as pawns in their sordid political game.

Negotiate now, they say, or the unspeakable Smith will hang a few more of the hundred Africans in the Salisbury death cells. And without a doubt there are ears in the Cabinet only too willing to listen to this sort of talk, just as they listened to Sandys, Powell, and Cyril Osborne over immigration. The Smith regime stands revealed as a naked, brutal dictatorship, representing the interests of a handful of whites determined to keep the black majority in perpetual bondage. It is moving steadily in the direction of full Apartheid on the South African model, and using its powers as a state to terrorise the African into subservience.

African nationalism in Rhodesia has not shown the same growth as in other parts of the continent, since many Africans nourished the vain hope that Britain would see justice done. Wilson has ruled this out from the start. Unlike the coloured people of Guyana or Mauritius the Rhodesian rebels are white "kith and kin". Nothing more severe than sanctions here.

Sanctions have undoubtedly had some effect on the economy of Rhodesia, but the living standards of the white ruling class was so high that pulling in the belts a few notches made little difference. The African suffered most, though gladly if it would help topple the Smith regime.

The events of the last few days have brought matters to boiling point. Smith is now ruling by open terror, and only counter-terrorism can overcome this. Without a doubt the hangings in Salisbury have stimulated the Africans into action. They now know that they can count on no British Government, Labour or Tory. Only their own strength can resolve the issue and we will see in the coming months an increase in guerrilla activity in Zimbabwe.

British Labour must welcome this. If the Zimbabwe Africans proclaim a Government in exile the Labour Government should be the first to recognise it. The road would then be open to arm that government so that it can make its power effective.

Meanwhile the Government must make it clear that it will make no deals with the hangman Ian Smith.