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Red Front

FOR WORKING-CLASS POWER
FOR A SOCIALIST BRITAIN!



ORGAN OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATION OF BRITAIN

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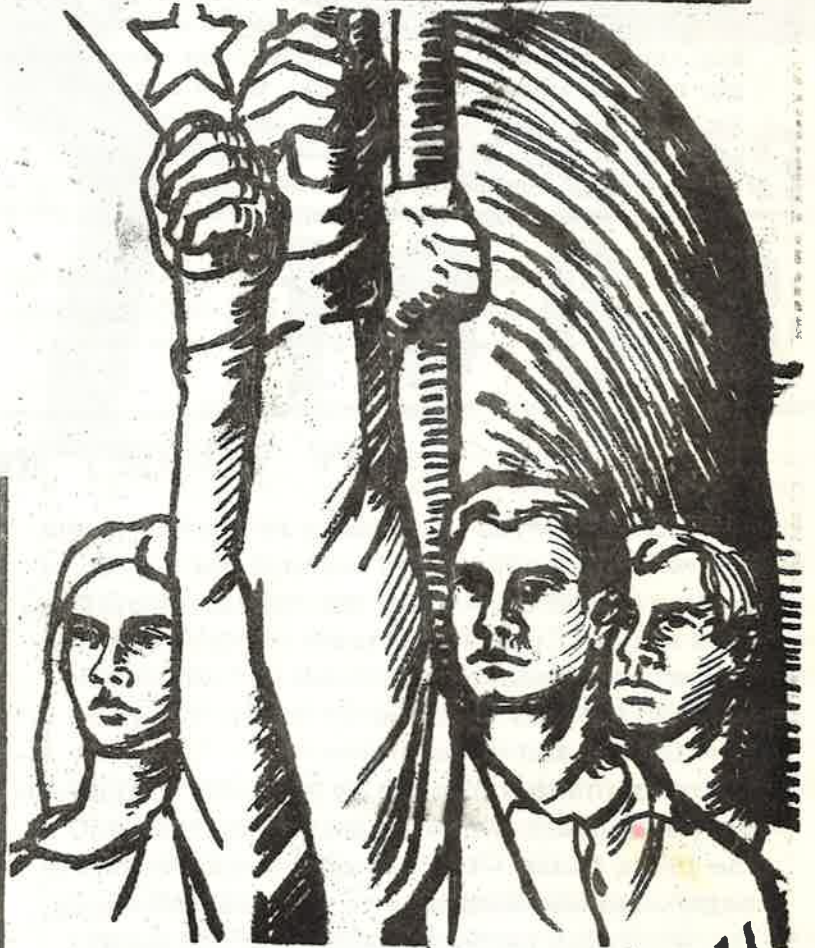
SALUTE TO THE STUDENTS!

IN 1968, IN MANY COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE, STUDENT MILITANCY HAS RISEN TO UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS - REACHING IN FRANCE THE HEIGHT OF DAILY MASS BATTLES WITH THE POLICE, THE PARAMILITARY FORCES OF THE CAPITALIST STATE.

In France (considered in detail in another article in this issue) less than 10% of university students come from industrial working class homes, the overwhelming majority being drawn from the middle strata of the population. That "middle class" students rather than workers should have initiated the 1968 wave of militant class struggle in France is a phenomenon that calls for comment. The principal reasons for it are threefold:

Firstly, conditions within the universities are deplorable. The number of French university students has risen in the last ten years from 170,000 to 514,000 - with no comparable increase in teaching staff, accommodation or facilities. Further, until the reforms forced on the authorities in May/June, the administration was mediaeval and bureaucratic in the extreme.

Secondly, over the past fifty years the character of the university has undergone a profound change. Once a primary function of the universities was to train personnel for the independent professions - law, medicine, etc. But with the development of finance capitalism, these professions have to a great extent been incorporated either into the apparatus of the state or into that of the great capitalist trusts, so that the former members of the professions have been increasingly transformed into employees. In recent years, too, there has been



a tendency for the creation of a "reserve army" of unemployed among such occupations, so that the student no longer feels secure in his post-graduation prospects. Thus the student from the middle strata, who tends to have the outlook of the petty-bourgeoisie whether he can be formally classified as petty bourgeois or not, tends to see himself as being at best degraded into a depersonalised "cog in the machine" of finance capitalism. And he tends to see the university as a monstrous factory for the mass production of deindividuated, enslaved experts.

Thirdly, while the French workers are to a large extent organised under right-wing leadership (including that of the revisionist Communist Party) this hardly applies to students, consequently, spontaneous militancy among students is less easily disciplined, controlled and damped down.

These factors have been incorporated into a "philosophy" by the German-born professor at the University of Chicago, Herbert Marcuse, who has become the intellectual idol of many European students. But Marcuse has distorted

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

City Notes

TOO MUCH POLITICS FOR THE "DAILY MIRROR" !

In June the board of directors of the International Publishing Corporation - which produces the "Daily Mirror" and many other papers and magazines - dismissed Cecil King as its Chairman. He was succeeded by Hugh Cudlipp.

The big shareholders in the corporation had for some time been dissatisfied with the fact that profits before tax, which dropped by £2 million last year, fell this year by a further £4 million to a "mere" £6.6 million - the lowest figure since the corporation was established. This dissatisfaction came to a head with the publication, on the eve of the municipal elections, of an editorial entitled "Enough is enough!", attacking the Wilson government over the signature of Cecil King. King, a comparatively small shareholder in the corporation with only 45,960 shares, was blamed for the fall in profits by virtue of his policy of introducing, not anti-Labour politics, but "too much politics" into the "Mirror". As one frank journalist on the paper put it: "We cater for a readership of morons. They don't want politics or any kind of serious stuff. They want scandal, pin-ups and sport!"

In May it was announced that Boots had made an agreed takeover bid of £36 million for another chain of retail chemists, Timothy Whites and Taylors. The new group will have almost 2,000 shops valued at over £200 million.

In June the American tobacco firm of Philip Morris made a £46 million takeover bid for a half-share in Britain's second largest tobacco group, Gallaghers, whose products include "Senior Service", "Kensitas", "Benson and Hedges", and "Nelson". On July 16th this offer was topped at £65 million by America's second largest tobacco firm, the American Tobacco Company, makers of the molasses-impregnated "Lucky Strike" cigarettes.

It was announced on July 1st that Rank Hovis McDougall, the giant flour milling, baking and food manufacturing group, is to merge with Cerebos, the salt (Cerebos and Saxa), Bisto and Scott's Porage Oats combine. Cerebos is forecasting pre-tax profits for the current year of £4.6 million, Rank £17 million.

On the same day it was announced that Parkinson Cowan had purchased Fisher-Bendix (manufacturers of Bendix washing machines, Fishlow sinks, radiators and other domestic appliances) from the British Motor Corporation for £4 million.

Also during July the giant Thorn Electrical Industries made a takeover bid of £9.3 million for Kenwood Manufacturing, the food mixer and dishwasher group.

HOW TO GET IN THE "HONOURS LIST"

Should you wish your name to appear in the Queen's "Honours List" without the bother of sailing round the world, the career of millionaire Oliver Cutts (sentenced in July to three years' imprisonment) throws an interesting light on the way to go about it. All you need is a million - and no scruples.

Having made a fortune by a series of dubious property deals which began during the war, in the 1950s Cutts - the son of a Peckham boxer - began making donations to charitable causes, for which his name was added to the guest-lists for those expensive and exclusive "charity balls" patronised by members of the royal family. Meeting Princess Margaret at one of these functions, he learned that she liked camellias; from that time a bunch of camellias was sent by chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce to Kensington Palace each week while they were in season. The royal letters of thanks opened the doors to other circles.

In the middle 1950s he bought Folds Farm, at Fordingbridge in Hampshire, and proceeded to build up a herd of Friesian cattle; this enabled him to join the British Friesian Cattle Society, in which he mingled with representatives of many aristocratic families. Buying a riding school in his wife's name, he learned to ride and added hunting to his social assets.

In 1961 he offered 15-roomed Timsbury Manor, near Romsey, Hants, to the International Athletics Club as a training centre for the Tokyo Olympics. In a blaze of publicity an army of volunteers moved in to clear the grounds and paint the mansion, while extensive alterations were carried out by means of public subscriptions. In 1966 Cutts sold the reconditioned Manor for three times what he had paid for it in 1958.

In 1962 Cutts paid £280 for the 21st birthday celebrations of the son of Robert Mellish, the present Minister of Works, and also lent Mellish £4,000 for the purchase of a house. On January 1st, 1963 (his 1945 conviction for receiving stolen coal having been charitably overlooked) Cutts's name appeared in the "Honours List" as an M.B.E. - proposed by Robert Mellish!

"THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY"

The Report of the Prices and Incomes Board on Rents of Local Authority Housing (No.62, Cmd.3604) states that in the three years 1965-68 the average rents of council houses in London have risen by 35.5%, in the rest of England and Wales by 28.9%, and in Scotland by 20.0%.

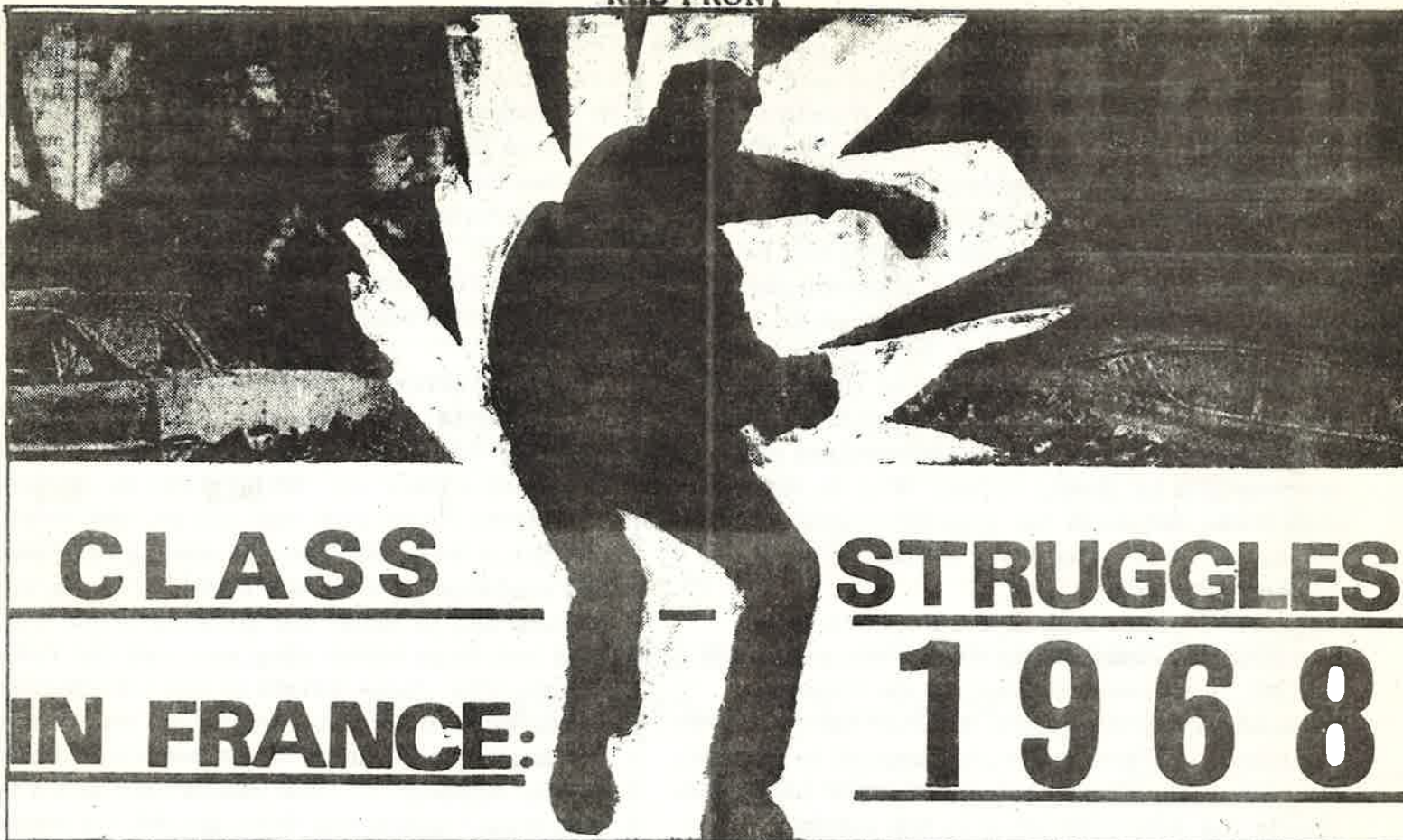
The real character of the "Prices and Incomes Board" as an instrument to hold down wages but not prices is well illustrated by the central recommendation of the report which is that weekly standard rents, which have risen in England and Wales in recent years by an average of 3s.4d. a year, should in future rise by an average of 7s.6d. a year.

A government sample survey of housing carried out in 1967 disclosed that out of a total of 15.6 million dwellings in England and Wales, 1.8 million (12%) were slums unfit for human habitation, while a further 4.5 million (29%) either lacked one or more basic amenities (such as indoor W.C., fixed bath, hand washbasin, or running hot and cold water) or were in urgent need of repairs. Thus a total of 6.3 million dwellings (40%) were in an unsatisfactory condition.

The Transport Tribunal has announced that as from August minimum bus and Underground fares in London will go up from 4d. to 5d.

In July Britain's two major tobacco companies - Imperial Tobacco and Gallaghers - announced that the prices of their cigarettes would go up immediately by 1d. for twenty, and that the prices of most of their tobaccos would rise simultaneously by 2d. an ounce.

Imperial Tobacco made a profit of £40 million in 1967, Gallaghers a profit of £15 million.



The militant class struggles in France which rose to a peak in May/June 1968 began among the students at the "Ecole de Lettres" - a section of the University of Paris in the western suburbs of the capital opened four years ago to relieve congestion at the Sorbonne, the Left Bank centre of the university. In November 1967 a strike took place among sociology students at Nanterre, directed principally against overcrowded classes; the authorities capitulated, and extra staff were sent to Nanterre and other improvements promised.

The lesson - that direct action could bring quick resolution of long-standing grievances - was noted by other students.

In January a group of anarchist students occupied the main hall at Nanterre, and police were called in to expel them. This action welded the mass of students into sympathetic action and the police were driven from the college buildings. Anarchist slogans of the "It is forbidden to forbid" type began to appear.

On March 19th a student from Nanterre was arrested during a Vietnam demonstration in Paris. On March 22nd, 8,000 students packed into the main hall of the college for a protest meeting, and a group of anarchist students, led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, carried out a symbolic occupation of the council chamber on the top floor of the college and then marched out again.

On April 4th, Alain Peyrefitte, the Minister of Education, ordered Nanterre to be closed, and the students replied by occupying the college buildings, now awash with anarchist slogans and portraits of Mao, Trotsky and Che Guevara. Two days later the Dean of Nanterre, Pierre Grappin, was forced to reopen the college and to grant a number of concessions to the students, including the right to participate in the administration of the college.

On May 3rd, the Nanterre students organised a march to the Sorbonne to protest against the threat of action against Cohn-Bendit by the disciplinary committee of the University of Paris. The Rector of the University, Paul Roche, called in police to clear all students from the Sorbonne.

As at Nanterre the previous September, this action welded students and staff into sympathetic action. UNEF (the students' union) and SNE (the university teachers' union) called out all their Paris members on strike.

On May 6th, 30,000 students taking part in a protest demonstration in the Latin Quarter were attacked by police and the first street barricades went up.

On May 10th students, children and workers succeeded in occupying the whole area around the Sorbonne, but were attacked by the "riot police" with a savagery and brutality unprecedented even for them. In consequence the trade unions called a 24-hour protest strike for Monday, May 13th.

Faced with this growing opposition, the authorities capitulated on May 11th. Prime Minister Pompidou agreed that the Sorbonne should be reopened and the police evacuated, and that the arrested student leaders should be released. The Senate of the University of Paris accepted the demands of students and staff, and the governing body of the university was reorganised to give the professorial staff 50% of the voting power, the lower grades of staff 25% and the students 25%.

On Monday May 13th, the students reoccupied the evacuated Sorbonne in the midst of the general strike.

The Workers Take Up the Cudgels

The right-wing trade union leaders (among

whom must be numbered the Communist leaders of the General Confederation of Labour, the CGT) had dismissed the militant movement of the students with a sneer as "infantile leftism". Nevertheless the widespread indignation at the police brutality forced them to call the 24-hour token strike on Monday, May 13th. But their aim was that, after this nominal day of protest, the workers should carry on as before.

But while the workers did, for the most part, return to work on the morning of the following day, they said - and said loudly and bluntly: "The students have won improvements and concessions by direct action. Why do we not also make demands for improvements and concessions? Why should our strike be only a 'token' strike?"

The lead was taken by the workers of the nationalised Renault car plants where, on May 16-17th, strikers occupied the factories, demanding higher wages, shorter hours (working hours in France are the longest in Europe, averaging 46-47 a week) and worker participation in the administration of the plants.

The Role of the Communist Party

Meanwhile the students had begun to raise political demands for the ending of the Gaullist regime. Faced with the prospect that these political demands would be taken up by the working class, the revisionist leadership of the Communist Party (which plays a similar role in French capitalist society to that of the Labour Party in Britain) decided on May 17th that it must take over the leadership of the spontaneous workers' struggle in order to ensure that it was directed towards purely economic demands and was in no way linked with the movement of the students. Within twenty-four hours the industries organised by the Communist-led CGT - mines, railways, engineering - had come to a halt, and by the week-end the other union organisations had followed suit. France was gripped by a general strike which paralysed the entire country, while in Paris the students fought on behind barricades of paving stones and overturned cars.

The right-wing trade union leaders urged the government that "to save France from anarchy" substantial economic concessions must be made to the working class so that they might "regain control". The government agreed and the terms of an agreement were hammered out: they involved a 10% all-round increase in wages, an increase in the minimum wage of 35% to 5s.1¹/₂d. an hour, and a phased reduction of hours to 40 a week.

When this "summit" agreement was reported to the workers, the general response was an indignant shout of "Ne signez pas!" (Do not sign!), and the strike continued.

On May 29th, while 800,000 strikers marched through the streets of Paris, de Gaulle flew round the army headquarters in France and

Germany and received pledges from the generals that he could rely on the armed forces to "restore order" if called upon. On his return to Paris on the 30th the General made his famous broadcast in which he declared that all necessary force would be used "to defend the Republic". The National Assembly was dissolved, elections announced for three weeks' time, and the tanks began to rumble towards the capital.

In the absence of leadership of the workers' and students' struggle by a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party, these moves were sufficient to enable the ruling class to capture the initiative. From this moment on, the wave of militancy went into decline among both workers and students. The police began to move in on pickets and to expel the students from the various buildings which they had held for the past month. The whole weight of the Communist Party was directed to urging the workers to end their strike and a mass return to work began, although in most cases only after further concessions had been gained - a wage increase of 12-15% and full or half payment for the days of the strike.

The French Communist Party - once the glorious revolutionary party of the French working class - had, under its treacherous revisionist leadership, succeeded in assisting the French monopoly capitalists to suppress a wave of spontaneous working class and student militancy unprecedented in western Europe for many years. It had assisted them to regain control of a situation that was slipping from their grasp. It had helped to give tottering French capitalism a new lease of life.

The Fruits of Revisionist Betrayal

On June 12th, the government banned all demonstrations and outlawed seven "leftist" student organisations, without interfering with the activities of the fascist "Occident" group.

After permitting the pro-fascist Georges Bidault to return to France, on June 15th de Gaulle released from prison (as a result of the demands of the generals he had met the previous month) General Raoul Salan and 49 other leaders of the fascist OAS. This action assured the Gaullist party of fascist support in the forthcoming election.

The results of the flagrant betrayal of the class struggle of the workers and students by the revisionist Communist Party (which fought its election campaign under such outright right-wing slogans as "Vote Communist to End Disorder") were manifested in the General Election of June 23rd/30th. Working class and student voters who had previously voted "left" abstained in large numbers (abstentions were 28% in Paris, 36% in the Latin Quarter). Petty-bourgeois and "middle-class" voters, frightened by the unorganised and unled student militancy, rushed for the shelter of de Gaulle's "paternal

stability". Fascist elements who had previously abstained out of disgust for de Gaulle's "surrender" in Algeria were persuaded by the rehabilitation of Salan and other fascist generals to give their support to the Gaullists.

As a result of all these events, the Gaullists and their Independent Republican allies increased their seats in the Assembly by 88 - from 242 to 350. On the other hand, the representation of the Communist Party and its electoral ally, the "Federation of the Left" led by Francois Mitterand, fell by more than half, the number of Communist deputies being reduced from 75 to 34, that of the "Federation of the Left" from 118 to 57. For the first time in French parliamentary history a single party, the Gaullist party, obtained an

absolute majority in the Assembly - one, in fact, of 50 seats.

Such were the fruits of the revisionist Communist Party's betrayal of the class struggle, its repudiation of revolution, its policy of "democratic socialism through parliamentary elections".

ONE LESSON ABOVE ALL MUST BE DRAWN FROM THE MOMENTOUS CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE OF 1968: IT IS THAT SPONTANEOUS CLASS MILITANCY, HOWEVER BRAVE, HOWEVER SOLID, CAN LEAD ONLY TO CLASS DEFEAT UNLESS AND UNTIL IT IS LEAD BY A REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST-LENINIST VANGUARD PARTY OF THE WORKING CLASS.

Another "Cultural Revolution" Ends In Fiasco

The ALBANIAN SOCIETY in Britain was founded in 1957 for the purpose of spreading information about the People's Republic of Albania - now the one remaining country in Europe continuing to build socialism under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist Party - and to foster friendship and understanding between Albania and Britain. In recent years the activities of the Society have developed considerably and its membership has doubled in each of the last two years.

In these circumstances a group of "left" revisionists decided this spring to try to "take over" the Society from its members and transform it from a broad friendship organisation into a narrow "leftist" political sect dedicated to support for the faction in China headed by Mao Tse-tung. The campaign began with the publication by Ivor Kenna (of the "left" revisionist "Finsbury Communist Association") of a libellous circular directed against the Secretary of the Society, Bill Bland. As a result the Committee suspended Kenna from membership for conduct detrimental to the Society.

Faced with the impossibility of convincing the membership of the Society to support their plans for "reforming" the Albanian Society, this group of disruptors then attempted a "cultural revolution" (or, as the Committee of the Society correctly put it in their communique, a "fascist-type coup") against the Annual General Meeting of the Society; they introduced forcibly into the meeting a number of people who were not, and had never been, members of the society (including such criminal charlatans as the notorious Albert Manchanda) and demanded their right to "vote". As a result the A.G.M. had to be adjourned. The disruptors then proceeded to call their own bogus meeting in order to pretend - such is the fantasy world in which "left" revisionists live - that it was an "Annual General Meeting" of the Albanian Society!

When the Annual General Meeting of the Society was reconvened on May 12th, under the security conditions necessary to preserve the democracy of the membership, the members unanimously confirmed the expulsion of Kenna, together with those who had taken part in the bogus meeting, namely: R. Archbold, N. Berger, F. Kenna, G. Lee, S. McConville and J. Shapiro.

Folklorist A.L. Lloyd was elected as the new Chairman of the Society, and Bill Bland re-elected as Secretary, supported by a Committee consisting of M. Baker, M.J. Fletcher, F.D. Rushworth and A.D. Shepherd.

(Readers interested in membership of the ALBANIAN SOCIETY, which costs 10s. a year, should write to the Secretary at 26, Cambridge Road, Ilford, Essex).

THE CAPITALIST WORLD

BRITISH POISON GAS USED IN VIETNAM

In June Dr. Steven Rose told a meeting of MPs in the House of Commons that the "riot gas" CS developed at the Ministry of Defence research establishment at Porton had been made available to the United States. Used by American forces in Vietnam, it had been responsible there for more than 350 "well-documented deaths".

Dr. Rose said that 5 tons of CS was enough to kill the entire population of the world, while the British government station at Nancokuke was producing 60 tons a year.

WEST GERMANY

On July 4th West German Chancellor Kiesinger issued a denial that he knew anything about the Nazi atrocities against the Jews while he held a high post in the Nazi administration.

On the following day a press conference in East Berlin was shown documentary evidence from the Nazi archives which established that Kiesinger joined the Nazi party in 1933 and held membership card no. 2,633,930. He rose to be Deputy Director of the Nazi Foreign Ministry's political broadcasting department, and not only signed documents relating to anti-Jewish atrocities but took part in them personally.

U.S.A.

In the Democratic presidential primaries held in New York State in June, Senator Eugene McCarthy, who has been campaigning for the ending of the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam, received the support of 58 delegates against 3 for Vice-President Humphrey.

THE REVISIONIST WORLD

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In the last issue of RED FRONT, we commented on the ousting of the old-guard revisionist leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party by a "liberal" ultra-revisionist faction, as follows:

"Various public statements by the new leaders have made it clear that their basic aim is to replace the present system of state capitalism with a free capitalist economy operated within the framework of multi-party 'parliamentary democracy'. They propose in the economic field:

- 1) to permit freedom of private enterprise;
- 2) to permit foreign private investment in the economy;
- 3) to break the present close economic ties with the Soviet Union and the other revisionist countries of eastern and central Europe, so that foreign trade may be orientated towards the capitalist world.

These proposals have, not unnaturally, aroused the trepidation of the old-style revisionist leaderships still in power in other countries of eastern and central Europe - particularly those in the Soviet Union, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic." (RED FRONT, Vol.2, No.2; May/June 1968, p.7).

Developments since then have more than confirmed the correctness of this analysis.

At a press conference on May 14th, Prime Minister Cernik confirmed that it was intended to introduce "free enterprise and competition", while Deputy Prime Minister Sik said that Czechoslovakia would welcome the investment of "Western capital", including the formation of "joint ventures", and that offers were streaming in from western European countries. This last statement is an exaggeration, since most capitalist interests are adopting a policy of waiting to see if the new "free enterprise" leadership can maintain its position.

One of the main planks in the economic programme of the Czechoslovak ultra-revisionists is to allow heavy industry to run down to a considerable extent, and to develop intensively light industries producing the luxury and semi-luxury consumer articles demanded by the new class of state capitalists. This requires extensive capital investment, which the leadership hopes to meet partly or wholly by means of a loan from one or other of the developed capitalist countries.

Taking advantage of the official demagogic propaganda about "the new freedoms", the workers have been putting in wage demands sup-

ported by threats of strike action. In May Pillar, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, said that for the government to grant these demands would be "economic suicide".

These developments have further increased the trepidation of the orthodox revisionists in the former socialist countries, especially those of the Soviet Union, who have issued strongly-worded statements about the danger of "revisionism" and "counter-revolution" in Czechoslovakia. In May Soviet President Podgorny sent a pointed greeting to his "Czechoslovak brothers" wishing them success "in the struggle against the scheming of quarters hostile to progress and socialism".

In June the High Command of the Warsaw Pact Organisation, dominated by the Soviet revisionists, sent Soviet and Polish armed forces into Czechoslovakia against the decision of the Czech leaders. On July 15th, Colonel-General Vyclav Prchlik, head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party's Defence Department, admitted this publicly in effect when he called for revision of the Warsaw Pact organisation and declared that nothing in the Warsaw Pact treaty justified the stationing of troops on the territory of a member country that did not want them. The aim of the ousted old-guard revisionists in Czechoslovakia was to organise a coup by the People's Militia, a para-military organisation still under the control of the orthodox revisionists, and then to call on the Soviet Union for its military forces to assist them in putting down the "foreign-inspired counter-revolution" of the ultra-revisionists. This plan ran into difficulties when the ultra-revisionists organised a campaign based on nationalism which confused sections of the People's Militia, and when other revisionist parties - notably those of Rumania, Yugoslavia, France, Italy and Britain - issued statements opposing Soviet intervention.

On July 14-15th the revisionist leaders of the Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic held an emergency meeting in Warsaw to decide on their course of action in relation to Czechoslovakia in these circumstances. A joint letter was sent from the meeting to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

POLAND

In Poland a number of the leaders of the "liberal" ultra-revisionist faction (corresponding to that headed by Dubcek in Czechoslovakia) are of Jewish origin, and the still dominant orthodox revisionist faction headed by Gomulka has for some months been waging a campaign against them on the basis of anti-Semitism.

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No Tears For Kennedy!

The Big Television Show is over.

The pool of blood - in colour if you can afford it - has been mopped up from the hotel floor. The pet social psychologists of the Establishment have mouthed their fatuous phrases about "the violence of American society" - and blamed it all on the American Indians. The king-size candles of St. Patrick's Cathedral have been wrapped in cellophane until the next Big Show.

In fact, there have been few victims of assassination, apart from Rockwell, for whom working people need feel less sympathy. The American advertising agencies, whose task is to sell any product which can pay their not inconsiderable fees, be it Coca Cola or Kennedy, had recently built Robert Kennedy into the false image of the millionaire's son whose heart was with the poor, the shy, not-too-bright All-American college boy who stood for what tens of millions of Americans wanted: "change".

Robert Kennedy was, in fact, almost a burlesque of the unprincipled, opportunistic politician created by the automated, electronic machine of American capitalist politics. The policies of "change" which he put forward in his pre-election campaign were drawn up for him by computers fed with public opinion polls. These showed that x million voters wanted the end of the war in Vietnam, that y million negro voters wanted better housing, that z million Zionist voters wanted the United States to continue full backing for Israel. "Here I stand", declared Robert Kennedy, "carrying onward the banner of 'change' brutally torn from the hands of my brother!" The advertising agents who wrote his demagogic speeches conveniently omitted to mention that it was under the regime of John Kennedy that the brutal United States aggression in Vietnam took on its present shape, that the "change" for which John Kennedy stood was symbolised by the "Bay of Pigs" invasion of Cuba! It is significant that Robert Kennedy's entry into the Presidential campaign was approved by his powerful and wealthy backers only at a comparatively late stage in the campaign, when the student-backed campaign of Eugene McCarthy in opposition to the United States war in Vietnam had revealed the need for them to sponsor a Presidential candidate standing for a "change" that could be kept safely under their control. Now, at the time of writing, these same backers are considering whether Edward Kennedy, cashing in on widespread sympathy which the assassinations of his two brothers has aroused, can take Robert Kennedy's place.

Assassination is, of course, no weapon of politically conscious revolutionaries. For every

member of a ruling class that falls victim to an assassin's bullet, there are a dozen understudies waiting hopefully in the wings. In fact, political assassination may well serve - consciously or unconsciously - the interests of the ruling class by providing it with a pretext for more extreme measures of repression against the progressive movement.

While, therefore, deploring the assassination of Robert Kennedy, we shed no tears for this unscrupulous demagogue who was a tool of the most vicious and reactionary ruling class the capitalist world has yet produced. Let those who must weep do so for the Vietnamese who have given and are giving their lives every day for the freedom of their country. But tears will not stop the murderous aggression of the United States in Vietnam. To stop this anger is needed - anger against the Johnsons and the Kennedys whose crimes make the assassination of a single capitalist politician appear but a petty misdemeanour. Such burning, righteous anger can indeed help to mobilise the peoples of the world into an invincible, militant front against their greatest enemy, the American imperialists - who are also the greatest enemy of the American working people themselves.

DATES TO REMEMBER. NO. 3

JUNE 2nd. to 6th., 1868 :

THE FIRST TRADES UNION CONGRESS

From 1818 onwards attempts were made to unite the infant workers' societies of the various trades into a single powerful organisation. Among the early unsuccessful ventures in this direction were the National Association for the Protection of Labour (1830), led by John Docherty, and the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union (1834), formed at the instigation of Robert Owen.

From 1858 Trades Councils were formed in various industrial centres to unite the local trade union branches, and the movement for a permanent national trade union organisation was greatly stimulated by the founding in 1864 of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) under the leadership of Karl Marx.

The first Trade Union Congress was held in the Mechanics' Institute, David Street, Manchester from June 2nd. to 6th., 1868 - just one hundred years ago - with 33 delegates present. The congress resolved:

"That it is highly desirable that the trades of the United Kingdom should hold an annual congress, for the purpose of bringing the trades into closer alliance, and to take action in all Parliamentary matters pertaining to the general interests of the working classes."

The degeneration of the T.U.C. under the successive right-wing leaderships of the last forty years - leaders whom Lenin aptly characterised as "lieutenants of the capitalist class within the labour movement" - is well illustrated by the Centenary Banquet held this June in that citadel of the working class, the Guildhall, at which the guest-of-honour was that eminent trade unionist Queen Elizabeth II!

STEPNEY MEETING LAYS BASIS FOR ACTION COUNCIL

At a public meeting convened in Stepney, East London, on June 13th by the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain, a Preparatory Committee was elected for the formation of an Action Council in defence of the rights and liberties of the working people.

The Council will be organised on the basis of individual membership and of the affiliation of local trade union branches, tenants associations, and other base organisations of the working people.

The Council will do all in its power to coordinate resistance to all attacks on the living standards and democratic rights of the working people, including in particular their freedom to organise for struggle, and will call for the nomination of independent working class candidates in both local and national elections in order to expose parliament as the deceptive front disguising the rule of the big monopolies and the banks.

Plans for the formation of Action Councils in other parts of the country are proceeding.

The Preparatory Committee,
East London Action Council in
Defence of Working Class
Rights and Liberties.

June 13th, 1968

The following Declaration was adopted unanimously by the Stepney Meeting:

DECLARATION

The past two years or more have witnessed the most serious and far-reaching attacks on the fundamental interests of the working class of any in the post-war period. Acting through its present chosen instrument, the Labour Government, British finance-capital is now gathering all its forces for the carrying through of the final measures aimed at destroying the whole traditional basis of working class rights and liberties. Already the Prices and Incomes Acts and other reactionary legislation - which the report of the Donovan Committee proposes to further extend -

the provoking of demagogic racist attacks against our class brothers from the colonial lands who are immigrant workers, are essential to the continued rule of monopoly capital if it is to maintain itself and its system of profit, interest and rent extracted from the labour of the working people in the conditions of ever more open disparity of interest between the tiny handful of monopolists at the top and the mass of the working people whom they oppress and exploit. In particular, they are necessary to the interests of the monopoly capitalists if they are to

AIMS

- 1 To organise the working people of East London, on both an industrial and a residential basis
 - a) to resist all attacks on the living standards and democratic rights and freedoms of the working people of all races and nationalities, including especially the right to organise on an independent basis, for struggle against economic exploitation, political and ideological reaction and bureaucratic oppression, deception and demagogy.
 - b) to promote the independent class militancy and fighting spirit of all sections of the working people through the putting forward of both immediate and long-term practical demands designed to extend and deepen the democratic authority of the working class and its organisations in all spheres of economic and political life.
- 2 To render effective practical assistance to all sections of the working class and working people in the establishment of such independent organisations of struggle in all spheres as will promote the achievement of the above aims: these would include Tenants Associations, Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Vigilance Committees, Consumers Prices and Rents Vigilance Committees, and so forth.
- 3 To cast off the long-standing disruptive and disarming role of the established political parties in all spheres of working class life and struggle and to facilitate the exposure of modern parliamentary practice as a demagogic front of deception designed to conceal the real rule by force of the capitalist class.
- 4 To put forward independent working class candidates for parliament and the local councils, in order both to expose the swindle of parliamentary shadow-boxing which disguises the oppressive dictatorship of monopoly capital and its state, and also to develop through independent working class initiative the basis for the future representative councils embodying the democratic rule of the working class, the foundation of a socialist Britain.

Immediate Demands

- 1 The inalienable right of all workers to withhold their labour, to

provide for legislative measures against such fundamental freedoms as the right to strike and other basic forms of struggle, including the imposition of a fine of up to £500 upon a striking worker and imprisonment for non-payment.

It is the profound and insoluble crisis of British imperialism which lies at the root of this offensive of monopoly capital. Throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America, the victorious national liberation movements of the workers and peasants in the colonial lands are sweeping away for ever the system of colonial enslavement and oppression. This, in its turn, is increasingly restricting the economic basis on which has rested the policy of piecemeal reforms and petty "welfare state" concessions, together with the hypocritical prattle about "our democratic liberties" which have accompanied them, which have ever constituted the main plank in the propaganda programme of the monopoly capitalist state - as old as capitalism itself - to tie the working class to the political and ideological apparatus of its class dictatorship and to prevent the working class from organising on the basis of principled and militant class organisations independent of the economic, political and propaganda organs of combined force and deception under the control of monopoly capital.

Today, however, this crisis of British imperialism has reached a new stage. It is no longer sufficient to the reactionary purposes of monopoly capital merely to combine the ideological corruption and deception of sections of the working class with the "judicious" use of force in times of "emergency", both combined within the framework of "constitutional parliamentary democracy". A qualitatively new stage has now been reached: faced with the growing intensity of class struggle at home and heightening contradictions and rivalries with its imperialist competitors overseas, British finance-capital is seeking to strengthen its apparatus of rule by bringing the mass organisations of the working class, the trade unions, under its direct control, by restricting still further the fundamental rights and liberties of the working class - in particular the right to organise for struggle - and so to erect a corporate state framework of direct, as distinct from indirect "democratically" disguised rule by monopoly capital. These steps form the essential preliminary to the imposition of fully fascist forms of dictatorship when the further intensification of class struggle makes this necessary. All these measures, including

succeed in "unifying" their social and class rear in preparation for the launching of adventurist wars of colonial aggression in an attempt to regain the areas they have lost either to the victorious national liberation movements or to their more powerful rivals, the U.S. imperialists. Hence the provisions of the Donovan Report.

In all parts of Britain, in all sections of our working class movement, the most class conscious and militant workers are preparing to organise for struggle against the fascist onslaught of monopoly capital and its preparations for the imposition of a corporate state. In mounting their just and progressive counter-offensive, they must make use of those same tried and tested methods of struggle and forms of organisation which, in all lands and at all stages of the historic struggle between capital and labour have proved to be the only ones capable of ensuring victory in struggle and of contributing to the achievement of the great final aim of socialism and working class power: the independent organs of struggle unified in a great united front embracing all sections of the working people which alone can effectively extend and deepen the scope and arena of working class struggle and promote the independent initiative of the working class at all levels. The separate organisations representing the aims and interests of particular sections of the workers alone are insufficient to achieve the aim of a permanent and stable organisational base capable of maintaining leadership over the important spheres of struggle in which they arise against the combined counterattacks of the state and its agents in the existing reformist organisations. Countless class battles, countless victories and defeats, from the Chartist movement, the massive demonstrations which attended the campaign for the Eight Hour Day in the 1880s, through to the Councils of Action thrown up by the working class in the General Strike of 1926, the mass movements of the unemployed in the 1930s and the struggle against Clause 18b of the Emergency Powers Act which culminated in the Great Dock Strike of 1948, have driven this lesson home with all the power of irrefutable logic. Now, when the British working class movement faces the most crucial testing time and the most vital tasks in its long history, these lessons must be incorporated into its fundamental programme. Action Councils embodying the independence and freedom of struggle of the working class and uniting the most militant vanguard, the industrial trade unionists, with other sections of the working people, must be set up.

organise strike committees and to raise support and funds for striking workers, whether within the existing trade union structure or outside of it, whether "official" or "unofficial", must be maintained. All pending or envisaged legislation which attacks or restricts this fundamental freedom of the working people must be abandoned.

2 The right of all workers to conduct all negotiations with employers directly through their elected local, regional or national representatives must be maintained. All state interference with negotiations, disputes and strikes must be ended. All organs and bodies designed to undermine the independence and unity of the trade unions and other working class organisations, such as "Joint Consultation Committees", "Joint Shop Stewards and Management Committees", etc. must be abolished.

3 The right of all working people to organise demonstrations and campaigns in pursuance of their class interest must be maintained. All actual or pending legislation designed to restrict these fundamental freedoms must be withdrawn or abrogated. The right of all workers to protect themselves against police provocations and brutalities must be fought for and recognised.

4 All municipal and private rents to be held at their present level. The right of tenants to withhold any increases of rent imposed upon them by either municipal or private landlords must be fought for and applied by means of rent strikes organised by tenants associations, which shall collect the standard rent due at the level prevailing prior to the increase and hold it on the tenants' behalf until such time as the increase is unconditionally withdrawn.

5 All measures designed to divide the working people on the basis of income, such as means tests or differential rent schemes, must be abolished. The principle of "a fair rent that all can afford" must be upheld and fought for.

6 All restrictions on councillors who are council tenants to sit and vote on housing committees must be removed.

7 All elected representatives, parliamentary and municipal, must be subject to recall, the procedure for recall being initiated upon demand of not less than ten per cent of the electorate.

8 The aldermanic system, an intolerable restriction on the working people's right to elect their own representatives, must be abolished.

9 All necessary measures to be implemented to achieve a cheap, efficient and fully adequate state-subsidised system of public transport. The present policies favouring private transport must be reversed.

THE DONOVAN REPORT:

A SUBTLE ATTACK ON THE WORKING CLASS

In June the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, which had sat for more than three years under the chairmanship of Lord Donovan, issued its Report.

During its long deliberations many Tory politicians and big employers had been loud in their demands that the Commission should recommend the legal prohibition of strikes - or at least of unofficial strikes.

In comparison with these demands, the Commission's report - largely drawn up by Professor Hugh Clegg, of Warwick University - appears at first glance to be "liberal", for it does not recommend the legal prohibition even of unofficial strikes.

What it does recommend, however, is more subtle and therefore more dangerous for the working class.

Firstly, it recommends that a change in the law should be permitted whereby leaders of unofficial strikes would be liable to be sued in the civil courts for damages for inducing their fellow-workers to break their contracts of employment. But there would be a further consequence of such legislation: an employer could take out an injunction in the courts against the leaders of an unofficial strike, and if this injunction were disobeyed, the strike leaders could be imprisoned indefinitely for contempt of court. Since some 95% of stoppages in Britain are unofficial (not because they are frivolous, as the capitalist press always suggests, but because the leaders of the unions are in the main in the pockets of the capitalist class and regard their main function as one of "disciplining" their members) Professor Clegg has devised a subtle way of hamstringing the workers' struggles without the stigma of "fascism" that attaches to the legal prohibition of strikes.

Secondly, the Report recommends the setting up of a new state body, the Industrial Relations Commission. One of the main functions of this body would be to press trade unions to alter their method of collective bargaining. At present the typical agreement reached by collective bargaining covers an industry, leaving the shop stewards in each factory, or in each department of a factory, to reach agreement with the employers on variations which are often significantly in advance of the national agreement. The Commission recommends:

1) that agreements reached by collective bargaining should be for a particular company, or for a particular factory;

2) that union officials - these days usually the management's best friends - should take part in their negotiation and not merely, as at present, the shop stewards who generally have the confidence of the workers; and

3) that all such agreements should be registered with an expanded Ministry of Employment.

The aim of this proposal is expressed in the Report as clearly as Civil Service English permits: it is to cut out factory and departmental variations favourable to the workers negotiated as a result of pressure from the shop floor; these give rise to what the pet economists of the capitalist class call "wage drift" which is not controllable by the Prices and Incomes Board.

"The registration of company and factory agreements would expose the whole process of pay settlement to the influence of policy (i.e. incomes policy - Ed.)

They would bring 'bidding up' for labour into the open and thus render it susceptible of control.

Incomes policy must continue a lame and halting exercise so long as it consists in the planning of industry-wide agreements, most of which exercise an inadequate control over pay."

These two primary recommendations of the Donovan Report are thus aimed at holding down workers' wages more effectively and at hamstringing the class struggle of the workers for improved pay and conditions.

It is necessary thoroughly to expose these reactionary aims of the Donovan Report to the workers, for they form a further step in the direction of the implementation of a corporate state structure in which the trade unions are no more than impotent state-controlled "labour front" organisations, as in Nazi Germany. It is necessary to mobilise the maximum struggle on the part of the organised workers to prevent the implementation of the recommendations of the Report, and this can undoubtedly best be done through the formation of Action Councils in industry and the localities.

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M. Scott;

34 Upper Tollington Park, London N4.)



RAILWAYS

On July 6th the work-to-rule of the National Union of Railwaymen (which began on June 24th) and of the footplaters' union ASLEF (which began on July 1st) resulted in British Railways accepting the railway unions' proposals which they had previously rejected. The agreement will give wage increases of between 3 and 4½% to almost 200,000 railwaymen. The government-backed demand that the increases would be withdrawn if a major productivity deal to cover the cost was not negotiated by September 2nd, was abandoned.

ROLLS-ROYCE BRISTOL ENGINES

On July 15th, 100 delegates attending a meeting in London of the Rolls-Royce Bristol Engine Combine Action Committee resolved to recommend to the 33,000 workers at the firm's establishments that there should be a general overtime ban and a "blacking" of all work transferred from the company's factories at Cardiff and Benthams (Glos.), which the management threatens to close in September as part of a "rationalisation" programme.

BUSES

70,000 municipal busmen are to strike unless they receive the negotiated rise of £1 a week

which has been frozen by the government.

FORDS

In June 187 women sewing machinists at the Ford car plant at Dagenham struck to demand regrading. They complained that they were the victims of sex discrimination in that they received only 85% of the male wage for the same work. The stoppage was declared official by the three unions involved: the Vehicle Builders, the Transport and General, and the Foundry Workers. The strikers were joined later by 197 women from the Ford plant at Halewood (Liverpool).

After ten days the union leaders agreed with the Ford management to recommend that the women should return to work on the promise that a "fact-finding committee under an independent chairman" would investigate their case. The workers declined and continued their strike until they received from Minister of Labour Barbara Castle "satisfactory assurances" of a "fair hearing".

B.O.A.C. PILOTS

The fortnight-long strike of 1,040 British Overseas Airways Corporation pilots, estimated to have cost the airline about £6 million, ended on July 1st with agreement that negotiations would be held between the corporation and the British Airline Pilots' Association under the chairmanship of Professor J. Wood of Sheffield University for a new contract of service under which salaries will be related to operating conditions (such as weight, speed and type of aircraft) and to experience.

The Revisionist World Continued from page 6

A third faction headed by Minister of the Interior General Moczar (made in July a Secretary of the Central Committee and a Candidate Member of the Politbureau of the Polish United Workers' Party) wishes to retain the present revisionist bureaucratic dictatorship but to follow an independent national course similar to that taken by the Rumanian revisionist leaders. The faction headed by Moczar is now not only organising a jingoist propaganda campaign directed at the Soviet Union, but is using the official anti-Semitism sponsored by the Gomulka faction against Gomulka himself, who has a Jewish wife.

To such a gutter level has politics in a former socialist country been reduced after twelve years of revisionist rule.

"COMRADE" MANNERHEIM?

During an official visit to Finland in April, Rumanian revisionist leaders Prime Minister Maurer and Foreign Minister Manescu laid a wreath on the tomb of Field Marshal ("Butcher") Mannerheim, the fascist dictator who opened the door into Finland for Nazi troops in 1940.

YUGOSLAVIA

During the weekend of June 2-3, about a thousand students occupied the administration building of the University of Belgrade after clashes with police in the streets of the capital. Among the slogans carried and shouted by the demonstrating students were some of a Marxist-Leninist character calling for the overthrow of revisionism and the ending of the official policies of restoring capitalism. The official leadership of the students, however, succeeded in suppressing the more radical demands and securing majority acceptance for comparatively mild demands for the democratisation of university administration. The latter demands were immediately accepted by the Belgrade University Council and a few days later endorsed by President Tito.

PEOPLE'S CHINA

In May it was reported that Canadian journalist David Crook had been arrested in China on charges of "being a supporter of Liu Shao-chi", the President of the People's Republic who has been a leading opponent of the counter-revolutionary faction headed by Mao Tse-tung.

LETTERS FROM READERS

THE REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN THE P. R. CHINA

"The January issue of RED FRONT, containing the Report of the Central Committee of the M.L.O.B., is a truly historical and significant document, not only for the M.L.O.B. membership but for all Marxist-Leninist movements. The Central Committee's analysis, based on correct Marxist-Leninist thought, showed both political honesty (a rare commodity among 'Marxists' these days!) and inspired one with great confidence in the integrity of the Central Committee. After all, it is not an easy matter publicly and openly to admit that an organisation such as the M.L.O.B. has been totally incorrect in its previous policy - in this case by supporting the Mao Yse-tung faction in the People's Republic of China. The Marxist-Leninist analysis of the Chinese situation in the January issue was clear, well-documented and convincing. It deserves as wide a circulation as possible among the working people and especially among the so-called communists and 'Marxist-Leninists' abounding in Britain and overseas. The 'Chinese Situation' report is altogether admirable and demands close study and respect.

I shall certainly follow the activities of the M.L.O.B. in future, and pledge my support to it."

P.A., Uckfield.

"When I first read the attacks made by some groups calling themselves 'Marxist-Leninist' on the M.L.O.B. report on the 'cultural revolution' in China, I found myself confused. The supplement 'The M.L.O.B. replies to its Critics' in the last issue of RED FRONT made me realise how baseless and dishonest all these attacks on the M.L.O.B. were. Reading the original report again, all my doubts have disappeared and I appreciate that they were due to my political thinking being clouded by emotional prejudice.

In my view the 'Report on the Situation in the People's Republic of China' ranks as one of the few truly Marxist-Leninist documents which have appeared in the international Communist movement since the death of Stalin."

S.P., Perth

STUDENT GRANTS

"Recently I attended on behalf of RED FRONT a public meeting organised on the question of student grants by students of Cambridge University. No visiting member of the public could fail to be moved by the accounts of hardships which were related: the cases of students compelled to draw on their bank and holiday grants to meet living expenses, and of one student in receipt of a grant of £90 a year who had to spend this entire sum on travelling expenses.

It was noted that the seriousness of the problem varied from area to area, grants to students being made at the discretion of local authorities: in one case a grant offered had been £5 a term! All this in face of the rising cost of food, clothing and accommodation.

The demands made by the students could be considered too moderate, since it was only proposed that grants should be adjusted to bring them into line with the increase in the cost of living since 1961.

Differences of opinion expressed at the meeting were chiefly concerned with the best forms of action to achieve these moderate demands. One Tory speaker expressed the view that "demonstrations of a violent character" could damage the students' image with the public.

In discussion, I spoke on behalf of RED FRONT and made the point that to ignore public demonstrations would only isolate the students from the public, since they could not rely on press and television to express their case, while history showed that demonstrations of militancy were often effective in producing results where years of

mild and polite requests yielded nothing.

I expressed the view that it was important that the students should get together with the organised workers for joint action in pursuit of the betterment of their living conditions. I said that the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain completely backed the demands of the students for increased grants and that the columns of RED FRONT were always open to them to present their case on this and other grievances. The leaflets which I distributed after the meeting were well received.

The capitalist press, of course, has been running true to form in seeking to set the public against the students. The Daily Mirror, in particular, reached a new low in journalism when it fulminated hypocritically against the students who rocked Wilson's car and spattered an American official with paint; it even demanded the stopping of their grants! But the Americans are not rocking cars and throwing paint in Vietnam; there Wilson's friends are using napalm, high explosives and toxic gases against the people. Why should the students apologise to those who condone the savage atrocities being committed in Vietnam? The right of students to demonstrate is an important democratic right which not only students must fight to defend."

D.C., Letchworth.

THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR

"True emancipation of the African masses is yet to come. The convulsions so far in those parts of Africa under Black rule are no more than scrambles among the reactionary forces. The world monopoly interests, while still scrambling among themselves over the African booty, are also manoeuvring to enthrone their respective Black puppets in the Black-ruled African countries. As for the 'socialist' countries, the Soviet Union and its appendages are busy stretching their economic tentacles without regard for ideological considerations, while the People's Republic of China is often very active aiding armed struggles, including those with bourgeois aspirations.

In all the Black-ruled African countries, the level of political consciousness based on class analysis is very low among the bulk of the African masses. And where such consciousness is being aroused and hence prospects of social revolution looming, the bourgeois ruling classes resort to tribal demagoguery, thus replacing class consciousness among the masses with tribal consciousness and diverting the course of social revolution on to that of tribal squabbles. Nigeria, ever since the phoney independence of 1960, has been a centre of such reactionary intrigues, of which the birth of 'Biafra' and the civil war raging ever since - with all its sufferings for the masses - represents the climax. Also foreign monopoly interests were involved, using their intelligence agents and economic trump cards to work on the masses and the leaders, and their propaganda machines to deceive their own people at home. The blindfolding effect of appeals to tribal sentiments can be brought home to the British people by the analogy of the recent effects of Powellism on the British White working class. If Enoch Powell with a single speech could arouse such sentiments in the British White working class, one can imagine what outbursts and fanaticism could be unleashed if an influential party resorted to a blatant racist campaign.

It is apt to emphasise that the bourgeois ruling classes on both sides of the Nigerian conflict are remarkably similar in constitution. On both sides they include left-overs from the old corrupt civilian government, Sandhurst-trained bourgeois army officers, bourgeois intellectuals and local capitalists. On the 'Lagos' side there are some social-democrats in the hierarchy. Major-General Gowon, the leader of the 'Lagos' side, is unmistakably bourgeois. Colonel Ujukwu, the leader of the 'Biafran' side, is more astute, so much so that some progressive quarters mistake him for a socialist. But his emphasis all along on religion and tribe, the fact that he inherited a great fortune from his millionaire father and received an Oxford education, his recent pronouncement that he hopes for 'free enterprise' in 'Biafra' - all these hardly combine to make a socialist.

At present the masses are polarised into two bitterly opposed camps, with most Ibos supporting 'Biafra' and the 15-odd other ethnic groups supporting 'Nigeria'.

The Nigerian Left stationed abroad are actively engaged in polemics. Those supporting 'Biafra' are mostly Ibos but with a good number of non-Ibos as well. Countering the above is the other Left school of

LETTERS CONTINUED

thought (mostly non-Ibo Nigerians but with a small number of Ibos too), and advancing the following arguments:

1) If the left should succumb to bourgeois intrigue and blindfolding propaganda by supporting 'Biafra', they will be obliged to succumb to other reactionary offshoots in future and hence assist the reactionary fragmentation of Africa for the world monopoly interests to prey upon.

2) Recognising the indisputable fact that the problem of the Black man in Africa can only be solved by socialist integration rather than reactionary fragmentation, the present complex situation in Nigeria calls for a principled united effort of the Nigerian Left from all the ethnic groups and from both sides to bring pressure to bear on the bourgeois regimes on both sides to compromise on a loose federation so that an immediate end might be put to the slaughter of the masses on both sides. This can be followed up by the Left planning strategically how to cash in on the foul role played by the forces of reaction, the militant mood of the masses and the obvious incompetence of the bourgeois bureaucratic set-up in Lagos and hence shatter the myth of tribal incompatibility which the enemy of the Black man has coined for the Black man's perpetual subjugation and dehumanisation."

Group for Nigerian Revolution, Birmingham.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

We are pleased to publish (in a slightly abridged form) this statement from our Nigerian comrades.

It appears, however, that they have been influenced by a "liberal intellectual" view prevalent in British institutions of higher education to the effect that, where a difference of opinion exists, in order to be "objective" one must note the arguments put forward by both sides but at all costs avoid coming down on either side, since to do so constitutes "partiality" and "prejudice". Thus, the GROUP FOR NIGERIAN REVOLUTION presents two different viewpoints on the Nigerian civil war, but carefully avoids endorsing either. But the revolution in Nigeria, as everywhere else, requires leadership and there can be no leadership based on this kind of non-committal "sitting on the fence."

We hold that only Marxism-Leninism, which sums up in its theoretical principles the collective revolutionary experience of the working people of all lands, can signpost the correct path for the liberation of the Nigerian workers and peasants. The statement of our Nigerian comrades nowhere makes mention of Marxism-Leninism; it speaks throughout of the "Left" - a vague term which may be held to include liberals, social-democrats, revisionists, trotskyites and anarchists.

In addition to the two viewpoints put forward in the statement of the Group for Nigerian Revolution, there is a third: the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism, and we say without hesitation that this is the only true Left viewpoint, while both the viewpoints presented by the group objectively serve the interests of reaction.

Marxism-Leninism holds that the revolutionary process in a colonial-type country must go through two stages in its development: firstly, the stage of national-democratic revolution directed against foreign imperialist domination and internal feudal/comprador forces linked with foreign imperialism; and secondly, the stage of socialist revolution. As our Nigerian comrades point out when they speak of the "phony independence" of 1960, the national-democratic revolution has not been completed in Nigeria, which has a neo-colonial status.

However, the failure of our Nigerian comrades to use Marxist-Leninist analysis leads them to make what is, in our view, a fundamentally wrong appraisal of the character of the present Nigerian civil war. They present this as a conflict between

"bourgeois ruling classes on both sides" (para. 3 of our summary), and one essentially created artificially by the Nigerian national bourgeoisie for the purpose of

"replacing class consciousness among the masses with tribal consciousness and diverting the course of social revolution on to that of tribal squabbles" (para. 2 of our summary).

There is no doubt that each side in the civil war is being supported by different imperialist groupings. Those which support the Fed-

eral Government hope to gain concessions throughout the country. Those which support 'Biafra' hope to gain even more profitable concessions in that part of Nigeria if the "Biafran" authorities succeed in winning "independence" from Lagos. But the civil war has a much wider social content than a mere struggle between what our Nigerian comrades call the imperialists'

"respective Black puppets". (para. 1 of our summary)

The majority of the Nigerian national bourgeoisie are in support of the Federal Government in the civil war, for they understand that the creation of a unified state embracing a single market is an essential condition for the development of capitalism in Nigeria.

On the other hand the "Biafran" authorities, despite support by some local capitalists (as our Nigerian comrades point out) represent in the main the most reactionary pre-capitalist feudal and semi-feudal social forces, which have sold themselves completely to foreign imperialists in an effort to preserve their existence.

"Biafra" is not a nation. The Nigerian nation is still in process of development. The war of the Federal Government for the unification of the country is playing a progressive role in the development of the Nigerian nation. The "Biafran" revolt is a revolt against the formation of a unified Nigerian nation and state, and its role in relation to the national-democratic revolution is a counter-revolutionary one. Thus the first "Left" viewpoint presented by the Group for Nigerian Revolution, the viewpoint which calls for "independence" for 'Biafra' is a reactionary, counter-revolutionary viewpoint.

On the other hand, the second "left" viewpoint presented by the Group for Nigerian Revolution calls for pressure to be exerted

"on both sides to compromise on a loose federation so that an immediate end might be put to the slaughter of the masses by both sides." (para. 7 of our summary).

But the Nigerian state is a federal state. The "Biafran" revolt is directed against the participation of "Biafra" in that federal state. To call for a "compromise on a loose federation" that would immediately end the civil war is to call for the dissolution of the federal state to an extent that will satisfy the aims of the "Biafran" counter-revolutionaries for independence in practice of Lagos, one in which the relations between "Biafra" and the rest of Nigeria are purely nominal. In August 1967, only a few weeks after the outbreak of the civil war, the "Biafran" authorities announced that they would accept a "Joint Services Authority" to link "Biafra" with the rest of the Nigerian Federation". This second "Left" viewpoint presented by the Committee for Nigerian Revolution is thus essentially the same as the first; it calls for practical independence for "Biafra" under the mask of a phoney "federal" constitution.

We Marxist-Leninists analyse the present war on the part of the Federal Government of Nigeria for the unification of the country as a part of the national-democratic revolution, which is a necessary prelude to the future socialist revolution there. It is socially progressive not in spite of the fact that it is being fought by bourgeois forces, but because of that.

The Group for Nigerian Revolution, on the other hand, presents two viewpoints on the civil war without choosing between them. But both these viewpoints call in practice for the victory of the war aims of the "Biafran" counter-revolutionaries, call in practice for the dissolution of the Nigerian state, call in practice for the independence of "Biafra". The pretext for this counter-revolutionary line is

"sufferings for the masses" (para. 2 of our summary) and

"the slaughter of the masses by both sides" (para. 7 of our summary).

This is essentially the same line as that put forward by pacifists in relation to the war in Vietnam. They emphasise the sufferings of the Vietnamese people - and of the American soldiers - as a pretext for calling for "Peace in Vietnam". But in the present situation, to call for "Peace in Vietnam" is to call on the Vietnamese people to lay down their arms while U.S. forces occupy their soil; it is, in effect, to call for victory for the U.S. aggressors and defeat for the just struggle of the people of Vietnam to liberate their country from the foreign invaders and oppressors.

"Biafra Radio" - and the international propaganda machine linked with it - emphasises the sufferings of the Nigerian masses as a pretext for calling for "Peace in Nigeria". But in the present sit-

CONCLUDED ON PAGE 15

"UNITY" AT THE CROSSROADS

"HAROLD MUGGINS IS A MARTYR" by John Arden

In June UNITY THEATRE presented the premiere of a new "satirical" play by John Arden titled "HAROLD MUGGINS IS A MARTYR".

But satire - whatever exaggerations, fantasies and parables it may use to give point to its rapier - needs to reflect truthfully and with basic realism the social evils against which it is directed. Arden's theme is the crushing by "Big Business" of the petty bourgeoisie - "typified" by Harold Muggins, the proprietor of a shoddy "caff". One can, perhaps, accept the representation of monopoly capital in the shape of a metal-nosed gangster, for in capitalist society the line between legal and illegal private enterprise is thin indeed. But salvation for the petty bourgeoisie can lie only in alliance with the basic progressive force in British society - the working class; and the "workers" Arden portrays are indeed a poor lot of corrupt, frightened, racist crawlers. In Arden's play "salvation" for Muggins comes from alliance with a rival gangster.

The content of "HAROLD MUGGINS IS A MARTYR" is thus fundamentally reactionary and anti-working class.

That Arden has talent as a playwright we know from some of his earlier plays, but no-one would suspect it from "HAROLD MUGGINS ...", which has a literary quality that matches its content - that of a fourth-rate comic strip. The dialogue is, on the whole, so inept that it is almost a relief that much of it is shouted so incoherently as to be unintelligible. In fact, with the exception of the author and his wife (who play Mr. & Mrs. Muggins) and the actor (unidentified in the programme) who plays the sinister "Mr. Big", the cast behave as if they were presenting an end-of-term school play, in which the slightest coy ogle is enough to draw hilarious laughter from an audience composed of parents and friends.

Joan Littlewood - before she deserted the theatre to propagate her scheme to bring about the social revolution by means of a great Fun Palace - built up from Stratford a commercially successful trend of theatre based on caricatured characters drawn from the lumpen-proletariat - prostitutes, pimps and pickpockets. Arden's new play is an inferior imitation of this trend which, since it is no longer fashionable with the predominantly bourgeois audiences of the West End, he has condescendingly permitted UNITY to produce. "Mr. Muggins ..." is impregnated with the infantile philosophy of bourgeois youth through the generations - from the Dadaism of the 1910s to the marihuanised hippyism of contemporary Chelsea - that to be "a daring revolutionary" one needs only to "shock Daddy". In pursuance of this philosophy, Arden gives us obscene gestures, an irrelevant nude girl and a W.C. on the stage. Stalin described the artist as "the engineer of the human soul"; clearly Arden, "slumming" at UNITY, aspires to be its sanitary engineer! All this was defended by a young intellectual member of the cast in a discussion which followed the play under the pretext of "the need for experiment in the theatre". But there is, in fact, nothing new about this reactionary, scatological, pornographic decadence, and it is no less boring today than it was in 1915.

We understand that these are difficult days for UNITY. But as friends who wish it well, we must express the view that the presentation of this kind of anti-working class filth is inexcusable, and a disgrace to everything for which this theatre has

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PIERRE LOTI

A poem by Nazim Hikmet

("Pierre Loti" was the pseudonym of Louis Marie Julien Viaud, 1850-1923, French naval officer and writer of many novels, mostly with an oriental theme).

"Opium!
Submission!
Kismet!
Lattice-work, caravanserai
fountains
a sultan dancing on a silver tray!
Maharajah, rajah
a thousand-year old shah!
Waving from minarets
clogs made of mother-of-pearl,
women with henna stained noses
working their looms with their feet.
In the wind, green turbaned imams
calling people to prayer!"

This is the orient the French poet sees.

This

is

the orient of those books
that come out from the press
at the rate of a million a minute.

But

neither yesterday

nor today

nor tomorrow

an orient like this

never existed

and never will.

Orient!

the soil on which

naked slaves

die of hunger

The common property of everyone

except of those born on it.

The land where hunger itself

perishes with famine!

But the silos are full to the brim,

full of grain -

only for Europe.

Asia!

where the young Chinese

hang themselves

with their long hair

like yellow tapers

from the masts of American dreadnoughts.

And on the highest

the steepest

the most snowy

hill of the Himalayas

British officers listen to a jazz band -

down, they dip their soiled feet

into the Ganges

into which

pariahs drop corpses with white teeth.

And Anatolia has become

Colonel Armstrong's

training ground.

Orient has had enough!

Orient will swallow

no more -

we're sick of it, sick!

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PIERRE LOTI Continued

If one of you, Loti,
 can give life
 to a famishing cow
 but if he's a bourgeois
 to hell with him!
 And especially you,
 you Pierre Loti
 like a typhus bug
 going through
 our yellow, oiled skins -
 a French officer seems
 more sympathetic.
 But you, as a French officer, Loti,
 how could you forget so quickly
 far quicker
 than a prostitute,
 the value of a man
 who'd just been freed?
 You planted his head
 in our heart
 and taking it for a wooden target
 you shot your bullets at it.
 Those who do not know
 must know now:
 you are no better than a charlatan.
 A charlatan
 who sells in the East
 rotten French fabrics
 at a profit of five hundred per cent.
 Pierre Loti,
 oh, what a pig of a bourgeois you are!
 If I believed in a soul separate from
 matter,
 on the liberation day of the East
 I would crucify your soul
 at the head of a bridge
 and smoke in front of it.
 I give you my hand
 we give you our hands
 the sansculottes of Europe;
 let's ride our horses together,
 look
 the halting-place is near
 the day of freedom nearer still.
 In front of us
 the Year of Liberation of the East,
 waving a blood-red handkerchief!
 Our horses' hoofs
 go deep
 into the belly of imperialism.

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'UNITY' AT THE CROSSROADS

Continued from page 14

stood for thirty years.

If UNITY is not to commit suicide (and for it to continue on its present course of becoming a Salon des Refusés for material rejected by the bourgeois theatre, a kind of theatrical annexe to that great practical joke the "Institute of Contemporary Arts", would be a fate worse than death!) those in its leadership must grasp, with all the talent, sincerity and enthusiasm which they undoubtedly possess, that it is the working class which will build the new socialist Britain - not the playboys of the "avant-garde" (which is really a derrière-garde) nor the lumpen elements who form the "heroes" of Arden's play. The theatre must base itself, not on the childish babblings of the most unstable strata of the petty bourgeoisie, but on the artistic ideology of the working class, on socialist realism, with all the infinite scope for experiment which is possible on this solid foundation. It must become once more the cultural centre of the working class - a theatre which inspires the workers in their struggles, which helps them to distinguish friends from enemies, which shows them in images and words of the highest artistic quality their path forward and the bright future that lies before them.

UNITY stands at the crossroads. It must choose whether to become once again the cultural servant and mentor of the working class, or to continue along its present road of bourgeois decadence and self-destruction.

LETTERS CONCLUDED

uation, to call for "Peace in Nigeria" is to call on the Federal Government forces to abandon their just struggle to unify the country; it is, in its effect, to call for victory for the reactionary war of the "Biafran" counter-revolutionaries to dissolve and fragment Nigeria. The Federal Nigerian Government, in fact, proposed the establishment of a neutral corridor through which food and medical supplies could be channelled to eastern Nigeria, but this has so far been refused by the "Biafran" authorities. As the "Guardian" put it (July 9th, p.4): "The Red Cross feels that Colonel Ojukwu is allowing people to starve for political ends". The task of revolutionaries is to place the blame for the suffering of the masses squarely where it belongs: on the shoulders of the counter-revolutionary "Biafran" regime.

Revolutionaries are not pacifists. Certainly we work for a world in which war will be a dark memory of the barbaric past. But we understand that, to attain that world, revolutionary war against the reactionary forces in society is necessary, for they will not fade from history at our polite request. If revolutionaries were to renounce socially just and progressive civil war out of concern for the suffering which such a struggle entails for the masses, they would condemn those masses to unending sufferings at the hands of those reactionary forces. Surely we do not need to defend revolution to a body calling itself the Group for Nigerian Revolution?

The compromising national bourgeoisie is not capable of carrying the national-democratic revolution in Nigeria through to completion - and, of course, it will be an outright enemy of the future socialist revolution. The successful completion of the national-democratic revolution and its transformation into the socialist revolution requires the leadership of the young Nigerian working class and the working class in turn requires the leadership of a vanguard Marxist-Leninist Party.

Furthermore, a united front needs to be established between the Nigerian workers and peasants and the working classes of the imperialist countries, such as Britain, for all have the same principal enemy in the shape of world imperialism. A united front between the Marxist-Leninists in Nigeria and those in Britain would be a significant step towards that wider united front. The key to the victory of the revolution in Nigeria, as everywhere, is international proletarian unity.

We should be pleased to discuss these questions fraternally with our Nigerian comrades at any time.

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These factors, and adulterated them with psychoanalytical concepts, in order to present the false and reactionary thesis that the working class has become a counter-revolutionary force in modern society.

These factors operated in France to make the students the initiators of the wave of class militancy that reached its peak in May and June. They operate (in, up to now, a less accentuated form) in all the developed capitalist countries, including Britain, where student sit-ins have been a healthy new development of class struggle which is directed, consciously or unconsciously, against the finance capitalists who control the British state and British society.

However, in the absence of Marxist-Leninist Parties in western Europe as a result of the betrayal of the leaderships of the former parties of the Communist International to revisionism, the leadership of the militant spontaneous movements of the students has tended to fall into the hands of "leftist" demagogues, anarchists, trotskyites and **maoist** "left" revisionists. The absence of **Marxist-Leninist** leadership has resulted in France in temporary defeat for the militant student movement there; in Britain it has manifested **itself** in a less spectacular manner, but with the same ultimate consequences.

A basic demand of the students in Britain, and the demand which wins the widest possible support wherever it is made, is the demand for a substantial rise in grants to a uniform level which can enable students to live decently during their years of hard study. Under the leadership of various "leftist" elements, this basic demand has in recent months been releg-

ated to a subsidiary place in student activity in favour of demands relating to entrance qualifications, examinations, syllabuses, student participation in college administration, etc. These questions are not unimportant, both to the students and to society. But they are questions on which students are far from unanimous in their views, so allowing scope for discussion and internal dissension to take the place of united action. They are also secondary in importance to the question of grants, for a student who is half-starved, or who has to work in the evenings in order to maintain himself, cannot take advantage of better syllabuses if they are introduced. This diversion is a consequence of lack of Marxist-Leninist leadership.

The student movement - militant and fearless of intimidation as it has shown itself to be - needs the compass of scientific Marxist-Leninist revolutionary strategy if it is to make any significant advance. It needs - as does the basic progressive force in society, the industrial working class - the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist Party.

AS MARXIST-LENINISTS WE SALUTE THE STUDENTS AND STAND SOLIDLY WITH THEM IN THEIR DETERMINED STRUGGLES.

WE CALL UPON ALL STUDENTS WHO WISH TO SEE THEIR TALENTS AND THE HARD-WON KNOWLEDGE THEY ARE ACQUIRING USED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WORKING PEOPLE INSTEAD OF FOR THE BENEFIT OF A HANDFUL OF PARASITIC BIG CAPITALISTS TO JOIN WITH THE MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATION OF BRITAIN IN BUILDING A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY. THIS IS THE FIRST STEP IN THE GLORIOUS TASK OF BUILDING A SOCIALIST BRITAIN.

* *

The aim of the MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATION OF BRITAIN is to build a Marxist-Leninist party of the working class in Britain which can lead the British working people to bring about the revolutionary overthrow of the present capitalist state, establish a People's Republic based on the rule of the working class, and build a socialist society based on planned production and the common ownership of the means of production.

To: The M.L.O.B.,
34 Upper Tollington Park,
London, N.4.

I wish to apply for candidate Membership of the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain.

Name
Address:
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