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**REVOLUTION  
IN ARGENTINA**

**SPONTANEISM  
VS. LENINISM**

**1/6**

# LETTERS

## CROYDON LEFT UNITES AGAINST FASCISM

On Saturday 5th July, the Croydon Radical Action Movement held a march through the town centre. The Croydon Radical Action Movement is an alliance of all shades of left political opinion. The march was against fascism and, as the fascists regard us all as red scum, our differences are minimal and the march comprised Stalinists, Trotskyists, social democrats, anarchists....in fact everyone except the SLL.

The fascists organised a counter-demonstration from their national headquarters (Mr. A.K. Chesterton, head of the National Front resides in Croydon). Posters condemning CRAM for largely fictitious crimes appeared overnight and NP members tried (unsuccessfully) to intimidate marchers by driving cars straight at them.

They also had a traditional para-military march headed by a loudspeaker van tailing the CRAM march. The comrade with our megaphone brought smiles to the faces of the crowds with his satirical references to the gentlemen behind us, who retaliated by making themselves even more ridiculous by interspersing their Mosleyite slogans by chanting "We are not Fascists!" in a most indignant tone!

Derek McMillan

## TROTSKYISM IN CEYLON

An article appeared in a recent issue of the "state capitalist" journal, SOCIALIST WORKER, by one Mike Kidron, currently on a visit to Ceylon, allegedly about the Trotskyist movement in that island.

Kidron, on the one hand, explained how the Lanka Samasamaja Party expects to be in the next Ceylonese Government and how, on the other hand, despite the LSSP's radical programme, it has to make many concessions. The latter are inevitable and unavoidable because Ceylon is an under-developed country with the need to build up its resources and is under the pressure of the international bourgeoisie. This is why, according to Kidron, the Ceylonese Trotskyists are compelled to persuade the working class to make sacrifices.

The article is both dishonest and an expression of consistent "state capitalism". I understand that a Ceylonese comrade has written a full reply and I look forward to seeing this.

However, in the mean time certain points have to be made:

(1) The majority of the LSSP were suspended from the Fourth International for their decision to enter the bourgeois government of Ceylon. A minority split off and formed the LSSP (Revolutionary) because of its total opposition to the entry of the LSSP into the bourgeois government. The LSSP(R) is now the Ceylon section of the Fourth International; its secretary, Bala Tampoe, is also the leader of the militant trade union, CMU, which has led many industrial and political struggles in recent years, usually against the efforts of the LSSP. Mike Kidron fails to mention these salient facts.

(2) It is monstrous that Kidron should defend the policies of the LSSP. The LSSP entered a government which made many attacks on the working class. No doubt my Ceylonese comrade will document these - sufficient for me to deal with one aspect. The majority of readers of SOCIALIST WORKER have no way of knowing that the main component of the bourgeois government the LSSP entered, the SLFP, is a racialist party. It has a policy towards the stateless Indians in Ceylon similar to that of Enoch Powell - it favours deporting them back to India to absolute poverty.

(3) Kidron's theory that revolutionaries in the non-industrialised countries have no other choice than to be the advocates of the working class making sacrifices to facilitate industrialisation has nothing in common with Trotskyism, Marxism or revolutionary socialism. It is in total opposition, for instance, to Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution.

Revolutionaries in the under-developed countries (exploited countries would be a more correct term) have the duty to fight for social revolution as the only immediate step towards solving the problems of the masses in those countries. This economic determinist theory of Kidron, a corollary of the theory of "state capitalism", is non-marxist in essence, leaving out the effects of the exploitive social relations within these countries. It is the ending of these exploitive social relations which gives a fund for building the economy without reducing the standard of living of the workers. (Rapid industrialisation and the laying of the basis for a socialist economy would, of course, require assistance from the economically advanced countries.)

Kidron's theories, like those of other "state capitalists" are similar, in essence, to those of the Mensheviks, who said that because of the low level of industrialisation in Russia it was not ready for a workers revolution.

Kidron's article is not a one-off aberration, it is part of a pattern, for example, in an article

Continued on page four/

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# Editorial notes...

## OUR SUMMER SCHEDULE

In common with many left-wing journals we have decided to reduce our schedule over the summer period. We have skipped the July issue and have brought the August issue forward. Subscribers, however, will lose nothing by this as we work from issue numbers rather than months.

## INTERNATIONAL'S FUND DRIVE

The response to this has been highly encouraging. At time of going to press we have some £200 of the £300 target with many pledges still to be collected. We urge all those who haven't got round to sending their donation in to do so immediately.

## THE SPLIT IN THE SDS

We have published this article for two basic reasons: firstly, there has not been an account of the SDS conference in any left wing newspaper in Britain of any length despite the importance of the issues. Secondly, we feel that many lessons

can be learned from this episode. There are organisations in this country which are seeking - just as SDS did - to build a mass movement without a political programme.

## ARGENTINE

Very little appeared in the left press in Britain about the May events in the Argentine and yet the struggle in that country were in every way comparable with those in France a year earlier. A very interesting aspect of these events was the unity between workers and students. Whilst the struggle has subsided to a certain extent an extremely unstable situation continues. All serious bourgeois commentators have predicted the fall of Onganía; the only point at issue is when. As we go to press, news is beginning to trickle through about repression against our co-thinkers. We know for certain that three militants of EL COMBATIENTE are in prison after being before a military tribunal in Cordoba.

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# A time to speak clearly

A recent copy of TRIBUNE had two articles on its front page, one praised the TUC for its progress in modernising the trade unions; the other spoke of the Labour Party's turn to the left. Recent demonstrations on Vietnam, in the main organised by the Communist Party and its off-shoots, have called for the implementation of the TUC and Labour Party policy on Vietnam, supporters of the solidarity line have been told to go to the back. If matters weren't so serious, one would not know whether to laugh or cry. However, the point is to understand.

During the hectic days of the so-called confrontation between the Labour Government, the whole of the mass media presented the question as though it was a matter of a conflict between the Labour Government, hellbent on modernising industrial relations for the sake of Britain, and the backward looking trade unions, hostile to all change and wishing to retain their power to hold the country to ransom. In fact, the argument was about something else: how best to tame the militant trade unionists without provoking an explosion. In the event "the Government saw sense" and decided to hand over the job to the TUC.

However, it is clear that this is not the way it seemed to the ranks of the trade unions. Whilst a colossal confidence trick had been pulled off, enabling "left" trade union leaders like Scanlon and Jones to gallop to the right, the deception had a certain dialectic: for many, many trade unionists the manoeuvres of Wilson appeared to be a victory. In their eyes this "retreat" meant one thing: it pays to be militant. Hence the contradictory features of the post-June 5th situation: the official trade union movement has taken several giant-sized, crab-like, strides to the right but the IMMEDIATE effect has been to increase militancy.

These events show the colossal reserves of militancy the working class possesses. They highlight the craven policies of the Communist Party and the Tribunites. There is no excuse whatsoever for pussyfooting, for being afraid to be bold or breaking with one's associates on one's right. A dynamic campaign against the TUC's sell-out to the Government would evoke a tremendous response. The Communist Party has the power, when it makes a militant call, to bring out hundreds of thousands of workers on strike on a political issue: February 27 and May 1st prove this.

But before one can ensure a really militant and clear-cut response one has to speak clearly. The double-talk we quoted causes confusion and takes the sharp edge off militancy. We desperately need a massive response to the Government's attack on the unions and working class standards. The C.P. could play a big role in ensuring this; everything indicates that its leaders put more store on their new-found friendship with "left" M.P.s and certain trade union bureaucrats. The rank and file militants of the Communist Party should demand that their leadership speaks out, denounces the TUC sell-out and calls for militant action against that policy (a one-day strike during the TUC meeting in September would show it means business).

If their party refuses to do this, the Communist Party shop stewards should join with other militants in the trade union defence committees in calling such action. Time is short, the autumn will see a renewal of the offensive against the unions and militants. The vicious attack on Alan Law, by the press, and the move against the East Midlands organiser of the NUVE, by trade union bureaucrats, are pointers to an offensive which is in the offing. It is time to go on the offensive; it is a time to speak clearly.

on Pakistan, published around the time of the upheaval in that country last year, Nigel Harris called for the Pakistan left to support Bhutto. The latter is a rich landlord, former Foreign Minister in Ayub Khan's Government, who at best would be a Sukarno-type figure, at worst (and more likely) a Kerensky, who would seek to bring Pakistan back into the western camp.

During the Algerian war of national liberation the Socialist Review group (the name under which the "state capitalists" went under in those days) supported the MNA (in common with the Healy group). The MNA ended up by fighting alongside the fascist OAS against the FLN. The "state capitalists" have never explained this little error.

In Ceylon, one of the main architects of the LESP entry into the bourgeois government was none other than Anil Moonesinge (he actually became Transport Minister); older Trotskyists will remember him as one of the founders of the Socialist Review group in the early 1950's and a very keen advocate of "state capitalism."

These mistakes flow from the world view of "state capitalism," which writes off the possibility of social revolution in the "third world" until the workers in the advanced countries have made their revolution. It is completely in accord with the pessimistic outlook of "state capitalism" which considers that all the gains of the Russian revolution have been lost.

The majority of the members of the International Socialism group do not, as yet, understand the implications of "state capitalist" theory. Most of them do not, in fact, think the question rele-

vant to their political activity. The leaders of I.S. have recruited people on the basis of contempt for theoretical clarity in their efforts to rapidly construct an all-embracing broad activist organisation.

However, as all the great Marxists have demonstrated, wrong theory leads to wrong practice. If members of International Socialism are to avoid the path of Burnham and Shachtman<sup>3</sup> they should repudiate these ideas of Kidron and Harris.

1. Ceylon Socialist Party.
2. Holy (!) Ceylon Freedom Party. It will also be the main component in any coalition which includes the LESP in the next Ceylon general election.
3. Two former leaders of the Trotskyist movement who began by challenging the Trotskyist concept of the nature of the Soviet Union and ended up on the extreme right wing. Burnham was an advocate for Barry Goldwater, in the 1964 election campaign; Shachtman is now on the right wing of the American Socialist Party, he supports American policy in relation to Cuba and Vietnam. The Socialist Review group had relations with his group, the ISL, until Shachtman dissolved it in the early 1950's.  
Dave Windsor (18/7/69)

#### SUPPORT THE IRISH STRUGGLE

A national campaign has been set up to support the Irish Civil Rights Campaign. The Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign also stands for self-determination for Ireland. A number of local branches have been established (usually after successful Bernadette Devlin meetings). For full information write: J. Lawless, 22, Duncan Terrace, London N.1.

## Argentina: tactics of taking power

# Spontaneism vs Leninism

(The following editorial has been translated from EL COMBATIENTE, the official organ of the Argentinian Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores. The subheadings appear in the original.)

From May 15 to May 30, the country experienced the most gigantic spontaneous popular explosion in its history. Never before has there been such intense mobilisation in the provincial capitals and many other cities, from Salta to Rio Negro and from Corrientes to Cordoba, embracing the entire territory of Argentina. Never before have all the popular strata risen to their feet united by one common feeling of repudiation for a government. Never before has the conjunction of all these forces and regions produced such a high level of combativity and resistance with such depth and scope.

No party, no ideology, no programme, no national-

ly or regionally centralised leadership today can claim responsibility for such an explosion. Its spontaneity has exceeded every anticipation. It left some people behind and taught others a lesson - especially those bourgeois oppositionists who, in their desire to save the regime from any real popular interference in politics, might try electoralist or putchist manoeuvres to give the government a preventive face lifting.

The denunciation of subversive planning guided by extremists of the left is no more than a crude trick by the dictatorship, something like an attempt at subtlety by Onganía and his troglodite prosecutors. It draws smiles even from the politicians of the regime.

What really produced the explosion was a slow, continuous accumulation of acts, crimes, sellouts to imperialism, attacks, deceptions and spoliat-



ions by which the dictatorship robbed the workers of their bread, their work and their rights; robbed the students of their universities; and robbed the middle class of their standard of living, together with their democratic rights and freedoms. This cumulated recently in a decree raising the price of petrol and transportation, which immediately affected the cost of consumer goods. In this accumulating resentment, the last straw was the murder of a student demonstrator in Corrientes\*, but it could have been anything.

The fact is that in the prevailing conditions the mere existence of the dictatorship of the monopolies generated a dynamic of popular resistance, which resulted finally in a feeling of unanimous determination on the part of the majority of the Argentinian people to get rid of this dictatorship once and for all.

This determination, and it alone, has been the cohesive element uniting the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who have poured on to the streets, torn up paving stones and built barricades, routed the police and confronted the army, defying its military edicts and its weapons of war. From bent nails and stones, the demonstrators escalated to slings, pistols and .22 calibre rifles with which they finally dominated the neighbourhoods of Cordoba.

#### THE MAY DAYS AND REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

This spontaneous popular explosion assumed a defensive character from the strategic point of view, although employing offensive tactical means. It revealed an uneven development among the various regions of the country. It made methods of active resistance and armed struggle definitely a part of the political conflict. It lacked a well-defined, centralised leadership, a programme, and the aim of taking power. It was based essentially on working-class motives and democratic aspirati-

\* The medical student Juan Jose Cabral was shot to death by police in mid-May in the cafeteria of the Corrientes University during a demonstration against higher prices for meals.

ons in combined form.

This popular explosion had been brewing from the very moment the dictatorship took over the Government. It is defensive - in the strategic sense - because it occurred as a specific response to the political, social and economic aggression of the regime and as a product of accumulated discontent. The combined democratic and class motivations extended from problems like unemployment, the cost of living, the wage freeze, and generally worsening economic conditions for the majority of the population to the total denial of democratic rights and guarantees.

The uneven character of this upsurge has been revealed in the backwardness of the masses in the coastal areas, especially greater Buenos Aires, relative to those in the urban centres of the interior. Cordoba especially, with its modern, combative industrial proletariat has provided the backbone of the mobilisations and the active urban centres of the interior have played has been marked by the highest level of popular participation, political consciousness, and the use of violent methods of struggle going as far as incipient forms of open armed struggle.

The movement developed without a well-defined and centralised leadership. However, as it has proceeded, the CGT of Paseo Colon\*\* and the main student leaderships especially have increased their role as mass political leaderships and made possible the emergence in local and embryonic form of new organisational instruments in the heat of the struggle, like the Juntas Coordinadoras (Coordinating Councils) in Tucuman and La Plata or the CGT Unificada (United CGT) in Rosario and Cordoba.

Understanding this characterisation requires in fact not only understanding the more important lessons of the May days; it also requires realising their limitations and arming ourselves theoretically against any illusions regarding the much discussed themes of spontaneous insurrection as a possible road to power. And it requires arming ourselves theoretically against the grandiloquent escapism which, under the pretext of pure armed struggle, ignores and underestimates mass mobilisations or considers them as a separate and walled-off aspect of the process of creating a revolutionary army.

Obviously, even if the May explosion had had a conscious insurrectional character and resulted in a conscious attempt to seize power, its real possibilities would have inevitably been limited

\*\* The Argentinian CGT (Confederacion General del Trabajo - General Confederation of Labour) is split into two competing organisations. The more independent faction, usually referred to as the CGT "Rebelde" (the "Rebel" CGT), is led by Raimundo Ongaro. It is also called the CGT de los Argentinos (the CGT of the Argentinians) or the CGT of the Paseo Colon for the street where its offices are located. The other faction is usually referred to as the CGT "Participacionista" (the participationist CGT), its main leader was assassinated just prior to Rockefeller's visit to the country.

by the lack of a party - a leadership, organisation and programme. Its possibilities would have been limited by the lack also of a revolutionary army capable of militarily defeating the capitalist army, the last resort of the system, in an all-out confrontation.

It is such a revolutionary army that will make possible a seizure of power and which unfortunately did not exist in Cordoba. We must not wait to build this army, as the promoters of spontaneism claim, until the masses go onto the street in an upsurge producing new insurrectional explosions. This army must be constructed on a steady day-to-day basis, even during periods when the class struggle is quiet. This task does not permit improvisations. Through this army, and with it, the inspiration of the barricades could support popular organisations emerging from the insurrectional process to challenge capitalist power.

But it would be criminal to wait for such an army to be "constructed" to promote the development of popular mobilisations and to intervene in them. On the contrary, it is necessary to accompany and orient the masses in their living, real and concrete experience.

One mobilisation is more educational than a hundred programmes and, in the last analysis, to be built and to be really the army of the people, the revolutionary army must emerge from the people's struggles and nourish itself from them - even though a revolutionary army has its own organisational and technical operational forms which are distinct from those which the people spontaneously adopt.

Revolutionists must, then, patiently explain this conception of the seizure of power to the new vanguard of the whole people which participated in the resistance in the May days and even took up arms. This vanguard will understand this concept better than anyone, because it is easier to arrive at an understanding of the necessity of a party and a revolutionary army starting from the level reached in a mobilisation and from the technique learned in an armed detachment than from revolutionary periodicals or propaganda leaflets, no matter how clear or well-written they may be.

#### A NEW STAGE OPENED IN MAY

Once the strategic perspective for the seizure of power is clarified, which the May days proved correct, it is important to stress the fact that these days opened a new stage. They opened a new stage in the relationship among the classes and in their relationship to the dictatorship which imposes new tasks, new organisational forms, and new methods.

This change has been produced by the incorporation of the people en masse into the militant opposition to the dictatorship. This popular opposition was unshakably consolidated with the general strike of Friday, May 30, which was carried out unanimously by the workers, the students, and the most diverse layers of the middle class.

This new stage has in turn sealed a definitive

breakdown of the unity of the regime, bringing its social, economic, and political contradictions to their climax. The whole political administrative apparatus of the state has fallen prey to crisis and attrition. No recourse can close the fissures that have opened between the dictatorship and the exploiting sectors today without provoking new fissures and splits. No measure can satisfy one sector without exasperating another. And in turn no exploiter is in a position to achieve his own "solution" at the expense of all the others.

The paradoxical base of support for the dictatorship is the incapacity of the capitalist system to replace it, since the system has been definitively discredited. In fact, the sectors of the oligarchy that are infuriated by the government's incompetence now have no other recourse but to tolerate it for the time being. They have to tolerate it in view of a greater danger threatening the system - - the danger of a violent irruption of the masses into the political arena.

It is possible, therefore, that the solution of a coup d'etat, never as "justifiable" as it is now, is considered a suicidal tactic even by its prospective leaders. In fact, only a military adventurer would risk bringing tanks into the streets now when they might be commandeered by unsuspected demonstrators for their own use.

This is what the vaunted stability of the regime has been reduced to. This is why we say that with the entry of the popular masses into the struggle, the stage that opened in the May days was the stage of preparation for a revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship.

It is not important that this stage still lacks a programme and that the masses in their thinking still lack the clear aim of taking power. The dynamic of its spontaneity has not yet created this product of revolutionary consciousness which will go hand in hand inseparably with the understanding of the necessity for a revolutionary army. And, therefore, it is an inescapable task to raise the banner of a revolutionary workers' and people's government as the only possible solution for preventing the fall of the dictatorship from opening the way for a flouting of the interests of the workers' class interests and the rights, guarantees, and liberties of the population.

But we cannot attain this revolutionary government and avoid the electoral or coupist traps of the bourgeois opposition by any other road than the active and militant mobilisation of the workers with their own forms of organisation arising out of and forged in direct confrontation, and with the methods and techniques which the resistance in Cordoba has put on the order of the day.

The character of any governmental shift to meet the situation that has appeared: a coup, electoral farce, or change in ministers, will be determined by how this mobilisation matures and develops, or, to the contrary, by the extent that it gives ground and leaves the initiative to the bourgeois leaderships in the government, who want to capitalise on the popular discontent to make alterations only in the facade of the regime.

Directing our fire on the dictatorship today as the main and immediate enemy does not mean that we must hitch the forces of the workers and the popular masses to the electoral or coupist cart of the bourgeois oppositionists. However, in some particular and concrete episodes in the confrontation with the dictatorship, we may find ourselves fighting together with the Radicales del Pueblo (People's Radicals - petit-bourgeois liberals) or the opportunists of the Communist Party. The essential thing today is not differentiating ourselves verbally from these forces, indulging in abstract declarations of principle on different objectives of class struggle. What is essential is to demonstrate these differences in acts, in methods of struggle, in forms of organisation, and in different political and governmental solutions which the masses are in a position to demand as the result of their mobilisation. There is no other road for preventing the overthrow of the dictatorship from being accomplished "in bourgeois style."

This is why we said that the present stage is one of preparation for the fall of the dictatorship while we at the same time call for mobilisation and active and armed resistance by the people.

#### PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY DEFEAT OF THE DICTATORSHIP

It is typical of sectarians and opportunists to look at the great political battles waged by the masses primarily from the strategic viewpoint of how to strengthen their own organisations. Since they take this as their essential objective, it is logical that they make all activity subordinate to "differentiating" themselves from other currents.

The sects try to keep the disturbing elements of obstinate and generally impure reality from infiltrating into their ranks. The opportunists in turn, resorting to grandiloquent purism and organisational exclusivism, try to conceal all their political incongruities and theoretical weaknesses which are submitted to the test of fire in the class struggle.

It is urgent - because the class struggle in our country demands it - that such erroneous conceptions not frustrate the chances that the existing organisations and mass leaderships, both in the workers movement and the student movement, have for participating in the revolutionary process at this time.

The CGT de los Argentinos (the "Rebel" CGT), although it cannot claim to be the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, has contributed to this process by consistently applying its May 1 programme. As a result of this application and the impetus this section of the CGT has given to the popular mobilisations, the workers movement has achieved "unity in struggle" at the regional level in several places in the interior. This has represented an example and an objective advance whose importance the government has not failed to recognise. The regime has been alert to this development above all because this unity has been achieved in the struggle against the dictatorship and for the purpose of carrying this

struggle forward.

In the student movement, on the other hand, organisations like the PUA (Federacion Universitaria Argentina - Argentine Student Federation), which claim the main leadership of the most consistent anti-imperialist struggle, have not yet shown any sign of this "unity in struggle". It is as if the exclusivism of its leadership - which moreover is threatened with progressive isolation - exempted it from other currents and leaderships fighting against the dictatorship. However, FEN (Frente Estudiantil Nacional - the National Student Front of Peronist colouration), Humanismo (Humanism), and other groupings in the student movement, if not for their programme, at least for their influence and leading role among sectors of the student population, constitute an active and significant factor in the struggle.

This was shown on the occasion when the mass of students, gathered in an assembly in the School of Philosophy and Letters, saw how the major student leaderships transformed what should have been a massive principled expression of a united front against imperialism and the dictatorship into a fight for dominance. The fight had nothing to do with any strategy of impelling and advancing the class struggle through the mobilisations of the student movement. The result was demoralisation.

Revolutionists who mire themselves in such wrangling today renounce in practice and in principle their orienting and leading role in the struggles which the workers and the popular masses began in Cordoba.

We are neither sectarians nor opportunists but consistent revolutionists. We will not hide our views. We will differentiate ourselves from both sectarians and opportunists by the Leninist and Trotskyist methods of common work for common objectives against a common enemy with the aim of advancing the mass mobilisations and transforming "theory" into authentic revolutionary practice.

Therefore, in the work of preparing the way for eliminating the capitalist system, we appeal for active resistance to the dictatorship by all the mass organisations of the students and workers movement - the CGT de los Argentinos, the CGT "Participacionista", PUA, FEN, Humanismo - and all other movements which claim to play a vanguard role. We propose:

- (1) Regional or national coordination by the workers and student federations in developing and deepening active resistance by the workers, students and other popular sectors.
- (2) The organisation of resistance commando groups, self-defence groups, and armed detachments of activists to protect popular mobilisations from the repressive violence of the regime, organised violence of the people in opposition to the government's violence, and beginning to lay the basis of the future revolutionary army.
- (3) A propaganda campaign aimed at the ranks and non-commissioned officers of the regime's repressive bodies, the police and the military forces, calling on them to fraternise with the people and not to fire on them.

# THE POLITICS OF NON-POLITICS

## THE STORY OF THE SDS SPLIT

### MARY-ALICE WATERS

Article II: Membership

SECTION 1: Membership is open to all who share the commitment of the organisation to democracy as a means and as a social goal.

SECTION 2: SDS is an organisation of and for democrats. It is civil libertarian in its treatment of those with whom it disagrees, but clear in its opposition to anti-democratic principle, as a basis for governmental, social or political organisation."

From the constitution of the Students for a Democratic Society.

Thus stood and still stands, the constitution of the SDS. But by the end of the stormy five-day convention held in Chicago June 18-22, such provisions of the SDS constitution had been rendered meaningless by the bureaucratic expulsion from SDS of all members of Progressive Labour and anyone agreeing with PL on certain questions. Meeting in closed caucus, a minority of the convention voted to expell PL and all those who agreed with their IDEAS from SDS.

The organisation which was founded nine years ago as a "new" experiment in building a political group free from ideology and programme, trying to escape the "sterile political squabbles" of the "old left," and hoping it had found a way to escape the bureaucratic, undemocratic methods of Stalinism and social democracy - that organisation has now come almost full circle. The "new left" failed to examine and take sides on the burning issues that divided the reformists and revolutionaries in the past, that divided the Stalinists, social democrats, anarchists and others from the Marxists, the Trotskyists....

The convention strikingly reconfirmed that there is no way to cheat history by trying to avoid political programme; that in the end politics is always decisive; that the debates which have divided the political tendencies in the working class movement for almost 70 years, far from being "sterile", remain the most fundamental and burning questions of today. It also showed that the "new left", like the Communist Party and Soc-

ial Democracy, is entirely capable of violating the basic democratic rights of members - when it fits their needs - not because they WANT to be undemocratic, but because they are politically incapable of dealing with serious, organised opposition.

From the moment the convention opened it was dominated by the fierce factional struggle between supporters of the current national leadership of SDS - Mike Klonsky, Bob Avakian, Bernadine Dohrn, Mark Rudd, Jeff Jones and others (who have differences among themselves) - and the Worker-Student Alliance caucus (WSA), which was led by the Progressive Labour Party. The supporters of the National Office organised themselves in the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) caucus.

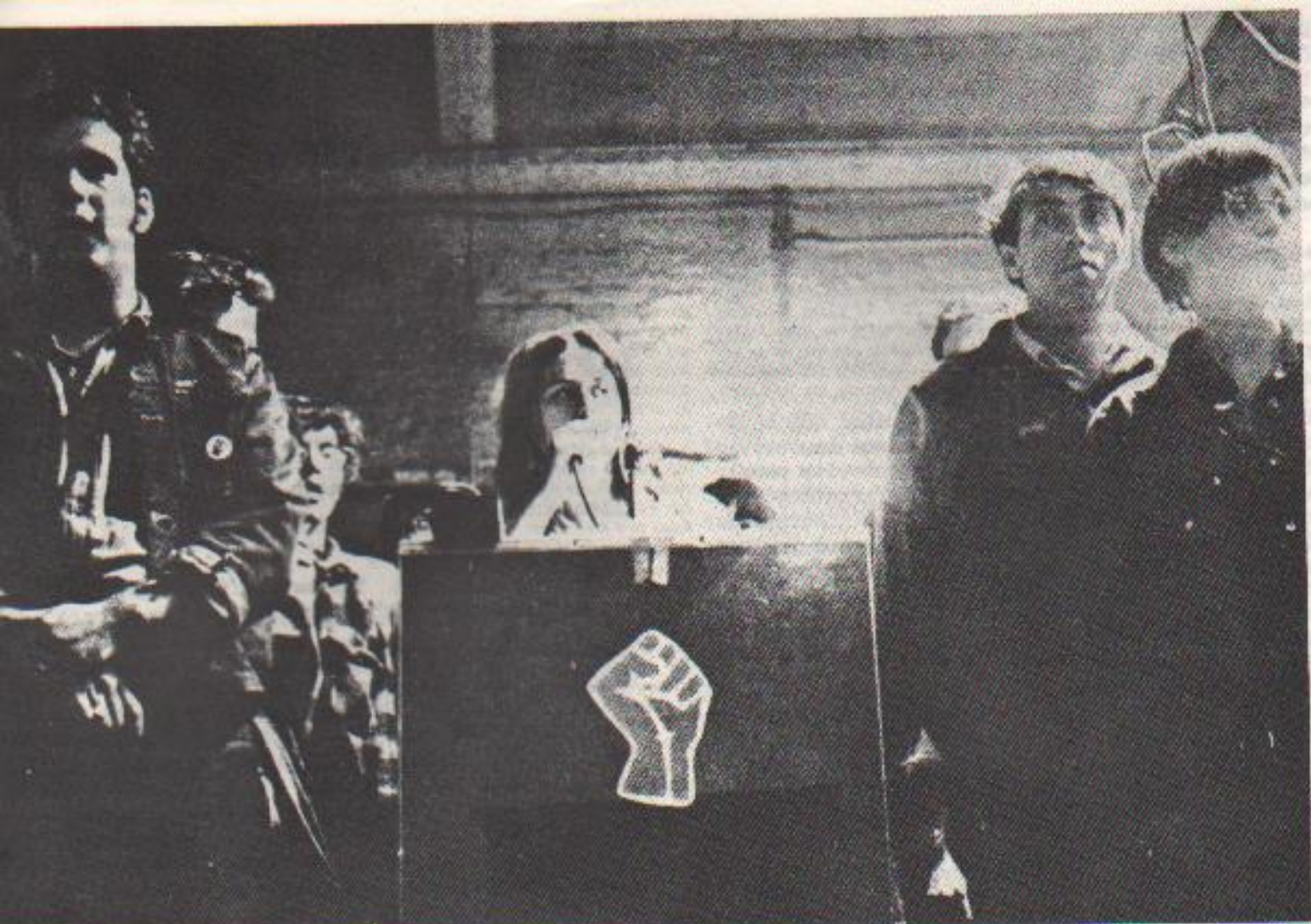
There was also a significant number of delegates who supported neither caucus....These other caucuses, some organised around specific programmes, generally disagreed with both major factions on one or more points, and many of them were opposed to the split that occured.

During the first two days of the convention little of substance took place, but several questions over which there were sharp differences came to a vote, giving both factions an opportunity to gauge their strength. The results were reassuring to PL and the WSA caucus, and, consequently, quite unsettling to the RYM faction.

PL won two such votes - to exclude the commercial press and to schedule more workshops - while the national office faction won a vote to give the floor to Chris Milton, an American student who joined the Red Guards in China for a while. PL charged that Milton had been cashiered out of the Red Guards and shouldn't be allowed to speak.

Apart from the vote itself, which was 586-577, the incident was also significant as an example of the method used by the national office throughout in trying to combat PL. Unable to answer PL's utterly false political line, they attempted to "out-Mao" the Maoists, to prove, by frequent reference to and quotations from the Red Book, Lin Piao, and similar sources, that THEY were the REAL Maoists. The country which has had the most consistently revolutionary line for more than a decade - Cuba - received no attention.





### Bernadine Dohrn reads caucus statement declaring Progressive Labor expelled from SDS

The split which occurred at the SDS convention has been maturing for well over a year. As the PL-led caucus grew from one convention and national council meeting to the next, the inability of the national leadership of SDS to meet the challenge became more and more obvious. At this convention, when the national leadership realized that PL might be able to win a majority of the delegates on some of the key resolutions, and perhaps even win the leadership, they precipitated the split without waiting to see how many they could win over in political discussion.

On the three main political questions before the convention, PL's "revolutionary" rhetoric is nothing but a cover for abstention from the real struggles with revolutionary implications going on in the world today. They condemn the leadership and the policies of the NLF and North Vietnam, refusing here in the U.S. to build the mass anti-war movement. They condemn all nationalism as reactionary, including the revolutionary nationalism of the oppressed, and even attack as "bourgeois" the struggles by oppressed national minorities for university education. They condemn struggles for women's rights unless they are directly tied to the struggles of women workers for equal economic opportunities. Even against such rotten, reformist positions, the national leadership of SDS proved incapable of engaging in a political debate with PL.

For example, whenever anyone attacked PL's refusal

to support the struggle for black control of the black community, open admissions, and many other demands of the black struggle, they were answered not by political argument, but by 500 voices screaming "Smash racism." The usual response of those supporting RYM was limited to a near-hysterical "Free Huey". And so it went on throughout.

#### SPLIT NUMBER ONE

On Friday evening, when the discussion on resolutions was to begin, the convention proceedings were suspended to hear a delegation from the Illinois Black Panther Party. Stating that he was speaking on behalf of the national organizations of the Black Panthers, the Brown Berets and the Young Lords, Panther Bobby Rush launched into a vitriolic attack on PL for its refusal to support the black liberation struggle in practice.

(Undoubtedly, some hoped this would produce an anti-PL stampede in the convention, but the Panther statement did not have the desired effect. One reason was that the previous evening the same Panther spokesman had seriously discredited themselves and had been literally booed off the platform for their male-chauvinist remarks about "pussy power". When they mistakenly assumed that the source of hostility was prudishness, they only succeeded in making matters worse by saying: "You sisters have a strategic position for the revolution...prone." The hall burst loose and the ensuing chaos prevented the Panthers from saying any more.)

In denouncing PL, Rush accused them of "deviating from the Marxist-Leninist position of the right to self-determination of peoples," and declared, "they will be considered as counter-revolutionary traitors" if they don't change their attitude. "SDS," he said, "will be judged by the company it keeps and the effectiveness with which it deals with factions within its organisation."

As the convention neared chaos once again, Jeff Gordon of PL took the floor to defend PL's position, denouncing the SDS leaders for trying to use the Panthers as a club against the WSA caucus and for their inability to carry out a political debate themselves.

Bernadine Dohrn, Mike Klonsky and other SDS leaders responded by declaring that it was impossible to remain in the same organisation with people who opposed self-determination in practice and demanded an immediate split. Then Bernadine Dohrn announced she was walking out and invited all those who agreed with her to follow. The convention was in such total chaos that few people even heard what she said. Less than half followed her out.

From Friday evening till late Saturday evening the SDS convention met in two different wings of the Chicago Coliseum. Those who had walked out, and others who had joined them later, debated whether or not to split SDS, and if so how. Those who remained with the WSA caucus held general workshops and waited to see if the others would "return to SDS." Throughout the day the RYM caucus fluctuated between 500 and 700, reaching its peak late Saturday night.

#### SPLIT NUMBER TWO

When the final decision was reached, the RYM caucus voted to expel PL, and all those who agreed with them, from SDS. About 10-15 per cent of the RYM caucus voted against expulsion. Abstentions were not counted.

In short, a minority of the SDS convention, in a caucus which excluded those to be expelled, voted to expel what might have been the majority of the convention. They were expelled not for specific acts against which they could defend themselves, but solely for their ideas. Technically, they have no means to appeal against the expulsion.

The RYM caucus returned to the convention hall and read a statement enunciating two principles which henceforth are supposedly criteria for membership in SDS. (RYM leaders shamefacedly admitted the next day that they had forgotten to read a couple of additional points.)

"One: We support the struggle of the black and Latin colonies within the U.S. for national liberation and we recognise those nations' right to self-determination (including the right to political secession if they desire it.)

"Two: We support the struggle for national liberation of the people of South Vietnam, led by the National Liberation Front and Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. We also support the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, led by President Ho Chi Minh, as well as the People's Republics of Korea and Albania, and the Republic of

Cuba, all waging fierce struggles against U.S. imperialism. We support the right of all people to pick up the gun to free themselves from the brutal rule of U.S. imperialism."

The statement stipulated that in addition to PL, "all people who do not accept the above two principles are no longer members of SDS." Where this could lead was made abundantly clear the following day when Bob Avakian (creator of the out-Mao-the-Maoists strategy), running for national secretary, announced that if elected he would work to exclude members of the Independent Socialist Club, a group which does not support the governments listed.

After reading the statement, during which screams of "bullshit", "shame" and similar political slogans reached their convention peak, the RYM caucus filed out of the hall.

#### TWO, THREE, MANY SDS'S

On Sunday afternoon the two sections of the SDS convention met on different sides of the city.

Four to five hundred gathered in the Coliseum to constitute the WSA caucus as SDS. PL, perhaps emboldened by the fumbling ineptness of the national office leadership, succumbed to the temptation to try to become SDS and bullied ahead. Instead of deciding to appeal to the ranks of SDS against the undemocratic expulsion, the WSA caucus passed its resolutions, elected its officers, and scheduled a press conference to declare itself THE SDS and to denounce "the splinter leadership" for "anti-working class politics and practices." In a painfully slow and lifeless meeting, SDS (WSA) elected John Pennington of Boston PL as national secretary, Pat Forman of San Francisco as inter-organisational secretary, and Alan Spector of the New England Regional SDS as educational secretary.

Across town some 700-800 members and supporters of the RYM caucus gathered to decide in what form SDS would continue. The general mood was one of great relief to have finally, somehow, been freed of the millstone. But very rapidly the political differences within the RYM faction intensified, and the national leadership found itself under attack from those who objected to the lack of democracy within SDS.

The first point of discussion was a set of five principles, drafted by the Avakian-Klonsky group and supported by the Bernadine Dohrn - Mark Rudd wing. The five points were intended to concretise and buttress the "principles" adopted to expel PL. The motion put forth was to adopt the five principles as the basis for membership in SDS. In response to a question from the floor, the chair ruled that the principles would definitely constitute the basis for excluding people from SDS.

The five "unity principles of SDS" proposed are:  
"(1) Oppose white supremacy. Full support the national liberation struggles of oppressed peoples against U.S. imperialism. For the right of self-determination for the black and Chicano nations. Independence for Puerto Rico;  
(2) Oppose male supremacy, support the struggle

- for women's liberation;  
 (3) Support for armed struggle;  
 (4) Exclude anti-communism; and  
 (5) Fight for socialism."

Strong opposition came from a minority of delegates who felt the principles were irrelevant to the day to day work of SDS and would not be acceptable to the bulk of the membership. They tended to want to return to the "old SDS" which was anti ideology and anti-programme, with everyone free to do his own thing.

The proposed set of principles, if adopted and enforced, would change the fundamental character of SDS as it has existed for nine years. Yet, the leaders tried to ram it through after 45 minutes of debate. But the opposition was vociferous enough to force a retreat, and it was decided to print the proposed programme in NEW LEFT NOTES and allow a written discussion.

#### ANTI-WAR INACTION

By far the most important issue acted on by SDS (RYM) was on the proposal for a fall action. Despite all the self-criticism about SDS's past errors and failure to make the fight against the war in Vietnam the central task, the action proposal adopted by the SDS (RYM) convention represented no fundamental change in policy.

SDS decided to call an action in Chicago in late September when eight indicted for last August's Chicago demonstration go on trial. The demands of the demonstration will be withdraw the troops, support the NLF, support the GIs, support black liberation, free all political prisoners. There was no mention, much less discussion, of how SDS could work with the anti-war coalition and other organisations to build mass demonstrations against the war and for the withdrawal of troops...

Far from being a turn to the anti-war movement, SDS's new action represents just one more variation of their five-year-old policy of hoping to substitute themselves for the mass anti-war movement in the U.S. Their adoption of the negotiations line, under cover of supporting the NLF 10-point programme, represents a retreat, not an advance for the anti-imperialist forces in the U.S.

The SDS (RYM) convention concluded in the early morning hours of Sunday with the election of Mark Rudd (who modestly labelled himself an internationally known "symbol of the movement") as national secretary, Jeff Jones of San Francisco as inter-organisation secretary, and Bill Ayers of Michigan as education secretary. Defeated in the elections were two ISC candidates, and the Bob Avakian-Lyn Wells ticket, running for national secretary and national educational secretary respectively.

The new national interim committee is composed of Barbara Reilly from Columbia, Bob Avakian of Berkeley, Linda Evans of Michigan, Mike Klonsky, Noel Ignatin, Bernadine Dohrn of Chicago, Corky Benedict of Ohio and Howie Machtinger.

SDS has traveled a long way from the days of its founding as a liberal anti-communist organisation.

While the political level of the delegates at the convention did not accurately reflect the total SDS membership, certainly the majority of the delegates at this convention considered themselves "some sort of communist". This indicates the rising political consciousness of the American student radicalisation.

But at the same time, the shallow pragmatic philosophy on which SDS has based itself, and the lack of understanding of the need for principled politics and clear programme has permitted the factionalism, supposedly barred at the front door to come flooding in by the windows, and back-alley entrances. Along with the increasing Marxist jargon have come all the vices, but few of the virtues of the "old left".

The ninth national convention of the Students for a Democratic Society was possibly the most bureaucratic, undemocratic and factional youth convention in the history of the radical movement in the U.S.

In its wake, there are now two groups claiming to be the real SDS, each with an essentially factional and sectarian programme, and one excluding the other. The factional battle will now continue on campuses across the country. But the convention itself provided striking confirmation that an attempt to build a broad student movement by ignoring political programme can lead only to one variation or another of the current crisis. The steadily radicalising student movement will gain little from either warring groups.

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# THE 'ECONOMICS' OF STUDENT UNREST

BRIAN DAVEY

A recent gem of bourgeois social science on sale in most university bookshops is "Economic Aspects of Student Unrest", published by the Institute for Economic Affairs. This distinguished work has been written by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of York University and Professor of Economics, A.T. Peacock, together with one Mr. A.J. Culyer.

At first the work seems promising since there is a pledge to look for the underlying reasons for student unrest and not to concentrate solely on the activities "of the extreme Maoist and other groups". Though the authors remain true to this intention the end results are far from intellectually satisfying.

Culyer and Peacock are economists and they have tried to apply a somewhat unusual methodology to analyse the student revolt - namely the "traditional" micro-economic theory of the market for individual goods. Micro-economic theory is an attempt to work towards a theory of the determination of prices on the market through examining the activities of profit maximising firms and "utility maximising" consumers. Unlike Marx's analysis of the theory of value which concentrates on examining the social relations between the producers, the bourgeois analysis keeps its focus solely on the actual exchange process or market. Culyer and Peacock turn education into a commodity and examine student unrest in terms of the particular conditions of supply and demand in the "education market". They have no place in their model for antagonistic social relations in education as a productive process - they either ignore or (more likely) are unaware of the concept of alienation. Nor do Culyer and Peacock conceive that the process of education may bring the unintended side-effect of an increased critical consciousness of capitalism. They are, of course, firmly committed to capitalism.

To our two "social scientists" the problem is essentially the result of an excess of demand over supply for university places. They postulate that an absence of "consumer sovereignty" on the part of the consumers (students) leads to the discontent. In the allocation of educational opportunities "the more the allocation rule ignores the preferences of consumers, the more animosity there will be between consumers and allocators." If one shops for washing powder one can choose between Omo, Dax, Persil and so on. Hence no reason for the housewife to rebel. However in educational market "rationing devices have to be employed, and since money prices cannot be one of them and the rationing is left to the producers, it is their preferences that count" not those of the students. The problem is exacerbated since the student is "tied" to a university over a period and cannot take his custom elsewhere. Given the absence of opportunity to shop around for his

education the student breaks the rules and tries to bend the existing situation to his own needs.

If this explanation of the student revolt seems fairly tortuous it becomes even more so. The complete bankruptcy of Peacock and Culyer's method becomes apparent in their attempt to stretch the category of profit maximising firm to fit the university. "The universities are not concerned with maximising profits, but they are maximising other objectives. By tying in subsidised residences for students, the producers in universities are able to derive an additional source of satisfaction from enforcement of rules of conduct.

"Formaldinners with academic dress, ladies (or men) out by 10.30 p.m., and so on, are conducive to satisfaction of the benevolent wishes of universities' staff..." Suffice it to say that there is no explanation as to why university staffs should have such "benevolent wishes" that need "maximising".

Peacock and Culyer are not lacking in positive (one hesitates to say "practical") suggestions and the section entitled "Solutions for University Peace" is at least consistent with their previous analysis. First, however, they reject the possibility of executive power for students "on decision-making bodies, such as Court, Council, Senate and Faculty Board." Though they admit that for students "this would be a logical extension of their objectives". Their reasoning is that this would lead "more and more to the dissipation of effort by students and staff which might be better spent in the main objective, learning and research." Professor Peacock does not explain how, as a member of staff and Professor of Economics he also finds time to be Deputy Vice-Chancellor of York University. Again it could be argued that the bishops and businessmen on court and council might be dissipating their efforts - what with the moral crisis the country seems to be facing, quite apart from the necessity to get the balance of payments right!

Surely Messrs. Culyer and Peacock, as responsible economists, would not quarrel with this; Is this not another example of "a progressive long-term erosion of the gains from specialisation of labour"?

They also argue that students will not be able to participate effectively, anyway, since their efforts will be nullified "by the complexity of administrative machinery" which can only be handled by the "expertise of professionals" - a pretty lame argument when one considers that few, if any, of the members of court, council, senate or faculty board are professional administrators. However, to get to Culyer and Peacock's solution. They suggest more consumer sovereignty in education. Students should get their grants (or loans) and be allowed to shop around - its as

simple as that.

Not much further comment is necessary since Culyer and Peacock have so obviously failed to provide a coherent analysis of the student revolt. Apart from being printed on a better quality paper, their work does not far exceed an article in an interesting journal called "Awake" (May 22,

1969) which says "If you are a young person ask yourself this question: Do I want to be manipulated by the greatest producer of injustice the world has ever known? If you take part in the lawless revolt of today's students, then you will allow yourself to come under the influence of the unseen rebel, Satan, the Devil. You will become a puppet in his hands."

# THE PRICE OF IMF LOAN

BRIAN SIMISTER

As a serious bourgeois commentator, the ECONOMIST is not usually gushing with optimism when it analyses the current fortunes of the British economy. However, in the June 28th edition, the editorial and another article entitled: "Up to Our Necks," reached new depths of gloom, not only through an examination of the extent of British capitalism's present dire position, but also, through not being able to conceive of any solution which would lead to disaster being averted.

In weighing the significance of the latest loan from the International Monetary Fund, the ECONOMIST noted that Britain's IMF debts (including those incurred in past years), debts to international banks and foreign countries, short term debts to central bankers, as well as the sum borrowed under the Basle stand by credit of September, 1968, produce a present total debt of the order of \$7 billion to \$8 billion. "...And this ignores any interest charges, even though these fortunately do not reflect present-day high levels, they tot up to a very large sum. Indeed, to as much as \$87 million this year - and this official estimate was made before the new IMF stand by credit, which will add another \$20 million or so a year if fully drawn. Moreover, to these sums must be added charges on central bank borrowings. It is becoming just a little too reminiscent of the Indians' plight..."

This is the position of an economy, which possesses one of the world's two reserve currencies. Anxious to avert the international financial crisis that would ensue if sterling were to collapse, and also anxious to prevent the British Government taking steps to introduce further import controls, the chain reaction effects of which would be to depress world trade, the brokers of the IMF have felt obliged to grant Britain a loan

of \$ 500 million right now and a further \$500 million to follow over the next 12 months. The strings attached to the extra \$500 million, however, are quite amazing.

The ECONOMIST notes: "...The disagreement that arose between it (the IMF) and the British Government over the conditions attached to the new credit simply confirms the extraordinary position into which Britain has got itself. Britain is the first highly developed country to be a persistent debtor; no other industrialised country has ever had to roll over its debts to the IMF for so long before. It is borrowing from the IMF in the 'fourth credit tranche'; that is to say, entirely at the IMF's discretion and under the least easy arrangements usually reserved for what are known as banana republics. Trigger clauses which stipulate that no money can be drawn by the borrowing country unless it is conforming to precise undertakings about public finance, bank credit and so on are usual features of such agreements with persistent debtors."

## TEN YEARS OF CUTS IN LIVING STANDARDS

One undertaking that Jenkins had to give to the IMF was that a balance of payments surplus of £300 million would be achieved in the current financial year. As a figure, this does not look particularly great when measured against Britain's overseas debts. The ECONOMIST calculates that "...It would require ten years of that kind of performance - which Jenkins is looking for in 12 months to next March 31st - to wipe out Britain's short term and medium term debts. If this repayment were persisted in, it would imply that for ten years the British standard of living must be held back to do no more than pay for the mismanagements of the past..."

The second undertaking also looks innocuous at first sight, but is, in actual fact, very important indeed. It is that Britain intends to keep its domestic credit expansion (DCE) down to £400 millions in the year to the end of March, 1970. This compares with an expansion of some £1,225 million in the previous twelve months. It is reported that the IMF brokers are particularly determined that this undertaking should be obeyed. Broadly, DCE means the increase in the money supply excluding the effect of the balance of payments. "...If Britain's overseas accounts were in exact balance this financial year, then the new formula would allow money supply to increase by £400 million (i.e. by about 2½%); if we really do get a balance of payments surplus that leads to an inflow of £300 million of foreign exchange, then money supply should be allowed to increase by some £700 million (or nearly 4½%); but if we again run a balance of payments deficit of £400 million, then the permitted increase in money

supply will be nought..."

The significance of the Government's undertaking on the question of the level of DEC is that it has been by the manipulation of the level of money supply that successive British governments, or any other governments that have adhered to Keynesian methods, have attempted to even out the extreme vacillations of the trade cycle, the phenomena of boom and slump. There are various ways in which this has been done. In times of threatened recession, governments have lowered bank rates, reduced hire purchase restrictions, encouraged commercial banks to loan money, increased social welfare spending and government spending in general. In times of inflation, converse measures have been taken coupled with increases in taxation, increases in government borrowing from within the domestic economy and wage freezes.

These financial techniques, together with a practically constant technological growth have prevented slumps of the magnitude of the 1929-33 trade depression from occurring. Now, the British Government, by agreeing to limit DCE so drastically, come what may, has abandoned these Keynesian methods.

#### ONLY TWICE BEFORE

Since the level of money supply in the coming year will depend to a great extent on the balance of payments situation, it would be apposite, at this stage, to examine the likelihood of the British economy achieving the £300 million surplus; the other undertaking given to the IMF. If past precedent is anything to go by, the likelihood is very slight indeed. Callaghan, when chancellor, gave an undertaking of a £200 million surplus to the IMF for 1968. In spite of devaluation and in spite of a general expansion in world trade, a deficit of £60 million was all that was achieved. Going further into the past, Britain last had a surplus on its balances of payments in 1962, one of £50 million. Only in two post-war years, 1948 and 1950, have surpluses of the order of £300 million been achieved. As for the future, with stringent monetary measures being applied internationally and with a slowdown in American trade and consequently of world trade being confidently predicted, the hopes of Jenkins and his IMF brokers look very grim indeed.

If, in fact, the balance of payments surplus is not achieved, a very small if, and if there is a recession in Britain, due, in the first instance, to a decline in exports responding to a decline in world trade, then in response to the deflation and extra unemployment thus created, the Government's commitments with regard to the DCE level will lead to further deflation and yet higher unemployment. The ECONOMIST editorial laments as follows: "...The Chancellor appears to have said that if the squeeze does show up on Government accounts (less revenue from income tax and purchase tax) he will squeeze still further; but if inflation shows up in Government accounts, he will feel less obliged to disinflate. Keynes will be turning in his grave...Mr. Jenkins was also insistent...that he expects exports to show a strong rise in the second half of this year, because the export order books of the engineering industry are so healthy. Even if this proves

right in the short term, a pessimist can only say that the recent monetary squeeze round the world makes an eventual slowdown in international trade all too likely. It is this slowdown that is the danger. If Britain does go into an export led recession in the next twelve months with its balance of payments deficit rising at the same time as its unemployment, the country will now be committed to meet it by squeezing the money supply and making unemployment higher still. That is what is implied in living by the letter incorporating IMF's law. With the enthronement of DCE, Britain now has an automatic deflator - not unlike the old Victorian gold standard - which will be triggered as soon as there is any drain of foreign exchange out of the country.

#### NO "GIVE-AWAY" BUDGET POSSIBLE

A few general conclusions can be drawn from this picture. In the short term, living standards of working people in the fields of wages and conditions, education and social welfare will continue to be attacked viciously, making it inconceivable to think of a Labour Government being re-elected. There will be no room for a give-away pre-election budget this time.

These attacks will be in collision with a rise in industrial militancy, as shown by rising strike figures, the increasing awareness of women workers and the mushrooming of trade union defence committees, pledged to vigorously oppose any curtailment of trade union powers. Cuts in education will run counter to the growth in militancy amongst students and teachers. Cutbacks in local authority housing programmes together with the prohibitive rises in building society mortgage rates, that have already occurred, taken with any future measures of this kind, will lead to sharpening struggles in this field, which have already led to militant squatters and tenants organisations being formed in increasing numbers.

Even accepting the most favourable possibility for British capitalism that the ECONOMIST presents, the attainment of a £300 million balance of payments surplus this year, and the maintenance of boom conditions within world capitalism, the standard of living of the British working people will have to be held back for ten years, simply so that past debts can be paid off, by the attainment of similar balance of payments surpluses. Within ten years, something will have to give.

#### POLITICAL STABILITY THREATENED

Taking the more likely possibility, that an adequate balance of payments surplus will not be gained this year or in the next two or three years; that world trade will decline, and that with the British Government carrying out its pledges to deflate at the same time, unemployment will rise sharply, probably approaching classical slump proportions, it is safe to say that Britain's political system, which has enjoyed relative stability for generations, will be severely threatened.

On the one hand, millions of workers who have enjoyed relative prosperity since the second world war and who are suddenly threatened with poverty, will question the validity of the political and economic system, which produces such a catastroph-

he. On the other hand, sectors of the capitalist class, seeing both Labour and Tory governments (the Conservatives under Heath have certainly not got the policies to cope with a crisis of this magnitude) failing to solve their problems, and feeling the foundations of their system threatened, will in all probability look for an extra-parliamentary solution: at most a neo-fascist

solution; at least a "strong state" solution, using demagogic, racist, anti-trade union, anti-student and anti-left arguments to try to develop a mass following.

Whatever happens, we have to ensure that the socialist alternative is put so forcibly to ever-increasing numbers of working people, that it is the labour movement which is on the offensive.

# CLASS NATURE OF EASTERN EUROPE

TONY ROBERTS

It would be hard to imagine a more complex problem, from the sociological point of view, than that which emerged in Eastern Europe at the end of the last war. This unique conjunctural situation became, in its time, an acid test for the "left" - it posed very sharply before it the question of method: just what criteria does one use to differentiate between a workers' and a capitalist state? This question was implicit in all the discussions that took place, both in and around the Fourth International, during that long and tortuous process up into the early 1950s. Its consequences are still with us today.

It was self-evident, from the start, that the question revolved around the highly complex nature of the Kremlin's intervention. To be sure, the advent of the Red Army into the "buffer zone" sparked off popular uprisings which coincided with a general sharpening of class knives throughout Europe - to reach its tragic climax in the Greek Civil War. Spontaneous strikes and demonstrations against the war-weakened bourgeoisies which, in Yugoslavia, reached wide-scale occupations of the factories and distribution of the big landed estates. But the carve-up between Stalin and Roosevelt at Yalta and Potsdam sealed the lid: it left the Kremlin effectively in control of Eastern Europe and the Balkans (excepting Greece).

From that point on, developments in the buffer zone became a direct reflection of Kremlin self-interest - a fact initially true even of Yugoslavia which, due to the success of the partisans during the war, was to reach much greater independence vis-a-vis the Kremlin (and which culminated in the Tito-Stalin split of 1948).

With the refraction of the class struggle into short-sighted opportunist manoeuvrings of Moscow, it became vital to concretely analyse this new social factor in all its inner contradictions.

Only thus could the contradictory path of events it initiated at bayonet-point be put into perspective. Certainly, in a situation where events were directly determined by a rapacious bureaucracy, substitution of abstract criteria (of what a workers state should look like) for a concrete analysis of what was actually taking place, was



worse than useless. It had dangerous political consequences.

Trotsky had already drawn attention to this in his comments on the Soviet invasion of Finland and Poland in 1939. Warning sharply against any tendency which refused to start from "the facts as they are", he pointed out the political consequences stemming from such an error in method (viz.: the evolution of the Burnham-Shachtman faction in the SWP towards "state-capitalism"). His warning was doubly cogent after the war, not least for the contradictory path of developments the Kremlin initiated in a highly bureaucratic fashion. Any analysis which refused to come to grips with this contradictory process - as an organic whole reflecting merely the dual nature of the Kremlin - could only end up in gross distortions.

For if anything marked stalinist policy in the "buffer zone", it was precisely this contradictory character - seemingly carried out in two distinct phases. If, to begin with, its reaction was to brutally stifle the very uprisings the Red Army had provoked, this was fully consistent with its fear of the independence of the masses. In order to crush this threat to its own position, it was willing to conclude temporary alliances

with the extremely war-weakened bourgeoisies - going to the disgusting lengths of collaborating with the Rumanian court and semi-fascist and fascist tendencies inside Bulgaria and East Germany

If, towards the beginning of 1948, its policy was to be abruptly altered, it was for exactly the same opportunist reasons. Molotov may have remarked as the Red Army tanks rumbled into Rumania that..."the USSR does not pursue the aim of acquiring any Rumanian territory or changing the existing social order"... But the threat of the Marshall Plan - which was attracting no small interest inside the buffer zone - brought home to the Kremlin that the only way it could retain hegemony over these states was to structurally integrate them into the USSR. Thus its about-turn - the purging of bourgeois members in the government, the extension of nationalisation and the introduction of economic planning.

No doubt but that this "integration" was accomplished in the most bureaucratic fashion - with the limited support of the masses if not over their heads. But it was accomplished; and in the years to follow, the trend was deepened with the introduction of new economic plans and mutual aid schemes between the various countries (COMECON). The point, however, was not to see in this any proof of the "progressive" nature of the bureaucracy. It was merely carrying through, in a very distorted way, the uprisings which it originally sparked off but which, out of self-interest, it had been forced to temporarily quell. Its policy was opportunist throughout. It was only through an understanding of the dual nature of the bureaucracy that the Fourth International was able to conclude that these were "deformed workers states". A conclusion which made no concessions to the bureaucracy - but which recognised the "facts as they are".

It was a conclusion that was to be amply confirmed, not long afterwards, by the uprisings of the East German workers not against the new property-

relations which the Kremlin had been forced to introduce but against the complete lack of political freedom that accompanied them.

In its own way, the "buffer zone" posed the most thorny problem for the Fourth International since Trotsky's death in 1940. It became a concrete case on which its analysis of the Soviet bureaucracy was to be tested. It was only by overcoming what tendency to substitute abstract norms for a concrete analysis of the social forces involved in all their aims and tendencies that its conclusions were to be so amply confirmed as they were. Other tendencies - through such a faulty methodological approach - were to end up either in the arms of the stalinists; or, equally disastrous, questioning the class character of the USSR.

The importance of the Fourth International's conclusions cannot be over-stressed - for from the analysis of the buffer zone emerged the guidelines for its later appraisal of the Chinese revolution, in 1949, and, more recently, of the spurious significance of Castro's seizure of power. In both cases, the revolution was spear-headed by petit-bourgeois formations (the former stalinist) whose strategy was quite "un-marxist" in the traditional sense. But attempts to come to grips with them by stereotyped criteria torn from the library of "orthodoxy" could only produce a travesty of reality. The vindication of the Fourth International - if it needs one - is that it has been able to face this new reality without sacrificing its principles one jot.

\*The Socialist Workers Party has brought out a document on this question ("Discussion of the Class Character of the East European States") which includes excerpts from documents during the crucial period 1946-51, illustrating the range of the discussion and the depth of the problems involved. It is well worth reading for its informative nature as to how the International reached its conclusion that they were "deformed workers' states". This is obtainable from the Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1., price 4/- post paid.

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