

International

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

BRIGHTON
Labour in
perspective

vietnam
the war continues



Lessons of the
Portsmouth TUC

1/6

AN APPEAL for BOLIVIAN TROTSKYISTS

Reading the reports in this issue of how so many comrades have been hard hit by the recent moves by the Bolivian authorities, is inevitably disconcerting. We cannot forget that these revolutionaries, who have sacrificed so much for so long in the struggle for socialism, are members of our own party, the Fourth International. To learn that they are imprisoned, tortured and hounded by the police of one of the vilest regimes of Latin America leaves us saddened and angered.

The name of their leader, Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, will be known to readers of the Trotskyist press. Others are less widely known outside Bolivia, but are no less close to the hearts of the people of Bolivia, the peasants, the tin-miners with their long history of struggle, the students.

The comrades of the POR have openly declared their adherence to the Fourth International, and their support for the concept of armed struggle, for Inti Peredo and the ELN. We know that those arrested will face trial under very diffi-

cult circumstances, that their lives are in danger. We know that whatever the difficulties they face, the comrades of the POR will continue the struggle, that as we write they are pressing on with the work of organising support for their arrested comrades.

Accordingly, the International Marxist Group as the British section of the Fourth International, has decided to open up a fund in order to assist our Bolivian comrades. Their needs are great; the families of those arrested have no income, those pursued by the authorities have no possibility of securing work. Above all the political work of the movement must continue. We appeal therefore to all supporters of Trotskyism, to all supporters of armed struggle, to all opponents of the reactionary oligarchies of Latin America, to contribute to this fund.

All contributions should be sent to Bolivian Fund, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1.

LETTERS - LETTERS - LETTERS - LETTERS - LETTERS -

FROM PAT JORDAN

Two inaccuracies crept into my article on the situation in Northern Ireland (September issue). Firstly, Kilkeel is not a Catholic town, although this does not affect my argument as the unemployed registering in that town come from the whole Mourne district, which is Catholic. Secondly, Downpatrick was shown in the map as having a lower unemployment figure than is the case; it should have had a black dot.

The Cameron report which came out shortly after I wrote my article confirmed the arguments of the left and the ICRSC. It explained gerrymandering, but not why the Westminster Government had taken so long to notice it.

The ridiculous attempt by the DAILY MAIL to witch hunt International Socialism and Peoples Democracy on the basis of the report must be strongly combatted. All the more because Wilson and the Stormont regime are likely to look for scapegoats as their policy proves useless. As the barricades go up again we must expect the kid gloves to come off. The ICRSC needs to be strengthened in readiness for a long haul.

LETTER FROM MAUREEN ROBERTS

Any revolutionary socialist observer of the present dispute of GEC workers at Merseyside factories will begin to ask him/herself what has really been the dominating factor in the rejection of the shop stewards' action committee resolution for a workers' take-over.

To the capitalist, it is "sound common-sense" not to listen to the "militants". After all, they are all bloody communists...and "we know what they are like....", etc., etc.

But to the revolutionary socialist, it is an extremely serious and frightening challenge to workers' democracy, when men display such hardcore resistance to the Marxist's resolution for workers' control.

What has gone wrong? Has the average worker been sufficiently canvassed? Does he really know about it? No. He is not prepared to become "involved," because he is at the mercy of the capitalists.

Working for a large factory in the North West and talking to men and women on the shop floor, etc., does not alter my opinion that the worker is AFRAID.

So let's all unite and educate the worker in theories and practice of workers control. Something must be done; otherwise under this so-called socialist government there will be even more pandering to the capitalists and immeasurable redundancy.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: We entirely associate ourselves with the sentiments of this letter. Whilst the rejection of the Action Committee's plans were a set-back there is no doubt that the fact that millions of workers had passed to them the idea of workers' control is immensely positive. The Institute of Workers' Control, which helped to formulate plans for the Action Committee, is a good vehicle for proceeding as comrade Roberts suggests. Readers should book the week end of November 1st and 2nd when a workers' control conference will take place in London under the sponsorship of the Institute of Workers' Control, the London VOICE and TARGET, the busmen's paper. Full details of the conference will appear in these journals and TRIBUNE.

Unity and Vietnam

On September 20th a memorial meeting was held for Ho Chi Minh in London. Hopes that this meeting would be an expression of unity in the face of American imperialism's continued aggression in Vietnam were shattered. The Vietnam Solidarity Committee, sponsors of the meeting made great efforts to get speakers from organisations which had been active in the solidarity campaign.

The meeting was turned into a bear-garden. Madame Linh Qui refused to enter the hall and speak. The expression of unity was transformed into an expression of disunity. How did this happen? Who was to blame?

Trouble erupted when Chris Harman, speaker from International Socialism, outraged the audience by asserting that: Ho Chi Minh was responsible in the mid forties for the murder of hundreds of Trotskyists, North Vietnam was a state capitalist regime and to organise mass demonstrations in solidarity with the Vietnamese was unnecessary.

The speech was provocative and in complete contradiction with united front principles. It expressed the growing sectarianism of the IS. This sectarianism reflects both the wrong theories of IS and its increasing frustration due to the failure of its "unity offensive" following Enoch Powell's famous speech last year.

Without a correct strategy for building a revolutionary movement, a theory of the bureaucracy in workers organisations (and workers states), the failure to apply transitional demands - and for many other reasons - International Socialism is all at sea.

Because it recruits on a basis of four points of a very general nature it is unable to ensure unity in action. The facts reveal that whole branches openly oppose their own organisation's national policy and in several areas branches have had to be split to allow reasonable working relations.

International Socialism has changed its position from active support of the Vietnam solidarity movement to opposing a continued campaign on Vietnam. What has changed? It is certainly not the war in Vietnam. It goes on, its decisiveness in the world struggle against reaction remains the same; Vietnamese people are still being killed and their need for solidarity action remains as great as ever.

But something has changed: the mass media's treatment of the war, which is a reflection of the American imperialists' attempts to defuse the world-wide anti-Vietnam war movement. Because of its petty bourgeois character and lack of a firm basic theory, international links and traditions, IS is especially vulnerable to shifts in so-called public opinion, as manipulated by the mass media. A good example of this was its almost hysterical reaction to the Powell speech.

We ask the IS why they raise the question of the Vietnamese Trotskyists just now. They have had many opportunities before to do so, at rallies,

conferences and internal meetings of the VSC. Yet they wait until now. Only one conclusion can be drawn: they raise the question now to rationalise pulling out of the Vietnam solidarity activities to concentrate on more "fruitful" activities - their own sectarian interests taking priority over the needs of the Vietnamese people and world revolution.

IS must have known that Chris Harman's speech would jeopardise the united front. Until now they have respected the principle that one does not use a united front platform to attack other participants. At the beginning of the solidarity campaign, when the SLL sought to use the VSC platform to attack the CP, the IS spokesman, John Palmer, very ably combatted the SLL's disruptive tactics. Now, three years later the IS are the guilty ones.

The united front approach does not mean that one refrains from criticising other tendencies in one's own press, at one's own meetings or at special discussion meetings. In fact, it is mandatory on revolutionaries to continue their criticisms of reformists and sectarians whilst seeking to work with them in united action committees. Despite IMG working with the YCL and CP in Vietnam work, we have never ceased to criticise them as those organisations would be the first to testify.

We will not deal with the question of the Vietnamese Trotskyists in this editorial. Because of the interest in this matter we have commissioned material which will give a full picture of what happened - the truth is a lot more complicated than the IS leaders seem to think.

The behaviour of the Maoists and the representatives of the Communist Party and YCL was most reprehensible. The Maoists, who have ceased to be active on Vietnam and some of whom sell journals which label the Vietnamese leaders including Ho Chi Minh as traitors for taking part in the Paris talks, sought to fish in troubled waters.

The Communist Party and YCL had no need to leave the meeting. Responsible people who really cared about the unity of the movement against the war would have responded to the efforts of the IMG, BLACK DWARF and VSC to restore unity. Again it is a question of the subordination of the struggle for solidarity with the Vietnamese people to sectarian interests. There is no doubt that if Harman had been a bishop or an MP there would have been no walk out.

Although the events at the meeting were a blow to the carefully nurtured unity the damage can easily be undone. A demonstration in solidarity with the people of Vietnam is planned for November 25rd - soon the preparatory work will be starting - and this can be used to once again present a united response. For its part the IMG will spare no effort to build this unity.

The lessons & dangers of the Portsmouth TUC

by Pat Brain

More than 1,033 delegates representing just under nine million workers assembled as the hundred and first Trade Union Congress started its proceedings.

This congress followed hot on the heels of the special conference at Croydon. At that conference it was agreed to reject completely the attempts of the Labour Government to legislate penal clauses against the Trade Unions. But at the same time in adopting the policy "Programme for Action" the TUC agreed to police the trade unions and curb the rights of workers to strike. The shadow of these events hung over the entire conference at Portsmouth.

On the first day Wilson addressed the conference for forty-five minutes. He started off as if there had been no conflict between the Labour Government and the unions over anti-trade union legislation. He said, "Because we are socialists we are concerned about the individual and the effect on the individual must be the test of our socialist movement. As democratic socialists we are concerned to strengthen the basic political and constitutional liberties which our people have won by the extension of economic democracy." He went on to talk about the necessity to restrict wage increases; in particular equal pay for women must be delayed. He said, "The elimination of injustice in our wages system means also a fair deal for women at work. That is why we have now decided to make a reality of a policy on which congress has repeatedly pressed and which the government accept - the policy of equal pay for equal work. But it will be clear to every delegate present that progress on this must be based on restraint in incomes policy generally."

He then stressed the need for the TUC to carry out disciplinary action against unofficial strikers. His speech was met with an extremely cool reception by the delegates.

The reaction to Wilson's speech was the result of a number of factors. Part of the hostility was caused by his attempt to introduce anti-trade union legislation. But his talk about inflation and incomes policy was seen as referring to the white paper to be introduced at the end of the year. This threatens to bring in a wage freeze and legislation limiting women's demand for equal pay, by phasing it over a number of years.

The reaction of the delegates can be more easily understood if it is borne in mind that the conf-

erence took place against a background of growing unemployment and an assault on the standard of living of working people by the government. On August 10 the Sunday Times read: "Partly through the activities of the government agencies like the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation but also the harsh facts of Britain's present economic situation, redundancy is sweeping the nation"

Unemployment is hitting railways, mining, steel, agriculture, docks, and plants like English Electric, GEC. In fact unemployment is now nearly 600,000. The economic review from the National Institute states through 1970 unemployment will leap 10,000 a month rising to 750,000.

The Wilson government is pushing policies of rationalisation which are leading to mergers and closures, giving rise to unemployment. He is pushing productivity deals which are leading to greater exploitation of the individual worker. Sunday Times, Sept 10: "Indeed the productivity per man year has leapt from an average of about 2.5% in the early 1960s to nearly 5% since 1966." This is the basis of the growing conflict between the mass of workers, above all those in the trade unions, and Harold Wilson's government.

In other words, the coolness of the delegates to Wilson and some of the discussions such as incomes policy, represented indirectly the growing class antagonisms taking place nationally. Railwaysmen's Union leader Sidney Green spelled it out: "The biggest worry of trade unionists is the way in which output and unemployment have been adversely affected by the methods which the government has adopted to get the balance of payments right".

GROWING MILITANCY OF WOMEN WORKERS

The next day, in contrast to Wilson's speech, the Congress called on the government to act immediately on the principle of equal pay for equal work. Women delegates spoke militantly for equal pay now. Shirley Enticknap, speaking for the Greater London Council Staff Association said that of the 8,750,000 women workers in Britain only about 11% were on equal pay. Large sections of women workers took home less than £6 after deductions - "Nothing less than slave labour".

It is important to note that TUC membership rose by over 100,000 in the last year and a large section of this was made up by women workers. The

facts speak for themselves: although there are over eight million women workers, 55% of them take home £10 or less; by contrast under 9% of fully employed male workers earn less than £15 a week.

GROWING GULF BETWEEN LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND TRADE UNIONS

The Labour Government and the General Council of the TUC received a slap in the face when the delegates voted by a majority of 445,000 to abolish the Prices and Incomes Board as well as legislation on wage restraint. The vote represented partly a vote against anti-trade union legislation by way of a wage freeze. But even more so the action illustrated the growing gulf between trade unions and the Labour Government.

This vote reflected in a distorted way much of the frustration and hostility building up in the working class generally. The recent Ford workers' demand for a 55% increase - £10 a week - must be seen to have some connection with Scanlon's speech.



Demonstration at Portsmouth TUC.

DANGERS POSED FOR WORKING CLASS BY TUC CONFERENCE

The Trade Union Congress while rejecting the Government's white paper, "In Place of Strife", have accepted the essence of that policy in their own proposals, "Programme for Action", that is, that the working class involved in unofficial strikes are responsible for many of the economic problems facing the country. They have given the General Council special powers to take disciplinary action against unions in unofficial strikes. They are taking over the role of policing the trade unions and if they are successful they will seriously weaken the democratic rights of workers to determine policies in their own unions. Scanlon and Jones went along with the General Council, and it must be said that the authority that they have built up in the eyes of workers in passing many of the left resolutions at Portsmouth will

put them in a much more effective position in giving the General Council a left cover when it moves in against workers' rights.

What must be recognised when drawing up a balance sheet of the TUC Conference is the dual character of the leadership of the Trade Union Congress, its coolness to Wilson who threatens the independence of the trade unions from the state, but its willingness to strike blows at the rank-and-file's right to strike, which means lessening the worker's ability to defend his working conditions, thereby leaving the working class exposed to the offensive of the bosses and in particular the Wilson government.

In response to the Labour Government's offensive and the General Council's proposed strike-breaking activities, revolutionary socialists and trade union militants must attempt to set up united front committees around a principled programme. Two conferences that socialists should participate in are to take place. On October 18 a national meeting will take place of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, and later at the end of October there is a London Workers Control Conference.

These committees should be built to develop the concept of the political strike along the pattern that gave rise to the May 1 strike. The political strike should be utilised against any attempt by the Labour Government to introduce wage freeze legislation. The committees should be used to promote support for industrial action for women's equal pay now. Committees should be prepared to come to the defence of any group of workers under attack by Wilson's government or the TUC General Council. These committees should be utilised to promote the demand for workers' control in opposition to productivity deals, unemployment, and closures.

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Turn Grief into REVOLUTIONARY ACTION



The following is the text of the speech made by Bob Purdie at the Ho Chi Minh Memorial meeting in London on September 20th.

The death of comrade Ho Chi Minh is a bitter blow. We had in our thoughts of the future imagined him enjoying the reward of his long life of struggle, the only reward he asked, and the only reward appropriate for that life, the reward of seeing the Vietnamese people at last defeat imperialism, and in a peaceful, re-united Vietnam construct the kind of society which will reflect the abundant courage and self-sacrifice which for so many decades has been expended in fighting simply to achieve the right to determine their own future.

We grieve his loss because he tenaciously fought for that future for the Vietnamese people; in many different battles, against many different enemies, he kept before the eyes of his people the ends for which they were struggling, and despite the attempts of the world's mightiest powers, he resisted the temptation to compromise that ultimate end. Even when U.S. imperialism was bombing North Vietnam, when they seemed willing to destroy the whole of the society which had been so painfully built up in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, there was no compromise, no settlement which would have delivered the North, and bound the South in the chains of imperialism.

And we grieve because the Vietnamese people grieve. As their fight has become the centre of the world struggle against imperialism, we who live in the heartland of imperialism and who have come to understand the need for its destruction, have identified ourselves more and more closely with the Vietnamese; their aspirations, their fears, their victories and defeats, we regard as ours. It is this identification which has radicalised thousands of young people in Europe and North America; it is this identification which has awakened once more that force which is the

most potent poison within an imperialist nation, the force of revolutionary internationalism. And as this internationalism has grown in influence and depth, we have re-discovered our own traditions, we have re-discovered men like James Connolly and John Maclean and we have understood that the venal social democracy that holds sway in the Labour movement at present does not represent the true history of working class struggle in Britain. And re-discovering that tradition, infusing it with consciousness of the world struggles, from the Russian revolution to the fight of the Vietnamese, we will build a powerful revolutionary movement here. But it was identification with the Vietnamese which was an essential part of this process, and therefore as the Vietnamese people grieve for Ho Chi Minh we identify with that grief.

And because Ho Chi Minh so closely personified the struggle of his people we cannot mourn him without also mourning the thousands of Vietnamese who have died in that struggle, and those whose lives have been rendered a living hell by the brutality of imperialism. And because the Vietnamese epitomise the world historical struggle against imperialism, we mourn all who have fallen in that struggle, in particular Che Guevara, murdered almost two years ago by the C.I.A., and if the news is accurate, Inti Peredo, murdered a few days ago in La Paz by the reactionary Bolivian regime.

The slogan of this meeting is appropriate: "Turn grief into revolutionary action". Grief has always been a potent source of revolutionary action - we need only think of the Russian revolution of 1905, which was sparked off by the "Bloody Sunday" massacre, or of the funeral of the old Fenian, O'Donovan Rossa, in 1916, where the Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers cemented the alliance which at Easter was to explode into the most heroic chapter in the long struggle of the Irish people against British imperialism, a chapter which as we are aware, has not yet closed.

It expresses also another great truth, the necessity for revolutionaries to turn aside occasionally in grief. The struggle has been long and hard and bloody, and we are grimly aware that more blood will be shed, more lives lost, before victory on a world scale will be in sight. But it is imperialism which sheds that blood and squanders those lives, not us; it is imperialism which is threatening to destroy the world rather than relinquish its power, not us; it is imperialism which is inhuman, not us. We are trying to change the world so that it conforms to the needs of human progress; imperialism seeks to subject all human beings to the lust for profit of a few monopolists. It is because it is essen-

tially human that our struggle is revolutionary, and we must constantly reinforce our struggle with dedication to the humanity on whose behalf we believe we are fighting.

Imperialism feels no grief, no matter how many lives are lost in the struggle, but because we are concerned with the future of humanity, each life lost is a bitter blow to us. And because our struggle is so essentially human we must express the essential human emotion of grief. And from that grief, reinforce our determination to take revolutionary action.

Venceremos! We Will Win!

Brighton: Labour in perspective

The Labour Party Conference is a unique institution, the like of which exists virtually nowhere else in the capitalist world. Gathered together to discuss the major political issues of the day are representatives of practically all the important Trade Unions along with the rank and file of the Constituency Parties and the other smaller organisations affiliated to the Labour Party. The thousand-odd delegates cast their votes on behalf of six and a half million individual and affiliated members. In one sense therefore this is the most important event in the annual calendar of the organised working class movement. Conference, and the decisions it takes, reflect the general political level within this movement. No socialist organisation which is genuinely interested in bringing the mass of the organised working class over to a revolutionary, internationalist position, can afford to ignore it.

Having said this however we should also stress that while the British working class has succeeded in building up one of the strongest and most durable organisations existing anywhere, that organisation has been constantly under the control of a leadership whose main characteristic has been timidity and a fear of radical social change. This is why, throughout its history, socialists have always found it very difficult to affect the Labour Party's course.

MANIPULATION OF CONFERENCE

Thus the rank and file delegate frequently suffers from an acute sense of frustration at the way that Conference is manipulated in order to

minimise the expression of dissident opinions; and he cannot fail to notice that when decisions are made contrary to the line of the party leadership, the latter conveniently ignores them. The system of block voting by the delegates of the Unions is of course particularly destructive of control over the leadership as is the method of election to the National Executive Committee, which is heavily weighted in favour of the delegates of the Unions because of their decisive weight in the election of the 5 women members. He sees the nauseating spectacle of members of the government sitting on the Executive and demonstrating their fawning acceptance of the constitutional norms of the capitalist state by always voting for government policy. The totally undemocratic principle of allowing members of the NEC (usually Ministers) to answer debates at enormously greater length than proposers of resolutions are allowed, exposes the view of the Party leadership - that Conference is primarily a public platform for themselves rather than a forum for the expression of the opinions of the rank and file.

While it is of course necessary to expose and try to change all these abuses, it is not enough to assume, as some of the Labour Party "left" appear to, that if they were rectified, the Party itself would rapidly be changed into a body capable of bringing socialism to Britain. For the undemocratic practices of the leadership, and the inability of the rank and file to overcome these, reflect the generally low political level in the British Labour movement. From time to time sections of the movement have conducted militant struggles in which they have acquired a much clearer consciousness of the class nature of British society, but the leadership has invariably been totally unwilling to challenge the entrenched power of the capitalist state.

FAILURE OF LABOUR LEADERSHIP TO CHALLENGE CAPITALIST STATE

Thus during the 1st World War, while workers on Clydeside, in Sheffield etc., conducted struggles to defend their living conditions, which led to a confrontation with the state, members of the Labour leadership participated in the coalition government which prosecuted the imperialist war. Leading a solid and unified force into the Gene-

al Strike of 1926, the TUC leadership was so horrified by its revolutionary implications that, to the amazement and dismay of the rank and file, it capitulated totally before the Government after nine days. Ramsey MacDonald was the archetype of the Labour leader mesmerised by the trappings of power, with a tremendous reverence for Parliament, the monarchy etc. He led the Labour Party into its greatest defeat: the debacle of 1931. In 1945, elected to power on a wave of postwar enthusiasm for radical social change, the Labour leadership confined itself to taking over a few bankrupt industries under a bureaucratic system of management and to some important reforms of the social services. But no attempt was made to challenge the commanding heights of capitalist power and influence.

RECORD OF WILSON GOVERNMENT

But the nadir of the British Labour Party has undoubtedly come with the Wilson government. In an increasingly unfavourable context of chronic crisis in the international monetary system, the impossibility of coupling a programme of social reform to a commitment to the maintenance of the private ownership of finance and industry has been clearly illustrated. The absence of serious big business opposition to the Labour Government, the lack of enthusiasm shown by industry and the bourgeois press for the Tory Party of Edward Heath, show clearly which path the Wilson leadership has chosen. The sole measures of public ownership have been the takeover, at munificent rates of compensation, of the ailing steel industry, thus guaranteeing private industry's supplies of a crucial raw material, and the ports takeover, which is leaving the most profitable handling businesses in private hands. State intervention through the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation is promoting the rationalisation of industry through the creation, with massive public subventions, of huge monopolies. The result is redundancy, as at GEC-AEI, for thousands of workers. The hub of the government's economic policy has been the much-vaunted incomes policy. This has evolved from appeals for restraint, through the introduction of legal penalties for breaches of the policy, to the sustained attack on the trade union movement mounted under the leadership of the government earlier this year. The main objective of this offensive was to break the powerful shop stewards' movements in key industries, which had been pushing up wage rates and improving conditions throughout the '50s and early '60s. The resulting "compromise" by which the TUC agreed to play the role of "policeman" of industrial disputes, was highly satisfactory to those strategists who sought to whittle away the freedom of the Trade Union movement, tying it closely to the pursuance of government objectives.

Attempts to promote a faster rate of growth in the British economy have largely foundered on the rock of commitment to the existing international monetary arrangements. The role of sterling as a reserve currency has been a "sacred cow" of government policy which has proved to be increasingly incompatible with the weakness of the domestic economy. Eventually, after three years of pro-

claiming the sanctity of \$2.80 exchange rate, the government was forced into the devaluation of November 1967. However, an acceptable solution to the chronic balance of payments crisis appears even more distant, notwithstanding the recent improvement in the trade figures. For the savage deflationary measures aimed at cutting domestic consumption and securing a decisive shift of resources into export industries in order to comply with the IMF demand for an annual surplus of £300 million for the next ten years, can only lead to further attacks on working class living standards.

SOCIAL SERVICES - ELECTION PROMISES ABANDONED

The rather modest National Plan of 1965, which was to be the blueprint for growth, was no sooner produced than dropped. In the field in which the Labour Party's reputation was highest, that of the social services, election promises have been slowly watered down, then abandoned. The modest target of building 500,000 houses a year is now dropped and Minister of Housing Greenwood rationalises this away by talking of a supposed rapid satisfaction of housing need - this when thousands of families are homeless in London alone. The Rent Officer system is producing verdicts more frequently favouring landlord than tenant. Council house rents are soaring under the pressure of record-high interest rates. Prescription charges have been re-introduced, school meals charges increased and school milk partially abandoned. Certain sections of the National Health Services are threatened with breakdown. The problems of the depressed areas remain acute. In Scotland and Wales they have in part been responsible for the emergence of nationalism as an important political force. In Northern Ireland they have played an important part in engendering the profound social crisis which now engulfs that part of the island.

The government has capitulated to racism with the 1965 White Paper on Commonwealth Immigrants and the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act. In foreign affairs the main feature has been the subordination of Britain to the dictates of U.S. imperialism, represented at its most obnoxious by Wilson's craven support for the U.S. role in Vietnam. Economic pressures have forced a partial withdrawal East of Suez, but care has been taken to ensure the continuation of imperialist interests there. The South African arms ban has been effectively liquidated, while only the extraordinary perversity of the Rhodesian Front leadership has prevented Wilson negotiating a sell-out settlement with the Smith regime.

REFORMISM AT A DEAD END

The evolution of the Wilson government provides yet another example of the dead end reached by reformism. In a period of expansion, e.g. post 1945, the Labour Party was able to make important social reforms, thus securing some improvement in the standard of life of the workers within the framework of the capitalist economy. In the ailing economy of the 1960s, increasingly under pressure from the general slowdown in the international capitalist economy, the old reformist

policy would not work. Disabled by its whole tradition and ideology from leading the working class into a real anti-capitalist struggle and breaking decisively with the world imperialist system, the Labour leadership has to accept the priorities of a struggling capitalism: to safeguard profits even at the cost of attacking the social services and working class living standards.

The scene is being set just now by the press relations men for the presentation of this year's Conference as a great triumph for Wilson. This is to be the turning point, after which it will be plain sailing into the next General Election and the inevitable pay-off of another five years in power. Socialists would do well not to be over-cynical about such a prospect. The indifferent performance of the opposition and the loyalty which a majority of the working class have traditionally shown towards the Labour Party make it not inconceivable that the Party could make a comeback in time for the election.

LOYALTY TO LABOUR

This loyalty to the Labour Party, demonstrated by the fact that leftwing offshoots like the I.L.P. have usually rapidly decayed, is both a strength and a weakness in the movement. On the one hand it demonstrates a remarkable loyalty by the British working class towards its political organisations: but it makes the task of those trying to change the politics and leadership of this organisation doubly difficult. For that leadership can and does continually make appeals to the loyalty, desire for unity, etc of the rank and file, and uses this quite unscrupulously to maintain its own position. It helps to explain why socialists with a serious perspective cannot envisage the development of any new left wing political force in Britain except, at least in part, as developing out of an organic struggle within the Labour movement itself in which large numbers of the Party and union rank and file come to identify with a coherent opposition to the existing leadership and to the rotten politics of reformism.

The consequence of the Wilson government for the party itself has been increasing sterility in its internal politics. A few years ago most of the important political issues were reflected in far-reaching debates in the party. Local constituencies were reasonably lively foci of political discussion. All this has changed quite rapidly. There has been a general haemorrhage from all sections of the party: in particular there has been a total failure to attract young people into its ranks. The low level is reflected in this year's conference agenda where such burning issues as Vietnam and racism have not produced any resolutions.

FAILURE OF TRADITIONAL "LEFT"

A very large part of the responsibility for this lack of clear and organised opposition to the policies of the Wilson leadership lies with the traditional "left" in the Labour Party, especially

that around the journal TRIBUNE. There is a long history of left-wing anti-leadership activity in the party, but an almost uniform aspect of this has been an unwillingness to go beyond criticism of specific details of policy to an overall and principled opposition to the pre-capitalist policies of the leadership. This failure of the left to have any real perspective, its fetish of Parliament and its unwillingness to mobilise the mass of the movement, has meant that it leads a very unstable existence. The career of Bevan, with his ultimate capitulation to Gaitskell in 1957, provides a perfect illustration of this point. In the present era many erstwhile "Tribunites" like Castle and Greenwood have joined the government. Those left MPs outside of the government have on the whole totally failed to mount any real opposition to it. Those who signed the famous "Never Again" manifesto after one round of cuts in government expenditure were soon to be found voting for the even more slashing post-devaluation cuts. Their Socialist Charter movement has been a stillborn animal. This is hardly surprising since its manifesto, while being quite unexceptionable in general terms, does not put forward any really concrete and specific demands. No mention is made for instance of an end to the incomes policy or the racist immigration laws.

Because the leftward looking rank and file of the party have customarily seen these people as their leadership, it is precisely their failure to come out in clear opposition to the rightward drift of the Wilson leadership that has been such an important factor in ensuring that no effective opposition did emerge, and in disillusioning many thousands of activists.



TRIBUNE has of course entirely failed to grasp what has been far and away the most important political development of the past few years. That is the rise of a new generation of revolutionary minded young people who are on the whole quite outside the ranks of the Labour Party. From the workers' control campaign, through apprentices' committees, and student campaigns, and above all in the anti-imperialist movement, a new generation has come very quickly to political maturity.

Many Labour Party and trade union activists are profoundly disturbed by the contempt with which the radical youth often appear to view their organisations. They should understand that this is a fundamentally healthy reaction which is a mirror of their own disillusionment with a bankrupt conservative leadership. They should also

POLEMIC -

Nigel Harris & Martin Shaw reply to Dave Windsor

From Martin Shaw

Comrade,

It is surprising that Dave Windsor (letters, August), who sets so much store on recalling the positions allegedly adopted by writers in International Socialism, should have forgotten the very apt comments of Pat Jordan, on the subject of "sectarian mud-slinging", in IS 19. It is even more surprising that the editor of International should seem to endorse this oversight, as I gather that cde Jordan is now a leading member of your International Marxist Group.

Cde Jordan then proposed that discussion between socialists of different tendencies should "(1)... be concrete and related to the living movement; and (2) it must not challenge the socialist credentials of the participants unless there is ample evidence that they are on the wrong side in the struggle. (Is it also necessary to say that such polemic should not misrepresent the ideas of anyone concerned?) Otherwise polemic degenerates into hair-splitting and/or exchange of abuse."

Cde Windsor's piece falls down even on what cde Jordan took for granted, namely the criterion of fair representation. Not only does he attempt to make highly explicit what in Mike Kidron's article on Ceylon was at worst implicit and ambiguous, namely Kidron's support for the LSSP, and not state that it is he (Windsor) who is drawing the conclusions. He also directly lies about the article of Nigel Harris on Pakistan, also in Socialist Worker (8.3.69), stating that Harris "called for the Pakistan left to support Bhutto. The latter is a rich landlord, former 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." In fact, Harris's article was very largely given over to a call to expose Bhutto as an opportunist, chauvinist politician whose apparent move to the left would pre-

pare the movement for betrayal. It concluded: "For the Pakistan left, the task must be to force Bhutto and the movement further and further left, to push the demand for civil rights into a demand for popular power, to build a movement which Bhutto cannot sell out. A peasant and worker alliance to begin the permanent revolution in Pakistan can transform the whole perspective for socialism in Asia."

Why the direct misrepresentation? Cde Windsor cannot bear facts which do not fit into his picture of IS as opposed to social revolution in the third world. This is achieved as much by omission as by direct misrepresentation. For a more authoritative statement of the IS position on Ceylon, I would refer readers to the editorial in IS 18, which attacked the LSSP participation in a bourgeois coalition. This is much more consistent with IS's general line, which is the strongest possible advocacy of social revolution. (Expressed not only in the Harris article on Pakistan, but also in frequent commentary in our press on the Middle East, China, etc). It is precisely from the standpoint of social revolution that IS has been forced to develop a theory of state capitalism to account for and characterise the peasant-based, statist petty-bourgeois regimes established in a number of third-world countries. Unlike those "orthodox" Trotskyists who have seen in the establishment of these regimes a direct confirmation of the thesis of "permanent revolution" despite the obviously non-proletarian social content of the changes, IS has insisted on the need to carry out the proletarian revolution in opposition to these regimes as well as to imperialism. To characterise petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes as in some cases "state capitalist" is precisely the theoretical means of preventing capitulation to them. This is the general line of IS which cde Windsor seeks to distort.

And it must be said that he is not above violating cde Jordan's second criterion, by challenging the socialist credentials of cdes Kidron and

Shaw

Harris. This he does by a smear tactic, rather than directly. Burnham and Shachtman "challenged the Trotskyist concept of the Soviet Union and ended up on the extreme right wing". Kidron and Harris also challenge this concept, so they are headed the same way. This is hardly conclusive, as (1) they do not challenge it on the same grounds as did Burnham and Shachtman, (2) others have challenged it without ending up on the right, and (3) "orthodox" Trotskyists have also been known to sell out.

The smear tactic is also used to link IS with the Ceylon LSSP's sell-out. Anil Moonesinge, a member of the Socialist Review group in the early '50s in Britain, later joined the bourgeois coalition as one of the LSSP leaders. But why should IS be responsible for the actions of an individual who had no political links with them at the time, and was in fact a member of a party which was under the international discipline of another tendency, namely the Fourth International (Unified Secretariat)? Surely it is that tendency which bears responsibility, linked as it was to the LSSP not by the past affiliations of one individual but by common discipline with the whole party. After all (cde Windsor omits to mention this) it was not until after the LSSP voted to join the Government in June 1964 that the F.I. acted to assert its discipline against any of the leaders who had for some time previously been preparing this step. (Even then only 3 were expelled, the rest merely suspended, and no action at all taken against a group which did not leave to join the LSSP (R), although it disapproved of the coalition.)

These criticisms of the F.I. are, I feel, "concrete", and also "relevant to the living movement" because they relate to the functioning of the International to which the IMG has just affiliated, and which other socialist groups must evaluate if they are to take their international responsibilities seriously. Cde Windsor's points, on the other hand, are for the most part a compound of smears and misrepresentation. There is

a valid criticism of cde Kidron's article - that the problem of the isolation of the revolution in Ceylon should not lead one to support entry into a bourgeois government. But cde Windsor has not established the case that this indicates a general criticism of IS theory. On the contrary, his methods of argument have discredited it. Let us hope that the editor of International will not help to reintroduce such methods, in defiance of the excellent standards proposed by cde Jordan in the past.

From Nigel Harris

Dear Comrade,

I am surprised that your journal chose to publish the letter of a certain Dave Windsor in your last issue. There are important theoretical differences between International Socialism and your journal, but they have little or nothing to do with the comical malice of Mr. Windsor. Apart from Windsor's childish distortion of Kidron's article (Windsor does not give your readers the benefit of a reference, so I had better do so: Tropical Trotskyism, Socialist Worker 129, July 3rd, 1969), and his choice of publishing his letter in your journal rather than sending it to Socialist Worker, his astonishing ignorance both of the viewpoints of Trotskyism and of International Socialism would ordinarily mean his contribution was not worth answering. I will not weary your readers by listing Windsor's silliness, but there is one deliberate and bald lie which concerns myself and cannot unfortunately be allowed to pass.

Windsor writes: "In an article on Pakistan, published around the time of the upheaval in that country last year, Nigel Harris called for the Pakistan left to support Bhutto". It is not clear what article Windsor refers to, but whatever it is, his statement is the exact reverse of the truth. I wrote two articles on Pakistan, one in Socialist Worker (112, March 8th, 1969), and one in International Socialism (56, April/May, p.5). In neither did I advocate support for Bhutto; on the contrary, both pieces contained the same details mentioned by Windsor as reasons for not supporting Bhutto, and were designed to prevent socialists thinking any solution lay with Bhutto. Poor Windsor, I fear, fell over his feet in his eagerness to be malicious, to avoid the serious issues in the trivialities of his shallow spite. Why he should want to be malicious, rather than debate seriously, I fear I do not know. I can do no better, by way of reply, than rephrase a recent statement by Comrade Pat Jordan: "If Windsor wants to discuss these things fruitfully he should elevate the discussion to a political one, dispense with sneers and misrepresentations (such as claiming that IS's perspective is that of the Mensheviks) and argue intelligently. A first prerequisite to all this would be for him to state where he stands in clear political terms" (Black Dwarf, Aug. 30th, 1969, p.5).

A REJOINDER by Dave Windsor

Both Martin Shaw and Nigel Harris seek to divert attention from a political criticism of Mike Kidron's "defence" (or "explanation" as he now calls it - see SOCIALIST WORKER, 18/9/69) of the reformist policies of the LSSP.

They seek to do this by making a song and dance about me telling "lies" about Nigel Harris' article on Pakistan. This, of course, is a classic debating trick. The most monstrous lies appearing in INTERNATIONAL would not change the reality - in a paper which claims to be revolutionary socialist an article appeared which was a rationalisation of the betrayal of the Ceylon working class. The motives of the writer are irrelevant. The fact that it could appear without comment and without any criticism from IS members is a very significant fact. When a Ceylonese Trotskyist wrote an angry reply, he was told it could not be published because it was too long. Perhaps it was - but no attempt was made to arrive at some method of publishing his views, say, by printing part of the letter. Despite all this we know there is considerable opposition inside IS to the article and not just from the numerous opposition factions.

However, seeing that a charge of lying has been levelled at me, let me deal with that first.

It is true that Nigel Harris does not use the expression "the left in Pakistan should support Bhutto". It is also true that his article contains many criticisms of Bhutto. It is not true to say that the article was "very largely given over to a call to expose Bhutto as an opportunist, chauvinist politician whose apparent move to the left would prepare the movement for betrayal."

In fact, the very passage Martin Shaw quotes confirms my POLITICAL ASSESSMENT of Nigel Harris' position.

This passage is the crucial one in the article because it deals with the "task" of the Pakistan left. According to Nigel Harris this is two-fold: (1) force Bhutto and the movement further and further left; and (2) build a movement that Bhutto cannot sell out.

I put it to readers of INTERNATIONAL: is there any other interpretation that one can put on this two-fold task than that of the left joining with Bhutto in the fight against Pakistan's rulers? A revolutionary would say that the task is to push Bhutto to the wall, not to the left. Furthermore how can one even pose the question of Bhutto selling out a movement unless he is part of it? It would be a logical absurdity to talk of him betraying a movement which is fighting him.

Nigel Harris' formulation is diametrically opposed to the task set by the theory of the permanent revolution: that of building a movement completely

independent of the national bourgeoisie and in conflict with its representatives. Moreover, talk of pushing Bhutto to the left implies some illusions that he can be pushed to the left (and that it is possible to prevent him selling out). The whole formulation is similar to that of the Indonesian CP's attitude to Sukarno. After all, they sought to push him to the left while they were building a "movement he could not sell out."

In case Martin Shaw is thinking of making the charge that I am basing all this on one short passage, let me quote other references to Bhutto in the article:

"Behind the politicians is the opportunist Bhutto. But behind Bhutto are the millions for whom Pakistan's much lauded 6% economic growth rate... over the past decade, has meant only increasing hardship and deprivation..."

"To keep the pot boiling, he (Bhutto) has recently talked vaguely about land to the tillers and will probably get away with it since he has no peasant support. He has won some industrial worker support, but he has not raised the issue of nationalisation or workers' control." (Fancy that - maybe if pushed further and further left he will go the whole hog and come out in favour of nationalisation with workers control over his own huge estates!)

It seems fairly clear that in Nigel Harris' opinion, Bhutto is a mass figure capable, if pushed further and further left, of assisting the building of a movement (which of course the left would ensure Bhutto did not sell out) which would "raise for the first time on a massive scale an authentic alternative to the Indian Congress." It is interesting to note that Martin Shaw left this out in his version of the "conclusion" of the article.

Throwing in the odd phrase about "a peasant and worker alliance to begin the permanent revolution in Pakistan" is mere rhetoric. The old revisionist leaders of the social democrat parties used to talk quite often about revolution in their Sunday suits on May Day. The essence of a revolutionary approach is what one says people should do here and now. Nigel Harris says that the left should push Bhutto further and further left and build a movement he cannot sell out - there is nothing revolutionary in that.

It is somewhat presumptuous for writers in Britain to tell the left in Pakistan what its task is. However, according to the theory of the permanent revolution one would expect it to construct a revolutionary party which would aim via a worker and peasant alliance, under the leadership of the former, to carry out a proletarian revolution.

Talk of, at this stage when there is no vanguard organisation, raising "on a massive scale an au-

thetic (sic) alternative to the Indian Congress" is, in reality, to talk of building a bourgeois organisation. Such an organisation would need Bhutto, with "his industrial worker support", because Pakistan's million are "behind" him.

Martin Shaw and Nigel Harris may seek to make a debating point about my use of the word "support" but that is running away from the politics of what he said. And it was his political assessment I was opposing not the words he used to describe it.

Both writers accuse me of transgressing the apt and excellent arguments and standards of Pat Jordan in an early edition of INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM (number 19 if one goes by the current numbering). First let me say that I agree with the main line of that article; apart from some criticism I would have of it as underestimating the value of polemic as a method of clarifying ideas.

It will be interesting for readers of INTERNATIONAL to learn of the circumstances which led to Pat Jordan writing the article. In issue number 18 (new enumeration) of IS, edited by Mike Kidron, an editorial had appeared criticising INTERNATIONAL's predecessor, THE WEEK. Among the charges it made were:

- (a) "VOICE OF THE UNIONS and THE WEEK, normally more critical than TRIBUNE, have tied themselves down to a policy scarcely different...."
- (b) (Crimes of crimes) "THE WEEK wants us to make classic 'transitional demands'...to prevent (the) government falling back on its commitments..."

The bone of the IS argument was that THE WEEK by linking the fight against the wage freeze and incomes policy with offensive slogans, such as "open the books" was "giving qualified support for wage freeze" and "unqualified support for leftish trade union leaders".

Less than a year later, one of the editors of THE WEEK and main target for IS abuse, Ken Coates, was expelled from the Labour Party for opposition to the Wilson government.

Whatever subsequent differences may have emerged, the comrades around THE WEEK were outraged by this attack which did "challenge the socialist credentials" of Ken Coates. They, therefore, commissioned Pat Jordan to write a letter in reply.

Pat Jordan could have found other targets in that issue of IS. Thus we have Nigel Harris again writing on the Indian sub-continent. In an article entitled "India: A First Approximation", he concluded:

"The aim for socialists is less trying to annihilate their strained and sparse resources in competing for urban middle class support....but rather seeking to conserve and garner their cadres against the coming storm....."

"In the interstices of the political federations of the trade unions, in the work of the smaller parties, like the Revolutionary Socialist Party," (now participating in two state coalition govern-

ments! - D.W.) "small but responsible (sic), is the seedbed for future action. The ideological consciousness involved is not and cannot be high, and the formal policy decisions often wrong - the RSP is no more preserved from the prevailing atmosphere of middle class chauvinism than any other Indian party - but it is here that a start can be made in the immense task of building the sort of organisation that can both protect workers during the violent clash between capital, state and the land, and provide a context in which workers can develop consciousness.

"For Indian socialist aspirations, these are bleak, Economist words, but for responsible (sic) socialists, THE FUTURE IN INDIA WHEN THERE IS AN INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT WHICH CAN BE A SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL FORCE and assert a decisive role is of more importance than the immediate middle class gains of riding the current factions in the hope that if only power can be seized, socialism can be forced on society by a small clique. At the outside, within a national context, Nasser and Mao might be possible, but socialism is not." (my emphasis throughout - D.W.)

I should explain before going further that Nigel Harris, like the Stalinists and Kautsky, seems to equate a successful proletarian revolution with the establishment of socialism - whereas I follow the traditional Marxist practice of calling the period following such a revolution the dictatorship of the proletariat. The latter is a society of a transitional nature where capitalism has been overthrown but socialism has not yet been established because classes (and therefore the state machine) still exist.

Returning to Nigel Harris' article on India, it is clear that for him socialists have to bide their time concentrating on economist demands until the future when the working class is much stronger. This is pure Menshevism* - Nigel Harris seems almost to be aware of this with his use of the term Economist (with a capital E) to describe his assessment. The Economists represented the extreme right of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and were the original opponents of Lenin in his endeavours to "bolshevise" that party.

Just like the Mensheviks, Nigel Harris says that it is useless for revolutionaries to do anything but "build a movement that can both protect workers...and provide a context in which workers can develop consciousness" because they have to wait for the time when the "industrial proletariat... can be a significant national force..."

This means telling the revolutionaries of India (and all other countries with a similar socio-economic structure, i.e., the overwhelming majority of mankind): we are very sorry, despite all the misery and suffering time is not ripe for you to make a proletarian revolution. You will have to wait until we "advanced" and "responsible" socialists, coming from a country where the working class is a significant national force, make a revolution. This argument is not merely reformist it is chauvinistic as well. Fortunately,

for mankind's social advance, the Bolsheviks, the Chinese, the Cubans, and the Vietnamese have all rejected this type of advice and made revolutions which have destroyed capitalism over one-third of the world.

In the second half of my reply I will deal with the arguments about the social nature of these revolutions and will demonstrate that the positions of Mike Kidron and Nigel Harris are directly and organically descended from those of Burnham and Shachtman.

Note: All my quotations from Nigel Harris' article on Pakistan are based on a version appearing in the April, 1969, edition of INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST, the journal of the ISC. This is because I was unable to obtain the copy of SOCIALIST WORKER from which it was reproduced - I hope, for the

sake of good relations between IS and the former ISC (now also IS) that the reproduction was accurate.

before Martin Shaw starts to scream about lies and making explicit what is only implicit, let him consider what E.H. Carr (who is not a member of the IMG) said about the differences between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks:

"...the Mensheviks followed the legal Marxists in their emphasis on revolutionary theory and in their postponement of revolutionary action to some still remote future; they followed the Economists in preferring the economic concept of class to the political concept of party and believing that the only concrete aim that could be offered to the workers at the present stage was the improvement of their economic lot...." ("The Bolshevik Revolution", Penguin edition, volume 1, page 51)

Vietnam - the war goes on

by Connie Harris

A year ago this month, 100,000 people took the streets in London's biggest anti-Vietnam war mobilisation. Organised by the October 27th Ad Hoc Committee, (a united front of political groups, tendencies and individuals) the mobilisation demonstrated its solidarity with the Vietnamese people in their heroic resistance to American imperialism. Sickened by the Labour Government's support of the American imperialists, the demonstrators also demanded an end to British complicity in the war.

Revolutionary socialists took their place on this demonstration and helped to mobilise it. They did so, not only to express their solidarity with, and to pay tribute to, the heroism of the Vietnamese freedom fighters, and to protest against British complicity, but also because they recognised that the outcome of the Vietnamese war would have important consequences for the liberation struggles taking place throughout the world.

The task of mobilising maximum support for the October 27th demonstration was seen as a priority by all those socialists who understood the decisive nature of the Vietnam war. For too long American imperialism had had the initiative in its self-assigned role of policing the world in the interests of world reaction; their aim being to halt the colonial revolution, which had gained fresh hopes from the successes of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions, and to prevent the world-wide struggle for national liberation and social progress from being realised; their intention being to "contain communism" in south east Asia.

The magnificent resistance of the Vietnamese people has already changed the relationship of forces throughout the world. Socialists everywhere have a vital stake in the Vietnam war. A victory for American imperialism would put back the progress of world revolution for a long time. It is unlikely that in Britain, as in other countries

that any big advance can take place if world imperialism is strengthened through an American victory. The Vietnamese people understand very well the international character of the war. That is one of the reasons why they are still fighting back with everything they have.

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the left in Britain has carried on the struggle with the same consistency and energy as our Vietnamese comrades. For while we are not called upon to actively resist imperialist aggression by taking up arms to defend our lives and national independence, we do have an elementary duty to do everything in our power to give the maximum support to the Vietnamese people and strike a blow at the imperialists. One of the best ways we can do this in Britain is to mobilise the biggest possible number of people against the war and bring them out into the streets to express their solidarity with the Vietnamese.

What better way of helping to weaken the forces of capitalism than by actively supporting those who are engaged in a living revolution? The Tories and the Wilson Government are very happy to let the Americans do the dirty work for them in Vietnam. They would be much happier if the Vietnamese did not resist and the international anti-war movement gave up.

A major factor contributing to the lull in the anti-Vietnam war movement in the past few months is confusion as to the current stage of the war. Johnson agreed to "peace talks" and stopped the bombing of North Vietnam. Nixon was elected to the White House because a substantial number of voters hoped that he would at least have sense enough to draw the conclusions from what happened to Johnson and that he had no alternative but to get the US out of Vietnam and without any procrastination. Nixon, however, decided to stall for time.

Fresh grumblings about the war began to be heard in the States. In the first week of April, the anti-war movement succeeded in staging demonstrations in key cities from coast to coast. Within the armed forces, opposition to the war became more vocal. A number of newsmen became restive under the rising pressure, and started criticising the new administration. And so Nixon announced a "peace plan".

Many people thought the "plan" might be genuine and adopted a wait and see attitude. Others were more disposed to view the "plan" as a manoeuvre to allay popular opposition to the war. The peace "plan" was written up by James Reston, the executive editor of the NEW YORK TIMES in his column on April 6th: "The indications are, that the President has decided to reduce the level of violence at once in Vietnam, begin withdrawing substantial forces from that conflict by the end of 1969, negotiate a cease-fire and a compromise settlement and a complete withdrawal of American troops from that country by the end of 1970".

Two months later, in June, Nixon announced a withdrawal of 25,000 troops by mid-August. What is the reality of the situation? A quick look at what has actually been happening in the past few months leaves no doubt but that Nixon's "peace plan" was as phoney as Johnson's talk of "peace". According to the Pentagon's figures, American troop levels at various dates were:

January 18.....	532,500
June 14.....	536,500
July 12.....	537,500
July 26.....	536,000
August 2.....	537,000

The figures reveal that instead of any withdrawal taking place the number of American troops in Vietnam five months after the 25,000 withdrawal announcement, actually increased. The apparent reduction during July is explained to us by the CHICAGO DAILY NEWS. It points out that since the Midway agreement, the number of US troops had dropped by a 1,000, but goes on to say "...the evidence suggests that the Administration went to great pains to set up special units that could be withdrawn in the glare of publicity...the units earmarked as part of the withdrawal were stacked with men on the verge of completing their regular one year tours of duty in Vietnam and would have been coming home soon anyway."

Even if Nixon had withdrawn the 25,000, what effect would that have had on the war machine? THE ECONOMIST of August 15th stated that although more withdrawals would be announced, and that perhaps 100,000 troops may have left Vietnam by the end of the year, military personnel say that this is compatible with the current situation

The military argue that the Americans and the South Vietnamese can maintain the war at the present level after as many as 100,000 Americans have been pulled out without "running any unnecessary risks."

So, at best, if the 25,000 troops had been withdrawn it would have had little effect on the actual course of the war. The whole "withdrawal"

announcement is thus shown to be as fraudulent as Johnson's "peace offensive". Nixon has not only not reduced the number of troops in Vietnam but has increased them. By lying about a withdrawal, Nixon hoped he could convince the American people that he was moving towards ending the war. If he could keep people fooled long enough, it would result in a downturn in the anti-war movement and thus a release from some of the pressures being exerted upon him.

The MILITANT, weekly paper of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, has consistently held the view that Nixon had no intention of withdrawing from Vietnam, and that his promises were simply meant to buy time. James Reston, draws out the contradictions between making promises and buying time - "It means more and more young men are going to die when US troops are purportedly going to be withdrawn anyway".

What about the "peace" plans projected change in military tactics? Just in case anyone should think big changes have taken place in that direction, General Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, hastens to re-assure us. On his return from a four-day visit to the combat area he made a statement that "the tactics of pursuing the enemy forces relentlessly remained unchanged, and that he approved of that kind of fighting."

There are optimistic signs however that his view is not shared by the majority of people in the United States nor by a growing number of GIs.

The case of Company A of the Third Battalion, 21st Infantry, which had been reduced from 120 to 60 at the time it temporarily refused to continue fighting, is not an isolated case. In trying to diminish the impact of the action of the men of Company A, the press has suggested that such temporary refusals to fight are commonplace in Vietnam. Rather than reduce the importance of the incident, it shows that it was not a fluke or accidental, but a consequence of the very logic of the war itself. More and more of the GIs are being influenced by the anti-war movement and are questioning the whole concept of being conscripted to fight in Vietnam. It is not surprising that explosive expectations are being fostered by Nixon in raising hopes of an imminent end to the war. Nixon has sought to buy time since he took office. We can expect more refusals to fight by GIs in Vietnam as long as Nixon continues his contradictory policy of making promises and buying time.

The reason he cannot make promises and carry them out is that he has not changed his policy towards the war. Washington has not ruled out the possibility of actually defeating the Vietnamese revolution on the battlefield. The Paris talks, Johnson's resignation and Nixon's promises and fake withdrawals, are for the purpose of lulling the American public into believing that the Administration is seriously seeking peace in Vietnam. Faced with growing opposition to the war at home and revolts in the armed forces, why doesn't he make a serious gesture and withdraw 100,000?

Surely that would take the heat off the domestic pressures and give greater hope to the GIs themselves that the war is really going to end? the answer is that much as Washington might like to Vietnamese the war - place the ever-increasing responsibility for fighting the war in the hands of the Vietnamese - it can't be done. TIME magazine, September 26th in a major article entitled "Can Vietnamisation Work?" states that "to a great many observers, Vietnamisation looks like an illusion or worse. How they ask, can the South Vietnamese after two decades of war successfully take on the military task that half a million troops could not quite handle?... A Vietnamese who spent four years in uniform predicted glumly, 'they will not hold without the Americans standing behind them. They will collapse unit by unit. I predict that you will see entire units deserting and going over to the enemy.'"

The GI PRESS SERVICE, 4th September claims that even talking about Vietnamisation is enough to shake the Saigon army and informs of a press report "on a secret study...a document...which warns bluntly that the South Vietnamese lack the leadership, logistics and organisation to take over the fighting from the American troops."

As James Reston makes it clear in the NEW YORK TIMES on August 27th, Nixon is worried about the revolt of the voters against the war, the possibilities of a growing revolt amongst the GIs and a revolt of the generals if he humiliates them by pulling out too fast. The position is that Nixon is under contradictory pressures from the people in the United States who are opposed to the war and the GIs who are opposing the war in increasing numbers, and from those sections of the ruling class who understand that to withdraw will mean a defeat for American imperialism.

As Nixon's politics became clearer, and it became evident that he was following Johnson's

policy on the war, the anti-war movement in the States became re-activated. Plans are underway for many actions in the next two months and a demonstration on Washington is fixed for November the 15th. There are encouraging signs that there is now more unity within the left in the United States around the concept of support for mass demonstrations than at any previous time. The GUARDIAN in an editorial on August 2nd states "Now more than at any time in the past, the domestic anti-war movement has an almost decisive role to play in bringing an end to US aggression in Vietnam..."

"That responsibility can be summed up very briefly: build a massive and powerful united movement for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US forces from Vietnam". The developing greater unity on this question can be a decisive factor in making the biggest and most militant demonstration yet seen in the States.

The North Vietnamese themselves have made their position very clear. They have no intention of granting any concessions to Nixon on account of the loss of their leader Ho Chi Minh. They have called for a continuation of the fighting "until there is not a single aggressor in our country," and reiterated a recent statement by Ho Chi Minh on Nixon's token troop withdrawal: "The Vietnamese people firmly demand the withdrawal of the US and satellite troops, not the withdrawal of only 25,000 or 250,000, but a total, complete, unconditional withdrawal."

Clearly we can see the task of all socialists in Britain in the next two months. Show our maximum solidarity with the Vietnamese people. Give international support to all the anti-imperialist actions planned for this autumn. Build the anti-Vietnam war movement in Britain, mobilise the biggest number we can for the demonstrations being planned in Scotland on November 15th and in London on November 23rd.

Repression In Bolivia by M Martin

The coup in Bolivia came at an interesting and vital juncture. The leading figure in it is General Alfredo Ovando Candia, who was credited with much of the responsibility for the killing of Che Guevara and the dispersal of his guerilla force. Commentators in the bourgeois press (see Richard Gott's report in the GUARDIAN September 27) have speculated as to the possibility of the new regime making some sort of concessions to the left (nationalist) along the lines of the moves by the regime in Peru - certain measures of nationalisation as a leftish dressing for a repressive military regime. Gott even thinks that the new regime may release Regis Debray (the best known of its political prisoners) and whilst this cannot be ruled out, it should be noted that the regime in Peru, has taken no steps to improve the conditions, let alone release its own political prisoners, among whom the Trotskyist Hugo Blanco is well known. More fitting then to regard the coup as the culmination of the recent moves aga-

inst the left, including the killing of Inti Peredo (see below) and the gaoling of many of his comrades and allies.

DEATH OF INTI PEREDO

Guido "Inti" Peredo, leader of the Bolivian Army of National Liberation, was reported to have been killed in a battle with police in La Paz on September 9. The announcement was made Colonel Eufonio Padilla, Minister of the Interior.

Padilla said Peredo was surrounded together with two companions in a house in the Bolivian capital. Two men with him were wounded and captured, one of them, it was reported, was Fernando Martinez, said to be a representative of the Cuban press agency, PRENSA LATINA.

Another fatality among the ranks of the guerilla was Rita Emilia Valdivia (Maya). Her death came at the start of the wave of government repression whose victims (arrested and tortured) are recoun-

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For a free debate on Trotskyism and "Revisionism" by Bob Purdie

Slaughter charges that the original article in *INTERNATIONAL* did not refer to the Communist Party or YCL as Stalinist and levels the same accusation at the main document accepted by the recent World Congress of the Fourth International "The New Rise of World Revolution". Thus he says "This document of over 50 pages again studiously avoids using the term Stalinist to characterise the bureaucracy of the Communist Parties, with one exception, ie in characterising the betrayals of the French Communist Party in May-June '68 which in all conscience they could hardly miss. In all cases the resolution refers to the 'Kruschvite apparatus' and the 'communist movement' and never to the Stalinist or counter-revolutionary bureaucracy and communist parties of the world." It is here that we will admit a deep theoretical gulf between ourselves and the SLL; we do not admit, however, that this gulf is caused by our revision of Trotskyism, but by the SLL's.

'NEW RISE' ANALYSIS OF WORKERS' STATES

In what way does "The New Rise" alter the classical Trotskyist analysis? Does it claim that capitalism exists in the Workers' States? Here is what it says:- "In none of these cases was the fundamental underpinning of a workers' state - the elimination of the big bourgeoisie, nationalised ownership of the means of production, controlled planning of major investment projects, the banks and big industry abolished. As long as these bases remain, and the workers have not been defeated by a new bourgeoisie, there can be no capitalist restoration."

Does it embrace the theory of Peaceful Co-existence? Here is what it says:- "The Vietnam experience has shown the fallaciousness of the Soviet Bureaucracy's theory that the strategy of Peaceful Co-existence would bring a peaceful advance of the revolution throughout the world as a simple result of the change in the global relationship of forces, whereas revolutionary wars or armed insurrections risked becoming transformed into a nuclear world war. In reality,

no revolution can advance or win without colliding with imperialist military intervention. Extending the revolution internationally remains the only way to compel imperialism to disperse its forces and weaken it throughout the world.

Does it abandon the perspective of political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers' states? In several places it analyses the prospects and necessity of such revolutions.

Does it place hope on new sections of the bureaucracy, such as the "technocratic" wing to engineer a change towards genuine workers' democracy and revolutionary policies? Here is what it says:- "Nowhere do they (the 'liberal technocrats') take a stand for workers' self-management even in principle. Everywhere they advocate increased powers for plant managers and more plant autonomy. Greater powers for the managers are meant not only with respect to the central planning authorities but with the workers as well.Only a bold programme calling for the full rebirth of socialist democracy based on power exercised by workers' councils, that is, on the programme of political revolution, can bring the workers back on the political scene en masse. The working class is too antagonistic to the bureaucracy in its entirety to let itself be used as a mere auxiliary force in the conflict between two strata in the ruling caste."

FRAGMENTATION

The innovation which "The New Rise" makes, and which differentiates the Fourth International and its British section the IMG from the SLL, is in the assessment it makes of the qualitative stage reached by the process of deepening crisis of the bureaucracies in the Communist Parties and the Workers' States. The resolution stresses four factors involved in this process:- "..... a slowing down of economic growth coupled with the detrimental effects which the 'economic reforms' of recent years have had for the masses;

the crisis in the 'world socialist camp', that is, the crisis in the relationship between the workers' states and the CPs; the bureaucracy's inability to develop a consistent ideological line to take the place of the Stalinist doctrine; the impact on the workers' states of American imperialism's aggressive escalation, of the victorious resistance of the Vietnamese working masses, and of the revival of revolutionary agitation and struggles in Western Europe."

The two factors which are of most relevance to this discussion are the ideological crisis, and the crisis of the relationships between the bureaucracies. In both these areas we are witnessing a fantastic fragmentation, a diversification which contrasts so sharply with the monolithic bloc which Trotsky fought and analysed during his lifetime, that it would be a betrayal of the Marxist method to coast along with ideas and attitudes formed 20 years ago. The political questions which Trotskyists have to raise in relation to these parties have altered, the opportunities for Trotskyists to influence and win elements within these parties has altered decisively in our favour, and the attitude of the bureaucracies towards the Trotskyists has of necessity altered. In several countries they are forced to participate with them in united committees for the defence of the Vietnamese revolution, a significant change from the days when Trotskyists were dealt with merely by physical violence (although there is still enough of that going on).

JOHNSTONE'S CRITIQUE - NEED FOR DEBATE

It is as a reflection of this process that Monty Johnstone's article on Trotskyism must be seen. Seeking an answer to the challenge which Trotskyism makes to the CP, unable to rely on the redundant ideology of Stalinist monolithism, or on the old methods of suppression, Monty Johnstone, as the representative of a clearly defined tendency within the British CP, puts forward a political critique, which must be answered on a political level. The tendency which Johnstone represents consists of younger intellectuals who are attracted to the Italian CP's non-dogmatic empirical reformism. Treating the history of the communist movement with a carefree eclecticism he praises Trotsky's contribution to the victory of the October insurrection and the civil war, Trotsky's call for a united front against Nazism and his opposition to the repression of Stalinism. On the other hand he supports Stalin's policy of Socialism in one country, the popular front orientation, and the Stalinist bureaucracy's line in Spain.

Johnstone nowhere makes a real theoretical assessment of Stalinism, or goes further than a liberal rejection of the more distasteful aspects of the Stalin era, but he does denounce the Moscow trials as frame-ups, and he does call for an end to the lies about Trotsky and Trotskyism, precisely those aspects which had prevented any real political discussion between partisans of the CP's and of Trotskyism. So that, while he can in no sense be said to have made a real break

with the Stalinist past of his party, neither is it sufficient to denounce him as "an apologist for Stalinism". The task of Trotskyists is to seize the opportunity for a real discussion which his article holds out. That the SM and their youth movement have not done so reveals their inability to debate with anyone.

In their fear of getting involved in a genuine discussion the SLL seize upon the paucity of references to Stalinism both in "The New Rise of World Revolution", and in the article which criticised them.

We have already shown that "The New Rise" maintains the classical Trotskyist analysis of the basic theoretical questions involved in the degenerated and deformed workers' states. Nowhere does it question this heritage; on the contrary its analyses of the new developments in this sector of the world are firmly rooted in this heritage. Slaughter does not directly challenge this. He merely implies that this lack of reference to Stalinism represents a revision of this theory; is this the case?

'STALINISM' A PRECISE SCIENTIFIC TERM

When Trotsky used the term "Stalinism" it had a precise and scientific meaning: the political line of the Soviet bureaucracy, its methods, and the politics of the world movement which gave it unswerving allegiance. As a term denoting the basic social nature of the bureaucratic caste in the workers' states, the political roots of the CPs, and the theoretical heritage from which none of them have as yet broken, it retains its validity.

But in order to express the new dominant feature of these parties, their organisational fragmentation and political diversification, the term "Stalinist" has lost its usefulness. Does it explain to us the difference between the Chinese CP and the Italian? Are we to use the same term for the Soviet and the Czechoslovakian CPs at the time of the invasion? Or apply the same nomenclature to the bureaucrat swinging a knuckleduster as to the young intellectual willing to discuss ideas.

In order to make the necessary distinction between these present and past manifestations of the CPs, such terms as "the Khrushchevite apparatus", and "the communist movement", are not only legitimate, but scientifically necessary.

There is one further, though secondary, reason for being careful about the use of the term "Stalinist". Amongst wide layers of new forces on the left, dissident elements in the CPs, the "New Left", and other non-Trotskyist Marxists, this term has taken on quite a different meaning from that traditionally used by the Trotskyists; for them it refers solely to the period in the CPSU from the triumph of Stalin over the opposition, to the 20th congress. It would of course be possible for Trotskyists to insist that before we can exchange ideas on this subject these forces should accept our definition of

"Stalinism", but there does not seem to be all that much advantage in doing so.

REASONS FOR DEBATE

We have already revealed some of the SLL's contortions in their attempt to avoid open debate. It will not therefore surprise the reader to discover that Slaughter relies on just such terminological abstractions to cover their retreat and slate the IMG. He seizes on our declaration that we would be willing to debate the YCL "..... without allowing any secondary issues, such as the title of the debate, whether or not these organisations are Stalinist, or accusations of past misdeeds, to get in the way of a free objective discussion."

Slaughter responds in amazement, "Whether these organisations are Stalinist or not is a secondary issue"! The political responsibility for the physical liquidation of the Left Opposition, and the betrayal of the German and Spanish revolutions - 'a secondary issue'! Every Stalinist will agree, and it is difficult to see just what they and Purdie could disagree on!"

Here we must confess ourselves at a loss to grasp exactly what Slaughter is postulating. Does he mean that the British CP and YCL bear such direct responsibility for these undoubted crimes of the Stalinised Comintern, that there can be no debate between them and Trotskyists unless they first admit to such responsibility? What then is the reason for the debate if the political conclusions the Trotskyists wish to establish must be accepted by the other side before it can proceed? And since common sense will tell that they would never in fact do such a thing, what was the point in challenging them to debate in the first place? But if there is a genuine desire for a debate, then the political conclusions which the Trotskyists wish to establish in that debate, are secondary to agreement on actually getting the debate under way. And it is in this sense that we said these were secondary issues, which should not get in the way of a free discussion.

But if the British CP and its youth movement were simply extensions of classical Stalinism in Britain there would be little chance of them accepting a debate, and less point in trying to achieve one. In fact the British CP has experienced the same fragmentation and diversification that has featured amongst all of its brother parties. It has cut itself adrift from Moscow on a number of issues, the most important being over the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Currents and tendencies are appearing in its ranks, and it has been forced to take a much less rigid attitude towards cooperating with Marxists to its left.

For these reasons a debate with the CP or YCL could achieve one or several things for Trotskyists: individuals or tendencies could be won over to, or closer to, our theoretical analysis; the process of diversification within the party could be sharpened, impelling sections of the Party to the left; and the Party as a whole

could be moved towards cooperating with the Trotskyists and other tendencies in work of immediate value to the British workers or the world revolution.

SLL'S FAILURE TO DEFEND TROTSKYISM

Because the SLL's theoretical analysis of the Communist parties today is inadequate; because they are mortally afraid of exposing their other inadequacies in public debate; they therefore throw away a historic opportunity to defend Trotskyism and extend its influence, and give the opportunity to CP backwoodsmen to represent the Trotskyists as dishonest political cowards.

The SLL has come a long way since it refused to participate in the re-unification of the Fourth International, but its theoretical degeneration has confirmed the conviction of those who did participate, that there can be no Trotskyism in one country.

It is because the IMG is an integral part of the only international revolutionary organisation that, despite its small size, it has no qualms about engaging in debate with any tendency on the left, and the constant stream of distortion about ourselves and the Fourth International in the columns of the SLL's press leaves us unruffled. We are confident that our politics will be vindicated.

Once more we challenge the SLL - debate us! If you object to what we have said here - debate us! If you really believe that we are revising Trotskyism - debate us! If you consider that we have capitulated to the CP - debate us!

If you do not meet this challenge then we, and the rest of the British left, can only conclude that you are unable to answer our criticisms.

Intercontinental Press

Documents of the World Congress of the Fourth International

A special 72-page issue of *Intercontinental Press* containing the main documents and reports discussed at the April congress of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky. Includes: 'The New Rise of the World Revolution,' 'The 'Cultural Revolution' in China,' a resolution on perspectives for the revolutionary movement in Latin America, and 'The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International.' Also reports by E. Germain, Livio Maitan, and a message of greetings to the congress by Jose Revueltas.

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regard it as a matter of urgency that the struggles of the younger generation be linked to their own. For it is not from the tired "old left" that the dynamic will come for revolutionary socialist action in Britain in the future, but from the new generation which has no illusions in the present set-up in the Labour Party.

NEED FOR STRUGGLE

Having said this we should however stress that the International Marxist Group does not believe that the present generation of youth activists will somehow develop into a new revolutionary party capable of overthrowing capitalism. Nor do we advocate that all militants should leave the Labour Party. It still remains an absolutely fundamental axiom of our politics that socialism in Britain will only be created by the action of the working class. This is why our long-term strategic aim must be to promote the idea within the organisations of the class that it is absolutely necessary to organise a consistent fight against the present leadership and for a programme of real anti-capitalist demands. When

ted in detail elsewhere in this issue. Maya and her comrade Enrique Ortega (Victor Guerra) are reported to have defended themselves against an attack by police, until their ammunition ran out - Victor Guerra was seriously wounded and taken prisoner. Maya, aged 23, died in the struggle. Police claim that the house they were defending was an ELN headquarters. From the prison hospital Victor Guerra has declared that the ELN would continue the struggle.

WIDESPREAD REPRESSION

The death of Inti Peredo and the measures of repression against the peasant and working class movements, are undoubtedly severe setbacks. In no sense however do they mark the end of the struggle.

The savage wave of repression which has swept Bolivia in the last few weeks has led to the arrest of a number of revolutionary militants. They comprise for the most part militants of the POR (Partido Obrero Revolucionario - Revolutionary Workers Party, the Bolivian Section of the Fourth International), and of the ELN (Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional - National Liberation Army - the guerilla movement of Che Guevara and Inti Peredo), many of whom have been tortured by the Bolivian authorities.

The repression is still under way, and the list of its victims not complete. We list below those affected, basing our report on information in Intercontinental Press, itself compiled from various sources.

AMONG THE VICTIMS....

FELIPE and ELIO VASQUEZ. Both are miners' leaders who are well-known as members of the Fourth International. Felipe helped to found and lead the underground miners unions following the military occupation of the mines. Elio was one of the leaders of the miners in the battle against the army in Sora Sora in the last days of the Paz Estenssoro regime. Felipe, before being thrown

such a fight is seen to be beginning we can be quite certain that the ranks of opposition will rapidly be reinforced by thousands of young people who now, and with a great deal of justification, decisively reject the politics of the Labour movement.

Unfortunately the present climate in the party is highly unfavourable for such a struggle. A combination of disillusion with the Wilson leadership and the bankruptcy of the traditional left has brought party militants to a despairing impasse. That's why we insist that the most important task facing socialists just now is to organise and link up with those forces which are fighting and to bring them to a conviction of the necessity ultimately to bring their struggles to bear on the mass of the working class movement. This is, of course, no automatic or easy process; but when it is done the British labour movement will contemptuously dismiss the Wilsons of this world and the way will be clear for the conduct of a real anti-capitalist struggle by the British working class.

by John Blair

into the dungeons was stripped and savagely beaten by the police, in front of his wife and three children. The two were arrested allegedly for organising terrorist activities in the mining areas, operating from an ELN headquarters based on Oruro.

ANTONIO MORENO (BRAULIO) and VICTOR CORDOVA (HUASCAR): Arrested after a street battle on July 15 in Cochabamba, they publicly declared themselves members of the POR. Moreno, a former railway worker, is accused of being a guerilla warfare instructor. Cordova is a leader of the peasant movement. Captured with them were the students MARIO BUSTAMANTE and BEATRIZ GUARDIA (aged 18 she was tortured - she declared herself a member of ELN) they were accused of associating with Moreno.

In La Paz the police claim to have discovered the ELN headquarters, and a number of POR militants were arrested. They include:

TOMAS CHAMBI, a peasant leader from Camacho province;

ANSELMO HERRERA LOPEZ, a Muanuni youth leader;

GABRIEL GUZMAN ILLANES, a leader of the railway workers whose health is very poor;

CECILIO ALCON and VICTOR ALCON; students who are charged with setting up a special laboratory for preparing time bombs, fire bombs, and other explosives.

HUGO GONZALEZ MOSCOSO, the leader of the POR, is being hunted by the authorities - his family have been harassed and threatened by armed police, who wear masks to cover their identity as they stole belongings from Gonzalez's family. The Minister of the Interior has claimed that Gonzalez's own home was being used as a general headquarters and training centre.

Also arrested were a number of foreign nationals, and P. MELGAR, a member of the PRIN (Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left), who is alleged to have joined the ELN after a visit to Cuba. The painter LUIS ZILVETI was arrested but managed to escape to the Ecuadorian Embassy.