

# A STRATEGY FOR SOCIALISM

A reply to the document "Labours Economic Strategy" Produced by N.E.C. of Labour Party

By TED GRANT

The title of this document issued by the Labour Party NEC is bold and striking. It is supposed to be a discussion of the economic programme for the 1970's and after, which the Labour Party will present to the people of Britain. The material gathered in it constitutes a crushing indictment of capitalism and of the monopolies which dominate the economy.

A searing attack on Tory programme and record is made. In the last year of Tory misrule:

... "By 1964... The State pension was inadequate; 50% of the schools in Britain had been built before the First World War; no new hospitals had been built since 1945; and there was a shortage of between 2 and 3 million homes. This was the measure of the public squalor and the price paid for economic decline."

But unfortunately the measures of the Labour Government at best have been a palliative, and have not altered the fundamental facts of economic life. If anything the capitalist class are in a stronger position than they were even under a Tory Government. For example the document claims

"In the period 1961-64 industrial development certificates were issued in development areas bringing 155,000 new jobs. In the following 4 year period 1965-68 the number of I.D.C. approvals issued in respect of jobs in development areas was 267,000—an increase of 72%"

...the scale of Government assistance to industry in Development Areas... has risen from about £30 million annually before 1965 to over £250 million in 1968-69. Thus the main beneficiaries of this programme have been the capitalists who have held out the begging bowl to the state for "national assistance" on a truly princely scale. Why should the Government pay the employers to exploit workers for their own individual profit? If factories are to be set up with Government money why should not the state and the people benefit, not the parasitic minority?

We live in a period of rapid technological change, where the skills of the past rapidly become obsolescent. Under these conditions the boast rings hollow that 6% of the total labour force in May 1968 were undergoing some form of training. Especially as

the claim is proudly presented that this is 15% higher than 1964. Baling the sea of capitalist anarchy with an eggcup instead of a spoon! This hardly solves the problem especially as by the spring of 1971 there will still be only 22,000 in Government training centres for skilled workers compared with the even more miserable 8000 at the end of 1964.

"Over the last 4 years, Government expenditure in the four central areas of social policy has risen faster than at any time since the end of World War II...—2 million new homes in Labour's first 5 years in office—a real improvement of 20% in retirement pensions by autumn, 1969.—£110 million spent on hospital building in 1967-68 as against less than £60 million on average in the last 3 years of Tory Government.—£600 million spent on roads and lighting in 1968-69 as against an average of £365 million in the years 1962-64.—1,010,000 new school places provided by the building of new schools and improvement to existing ones in Great Britain in the three years 1965-67, compared with 763,000 in 1961-63, an increase of nearly one-third."

Even setting aside the increase of inflation which reduces the real expenditure somewhat in the comparison with the Tories, this does not take into account the real needs and demands of the people in all these fields so shamefully neglected by comparison. The slums still make up at least 1/3rd of the houses in Britain. According to Shelter more than 1 million people still today are homeless in reality. The filthy rat infested hovels are not homes. Children in many schools are still 40 to a class. The school buildings in many areas date back to Victorian times. Many hospitals are dangerously old and outdated, resulting in outbreaks of infection because they cannot keep the wards and even the operating theatres in antiseptic conditions. Thus the undoubted reforms in comparison with the miserable expenditures of the Conservatives, nevertheless only scratch the surface of the problem. After 5 years of Labour Government capitalism remains virtually intact.

References to the many taxes introduced such as Capital Gains Tax miss the fundamental point. No matter what taxes are introduced, the

capitalists, with the aid of their accountants, or tax dodge merchants, can drive a modern tanker sailing through the loopholes. There are 2000 different exemptions to Capital Gains Tax alone!

Because of the ruin of the industry by the monopolists Steel has been re-nationalised, or rather the 90% which stood to lose money, with the necessary modernisation, and large capital expenditure required. This with enormous over-compensation which resulted in a rise of the share

price on the stock exchange. The 10% making a third of the profit was not nationalised. They stand to make greater profits because of the co-operation of the nationalised sector.

The proud claim is made that the nationalised industries with assets valued at £11,600 million have an annual investment of £1,600 million. This is equal to the entire investment of private industry! What a shameful indictment when it is considered that

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Despite N.E.C.'s claims workers still asked to pay moneylenders through increased rents.

BRITISH C.P. IN TURMOIL

## FOR A MARXIST PROGRAMME

By TED COXHEAD (Finchley L.P.Y.S.)

The forthcoming Communist Party Congress will occur against a background of mounting dissension in the party ranks.

In the pre-congress discussion many letters in 'Comment' and 'The Morning Star' illustrate the critical mood of a large number of rank and file members. In 'Comment' on October 25, R. McNulty pointed out that the draft resolutions document had to record a drop in membership and sales of 'The Morning Star'. He complained that '... our image of moderation and respectability can be best summed up when we hailed the recent clash between the TUC and the Government as a 'great victory' for the trade unions, when all it meant in essence was that the TUC were going to do the dirty work of Wilson and his right wing.'

It is questions like this which go right to the heart of the problem as many members of the party see it. The programme has been toned down so much that '... left unity means unity with anyone who is to the right of the party' and yet no appreciable gains result.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Finally, the actions of the Kremlin Bureaucrats and their Warsaw Pact

henchmen brought all these feelings to a head. That hardline Moscow Man of thirties vintage, R. Palme Dutt, has come out against the timorous draft resolution on Czechoslovakia.

Was the invasion of Czechoslovakia a 'blunder', an 'error'? Many letters to the 'Morning Star' have asked this, and many Communist Party rank and file militants have seen clearly that it was not. Their feelings were expressed in a letter published in 'The Morning Star' on September 8. 'The coming Congress of our Party must thrash out this question (of Czechoslovakia) as a major priority. Not as an unfortunate happening in 'some far away country' but as a matter of life or death to the communist movement here and elsewhere.'

The crisis provoked by the Czech events is perhaps an even more profound crisis than that provoked by Hungary. The bloody repression of the Hungarian workers in 1956 took place at a time when the Kremlin leaders were basking in the sunshine of 'de-Stalinisation'. Now the revolutionary movement throughout the world has grown incomparably stronger and with it the criticism of the Communist Party internally and externally. The British Party has retaliated by

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# 36 million oppose Vietnam war

By PETER TAAFFE

October 15th. marked the biggest anti-war demonstration in history. Named by its student initiators as a Moratorium—in fact it was a mass strike against the Nixon Administration—hardly a part of the USA remained untouched by some kind of protest against the Vietnam War. NEWSWEEK magazine commented... "Certainly no-one friend, foe, or neutral—could deny that the demonstrators reached into every nook and cranny of the land" (27/10/69). At least one million people demonstrated on the streets while the "Times" estimated that something like 36 million participated in one way or another. Practically every stratum of the population demonstrated for an end to the War and the withdrawal of American troops. At least 1,200 colleges and universities were involved including 5 out of the 8 "Ivy League" universities, the training centres for the "elite". And for the first time at national level the Trade Union Movement, headed by the newly formed ALLIANCE FOR LABOUR, representing 6,500,000 Trade Unionists, including auto workers, chemical workers and teamsters, came out solidly against the War.

In a thousand and one ways the sufferings of the American workers and middle class through the Vietnam War were brought home. In Kentucky a middle aged woman during the reading of the American War dead "stepped up to the microphone and spoke a single name. 'This is my son' she said 'He was killed in Vietnam last week...' In nearby River Forest 300 housewives, most of whom had never participated in a protest before M. Day—marched a mile to the local post office to deposit letters to President Nixon asking him to end the war ("Newsweek"). Even sections of the ruling class, for their own reasons, came out on the day to express their "solidarity" with the demonstrators. Thus as the "Time" magazine reported: "A sea of demonstrators poured into Wall and adjoining streets crowding them so tightly that people could hardly move. Hundreds of custom-tailored bankers and brokerage-house partners joined their clerks and college students in a peace march"!! Not only the rebellious student sons and daughters of the American ruling class demonstrated their opposition to the war, but so did the "responsible" offsprings. Thus the son of Cabot Lodge, Nixon's chief "negotiator" in Paris joined in the anti-war chorus by participating in a university teach in. But the most ominous development for the Nixon Government is the open sympathy shown by the soldiers in Vietnam to the strikes in the USA itself; big sections wore black arm bands for the day!

## WORKERS WANT "OUT"

The mass of the American people have served notice on the Nixon administration, that they want "out" of Vietnam. And all the manouvering of the Government leading up to October 15th. and after has done nothing to allay this opposition. First there was the frantic sacking of General Hershey, head of the Draft Board, who had pursued a policy of drafting anti-war students. Then Nixon issued an apologetic open letter to an anti-war student. This has been followed by the promise of troop withdrawals of up to 300,000 by the end of 1970. But the American workers and middle class realise that even the "optimistic" forecasts for ending the war by 1972 will mean an ever piling higher of American dead; they are not prepared to see a repeat of the Korean War, when thousands were killed while "negotiations" dragged on. They have shown that the only proposal worth considering is the one "which says all that is needed is ships" ("Times" 17/10/69).

But Nixon has shown in the last nine months that, like Johnson before

him, he has ignored this head of steam, which is building up, and for that matter the long term interests of the American capitalists. The barons of Wall St. have not come out against the war for "humanitarian" reasons. The flint faced idolators of profit have supported and acquiesced to the crushing of one revolution after another in the past. That they have now changed their position on the Vietnam War is because they see it as a threat to their system; it is a policy of cash calculation. It is a massive albatross around their necks. Expenditure on the war is now upwards of £12,000 million a year. Overall "Defence" expenditure is greater than the total production of Britain in a year! Even the mighty American economy has begun to sag under this weight. The war has been the major cause of the rocketing inflation of the last years; it was 6% last year, the highest since the Korean War. On the one side this has exacerbated the social conflicts in the cities, particularly as far as the black population are concerned. Massive unemployment of Negro youth still continues, fluctuating around the 20% mark. On the other side the white working class is also now feeling the effects of the war, the spiralling in prices and an undermining of living standards. "Time" sums up the position of the dominant sections of finance capital: "True, some industries profit from the war. But investors are well aware that, contrary to the cruel myth that capitalism generally thrives on war, the Vietnam War aggravates social tensions that are bad for business". (24/10/69). It has been these factors which have produced the proliferation of "Businessmen for Peace" and other organisations. It is also the explanation for the spiralling in share prices on the day of the Moratorium. Big Business itself has become incensed at what appears to be Nixon's acquiescence to the pressure of the puppets in the Thieu regime in South Vietnam and of the Pentagon chiefs. But even Nixon realises that the war cannot be won.

His policy consists in attempting to "gracefully" withdraw from Vietnam without provoking an outcry of "Betrayal" from the Right. Hence the promises that it will be over in three years. But even this is too gory a prospect for the American people, and which they are not prepared to accept. Nor will the troops in Vietnam take too kindly to the prospect of the continuing slaughter to save the face of a rotten and corrupt capitalist system and Government. The wearing of black arm bands is only the latest symptom of the smouldering revolt by these American workers in uniform. The senselessness of the war from their point of view has been underlined in the past months. In May the

blimps in the high command sent them against a useless target "Hamburger Hill" with murderous results to the troops. One commented to the press "There were lots of guys, screaming guys, cries of agony, God, it was awful to see your buddies like that". Defying military discipline on August 25th Company A in Au Shau Valley refused to go into action. This is symptomatic of the revolt of the troops in Vietnam. It has also to be added to the enormous desertion rate both in Europe and America; with a modern version of the "underground railway" only this time assisting the flight of troops instead of slaves! If the war is not soon ended the powder keg on which the Nixon Government is sitting will explode in mutinies amongst the troops which will undoubtedly take on mass proportions.

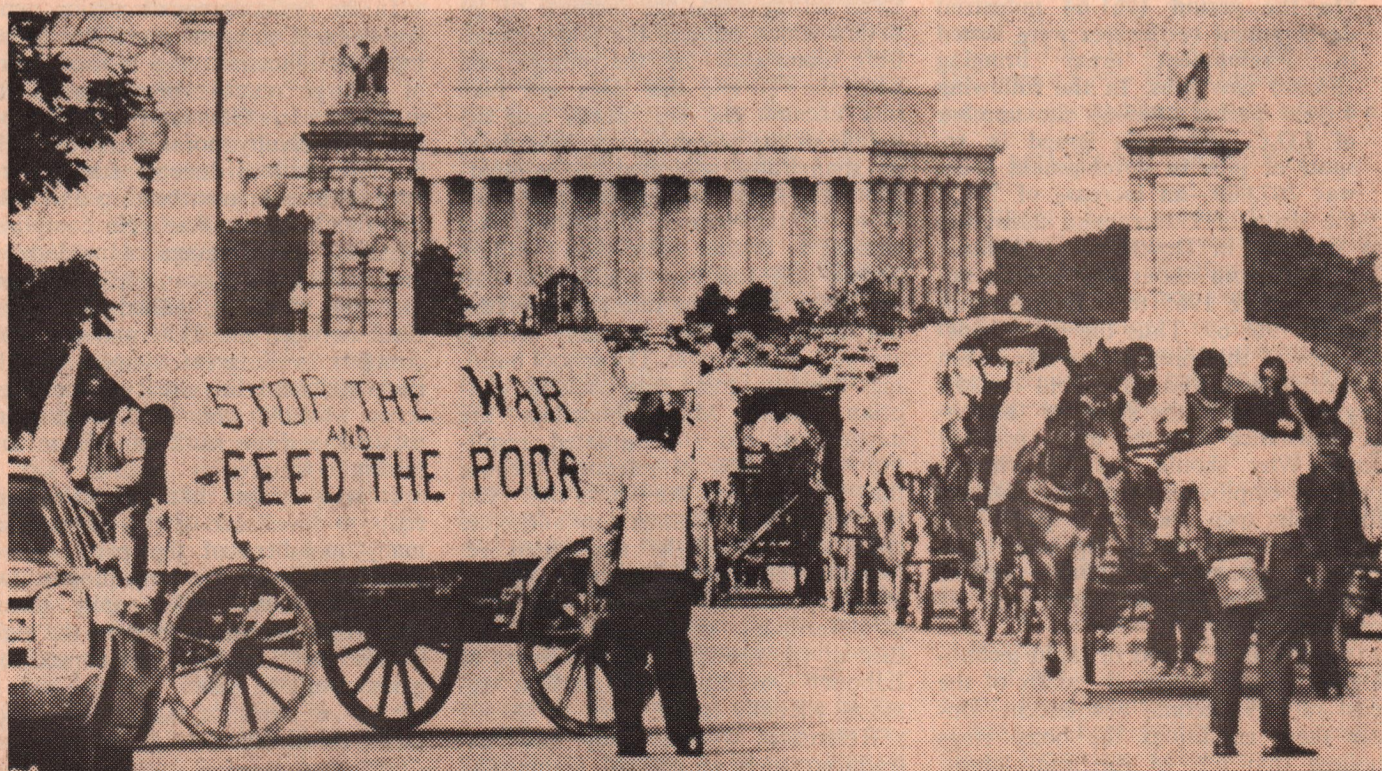
This, together with the social explosions in America itself, quite apart from the impossibility of holding down a whole people even with a million troops, have forced the strategists of American Imperialism to concede defeat in Vietnam. The prevarication of Nixon and the stubbornness of the Thieu clique in South Vietnam will be forced to give way before this pressure. The idea that the American Army can retreat to the "enclave" strategy of a few years ago, whereby only important towns are held by American troops, is an illusion. It rests on the assumption that the South Vietnamese Army can carry on fighting the war. But already with the prospect of the NLF taking power through a "coalition" Government, undoubtedly many of the generals and tops in the army have taken out an insurance policy for the future by secretly going over to the other side. Even the US generals place little trust in their "ally" as is shown by the fact that one of the contingency plans of the Pentagon is that the American troops might have to fight their way to the beaches against a hostile South Vietnamese Army! At the same time Thieu and the ruling clique while prevaricating have not hesitated to secretly purchase houses in Switzerland for themselves and their families as a "precaution".

The far sighted strategists of American Imperialism have already conceded defeat in Vietnam. They are pressuring Nixon to include the NLF in a coalition Government, which will give the appearance of "neutrality" but in reality will quickly lead to the real power being concentrated in the hands of the NLF. This would leave the way for a facesaving withdrawal by American Imperialism and would lead on to the re-unification of Vietnam with the ending of landlordism and capitalism in the South, and the ushering in of land to the peasants

and the nationalisation of industry. A "Communist" Vietnam of this kind would pose no serious threat to American Imperialism, because of the isolation of the revolution, its predominantly peasant and nationalist base, and Stalinist leadership. While it will mark an enormous step forward for the Colonial Revolution it will also result in the establishment of a totalitarian regime in the image of China, Russia and Eastern Europe resting on a nationalised planned economy. It would of course lead to the collapse of US power in Laos, Cambodia, eventually Thailand and the other countries of South East Asia. But the Vietnam War has underlined the impossibility of ever again intervening directly with massive military force on the Asian landmass. Walter Lipman has propounded the "Blue Water" theory that "Defence" for the US ruling class should now stop short at "Western Europe and North America and Central America" ("Sunday Times" 19/10/69).

The defeat of American Imperialism in Vietnam—and that is what the mass October 15th demonstrations presage—marks a decisive turning point in its history. It will be the first time that it has suffered an outright military defeat. At the same time it has brought to the surface all the festering discontents, all the diseases inherent in American society. On the one side the "Green Beret" murder (without trial) of a Vietnamese suspected double agent demonstrates the degeneration of the tops in the army. (It has also been recently revealed that the Pentagon financed the pro-war film "Green Berets" made by John Wayne to the tune of a million dollars in the cause of defending "freedom"! At the same time the war and its consequent inflation has brought into action not only the population, but also the white workers, who are moving to defend their standards; a big wave of industrial struggle is expected by the Government in the next period. The prospect of a slowdown in the economy next year leading to 5 million unemployed looms.

In this kind of situation even the timid moves of the Trade Union leaders such as Walter Ruether towards the formation of the "ALLIANCE FOR LABOUR" will lead the American workers on to demand independent working class political action at a certain stage. The demand for the formation of an American Labour Party will grow apace, maybe not immediately, but in the stormy periods which lie ahead. The Vietnam War has not only trapped the American ruling class in a quagmire, but has conjured up forces which in the next decades will shake it from top to bottom.



Poor peoples march on Washington: Fight against war and poverty are one.

## Dustmen inspire revolt of low paid

By BOB FAULKES

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90% of productive industry, is in the hands of private owners.

It hardly demonstrates a Socialist or even "social" conscience to glory in the work of the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation which

**"has been associated with approximately 30 mergers. Some of them—the heavy electrical industry, the motor car industry, electronics, cranes and pumps—are sections of industry crucial in the total export pattern."**

The notorious GEC-EEC merger which was one of these mergers resulted in fabulous capital gains to the chief stockholders. Arnold Weinstock made £1¼ million, then the board proceeded to prepare to sack thousands of workers on Merseyside, thus cancelling out the hand-outs to the capitalists to provide jobs in this development area. In Woolwich thousands were dismissed. In areas all over the country the industrial butchers of these mergers are preparing to sack workers. Profit is the only true god of the capitalists. All else must be sacrificed in its name.

This becomes staggeringly clear when with unconscious grisly humour they state (for this almost the entire capitalist press has patted them on the back without revealing its real significance):

**"Between the second half of 1967 and that of 1968 the economy grew at 4% while personal spending rose by just over 1%. Exports on the other hand, rose by no less than 18½% (1968 prices) over the same period."**

**"It made the contrast between this and the last previous periods of relatively rapid growth 1958-1959 and 1962-63 striking. In both these periods private consumption grew substantially faster than exports."**

So they are crowing over the Tories at the fact that personal consumption rose more under the Conservative government! What this means is that the share of the wealth they produced is less for the working class. The exploitation and the unpaid labour of the working class which goes to profits rose enormously. That has been the meaning of the incomes policy. The strikes of the dustmen, miners and other sections of the industrial workers, the awakening of the white-collar workers such as teachers and bank clerks, shows that the lower paid, as well as the skilled sections of blue-collar workers are demanding a greater share of the wealth that they produce.

### "BRITAIN'S NEW ECONOMY"

In 1958 "acquisitions" of subsidiaries by big firms amounted to a total of £121 million. In 1968 the merger of giants totalled over £2,000 million. A figure more than 16 times as great. Thus the speeding up of the centralisation and concentration of capital refurbishes the prediction of Marx on this process. So much for the sneers of capitalist economists and reformist politicians.

The real relationships of governors and governed is shown in the following quotation:

**"The five largest companies in the United Kingdom now have a combined annual turnover of over £6,000 million; the combined budget of the top 30 firms considerably exceeds that of the National Exchequer."**

This means that the Board Room directors of these 30 firms have far more power over the economy and thus the lives of the British people than the entire Cabinet including the Prime Minister. The document then underlines the extent of concentration of power not only nationally but internationally when it quotes the estimate of economic experts that:

**"the economy of the 'free world' will be largely controlled by a mere 300 giant corporations in the year 1990—only 20 years ahead."**

At the same time all the vague and woolly promises that society would become more equal by taxation policy proclaimed in the first section of the pamphlet are given the lie in the section on "Inequality in Britain".

**"According to the latest official estimates nearly a third of the total personal wealth—£27,600 million out of £83,700 million—is owned by the richest 1% of all adults, the top 5% own 59% and the richest 10 per cent 74%. At the other end of the scale, nearly 60% of all adults appear to have little or no recorded personal wealth at all. Yet evidence from 'independent' estimates indicate that these official figures (based on death duty statistics) considerably underestimate the degree of concentration—they ignore entirely the wealth which evades duty via inter vivos gifts, discretionary trusts, family settlements etc. And the picture that emerges from the independent estimates is that this extreme concentration of wealth has changed little over the past 20 years."**

Since 1945 Labour has been in power for 11 years out of 25 including the last 5 years, yet even according to the statements of the NEC nothing fundamental in changing society has been achieved.

**"...with 80% of the income of those with incomes above £100,000 being in the form of investment income—it is not surprising that the distribution of income is also extremely unequal. The official estimates, which again tend to understate the degree of concentration, reveal that the richest 2% and the bottom 29% of incomes received about the same share of the total personal income in 1966. Yet these figures include all social security benefits. The result is that whereas there were 40,000 incomes over the £10,000 mark, a million families—a quarter of whom had three or more children—had to manage on under £700 a year. ...Before tax, the poorest one-eighth received just under 3% of total personal income; after tax received 3½%. Meanwhile the richest 1/8th received 10 times as much—and this remained the case both before, and after, tax."**

The authors comment

**"Britain's progressive tax system is largely a myth... The overall picture, however, (in spite of Labour measures of amelioration) for both income and wealth, remains one of stark inequality."**

What a criticism in fact of the "practical politicians" who, they claimed, were practising Fabian tactics of introducing equality painlessly! The inequality according to their own statements, the injustices of the social system have never been greater!

### "THE CAPITALIST DYNAMIC"

**"What is the effect of all this on the distribution of wealth and income? This can be gauged from the fact that only about 1.8 million adults (under 5% of all adults) directly own industrial ordinary shares. Between them, this tiny group directly own about half the total stock of equity—and their stake, in June 1969, amounted to a cool £15,000 million. Each 1% increase in overall share prices thus adds a further £150 million to their wealth."**

Since the end of 1966 alone, despite the recent setback in prices, they have gained no less than £5,000 million. And this is quite apart from any stake they may have via the various financial institutions."

In a similar period of years under the Tories the capitalists gained less on the stock exchange, but the Labour

With a tremendous display of militancy the strike of the dustmen has electrified and inspired the labour movement. The lead given by the Hackney men was felt not only throughout nearly the whole of London but in almost every part of the country, where the demand was taken up by many other council employees for a £20 minimum. The dustman whose placard outside Caxton Hall read 'our job stinks, so do our wages' summed up in a nutshell the dustmen's lot. Working in filthy conditions in all weather most dustmen averaged between £14 and £15 take home pay, whilst provincial dustmen and nearly all other council employees are even worse off. Public sympathy for the dustmen was such that even the capitalist press and many local councils were begrudgingly forced to admit the validity of their claim, whilst at the same time the latter was attempting to use private contractors to break the strike. The Press ground out its usual jargon, 'unconstitutional', 'unofficial', and 'need for responsibility' etc., while articles appeared such as 'The Dustmen Who Earn Over £2000 a Year' (TIMES 10/10/69). But even if true Mr Sam Martin, chairman of Stepney Street Traders Association and a stall holder for 44 years, said 'the dustmen have a good case and they are perfectly entitled to protest. I would not do their job for £50 a week'. By the emptying of dustbins at hospitals and of old age pensioners for no pay, whilst their own remained full, the dustmen showed consideration for the public. Even the accusation against the dustmen of being responsible for the 'super flies' around the garbage piles just did not wear, as these were removed with the dustmen's consent when thought to be a health hazard. Yet in most working class districts there is only one collection a week as opposed to more

leadership in Parliament correctly referred to the "casino society". With a new croupier at the wheel they have increased their unearned wealth without lifting a finger. The Labour leadership hope, as they have done now for a generation, to redress the balance by a "wealth tax" after the next election. But besides being completely impractical it would not have the effect they desire.

**"We must note, however, that the steady, long term growth in the value of company assets has dwarfed the yield from these taxes. (capital gains tax, betterment levy etc.) Persistent inequalities remain because they are built-in to the system, and one of the first needs is a far more powerful capital tax structure."**

Thus secondary reforms do no more than hamper the capitalists' control of the economy. While they enormously increase their wealth they are prepared to tolerate this. This is not the purpose for which the trade union and Labour movement was created. The taking over of the 250 monopolies with compensation on the basis of need, is the only way in which the needs of the people can be satisfied. The colossal wealth of Britain created by the labour of the working class can only be used if they together with the banks and insurance companies are taken into public ownership. The balance of payments problem can only be solved by the monopoly of foreign trade.

Under the Labour Government  
**"...British firms are playing an increasingly dominant part in the economies of other countries. Overseas investment by Britain during 1968 amounted to £621 million compared with £435 million in 1967 and £303 million in 1966. Total private investment overseas was 11,550 million in 1967."**

privileged areas such as the City of London that has daily collections. The rubbish usually overflows between each collection. Why is refuse not packed in bags as in Barking? This would eliminate to a large degree the danger of diseases and also make the dustmen's job a lot easier.

Many of the men must feel cheated since their full claim has not been achieved. Nevertheless the 50% won was a big victory, and despite the rearguard leadership given by the TU officials. Their newly awakened militancy has shown that only through action can real results be won. The lead given by the dustmen has undoubtedly found an echo in other sections of the low paid workers, as shown by the miners and bakery workers' dispute. During the strike enthusiastic support came from the labour movement in Hackney. The Labour Party Young Socialists were responsible not only for moving resolutions of support and sending them to all the local papers, but raised collections every week of the strike and the Downs ward of Hackney Central Labour Party donated £5, while leaflets of support were distributed in the area. This kind of support no doubt was repeated in many other areas. But the issues raised by the dustmen have shown that the long threatened revolt of the low paid workers is now a reality. This movement cries out for a real lead. The T&GWU has already gone on record as being prepared to fight for a minimum wage. These words must now be put into deeds. A real campaign must now be pressed for throughout the whole of the labour movement. The demand must be for the implementation by the Labour Government of emergency measures for a minimum living wage for all low paid workers now!

Capitalists are not concerned with "patriotism", but with profits. They will invest in brown, black, yellow or green labour if they can make an extra profit. They are not concerned with "righting" the balance of payments, but with squeezing an extra surplus from those they exploit.

A real and democratic plan of production can only be possible when the resources of the country are rationally planned for the benefit of the people. Then hours of work and wages could be raised with a basic minimum guaranteeing comfort and a decent standard of living for all. Tinkering with the system leaves the levers of the economy in the hands of a handful of selfish millionaires. This way the houses, schools, roads and hospitals that are really necessary can never be built. This way the law of the jungle decides. It is time to cage the capitalist tigers, and take the necessary measures without which a planned economy is impossible.

### MILITANT PRESS FUND ANNUAL DRAW

The draw will be made on November 1st, after we go to press, and the results will be announced in the December issue of MILITANT.

### LENIN & TROTSKY WHAT THEY REALLY STOOD FOR ?

(A reply to Monty Johnson of the British Communist Party on Lenin, Trotsky and Marxism).  
by Alan Woods & Ted Grant  
5/6 post paid from

MILITANT  
197 King's Cross Rd., London, W.C.1.

# Full support for Standard workers!

Contrary to the reports in the press, the Liverpool Standard Triumph dispute is not a question of a pay rise but one concerning the basic rights of the workers at that factory.

In 1965 Standard Triumph reported financial difficulties, and veiled threats were made of a possible closure of the factory. Fearing that their employment might be in danger, the men agreed to a cut in the bonus in order to help the firm over the difficulties it faced: perhaps through farsightedness the stewards advised against this, but the fear of being on the dole is always prominent in the minds of working people, despite the claims of the capitalist press that the British workers are lazy.

So from 1965 up till now the workers have made this quite substantial sacrifice. Then in February of this year Lord Stokes (head of Leylands), obviously flushed with a 1968 record year (for sales), said, in the British Leyland Supplement, "To have produced and sold over 1m. vehicles in a year with world sales of £907m. is no mean achievement. It could not have been accomplished without tremendous sustained efforts by everybody at all levels at home and overseas, and to all concerned I would like to extend our sincere appreciation of, and pride in, their efforts". In the same article boasts were made of the dividends for shareholders, reflecting the Corporation's confidence in the future. Quite naturally the question of a return to the previous bonus and a rise to compensate for the devaluation of the pound should be raised by the men. In fact this is what the so-called £4.10.0d demanded pay rise is. If a giant firm such as Leylands, capable of competing internationally with its American counterparts (as Lord Stokes claims), cannot afford to return to an already agreed arrangement, then something is drastically wrong with the situation. In any case if they cannot afford it how can a worker who has nowhere near the income of the management or the majority of the shareholders!

Coupled with this is the situation where workers, because of a variety of reasons (management inefficiency, strikes elsewhere, low orders etc.), can

be laid off. Indeed men can turn up in all sorts of weather only to be told to go home again. Thus most men in production barely average a weekly £12. This affects the skilled section in a peculiar way. Because maintenance staff and men in the tool room are on a bonus based on the overall factory production, and because there is a lot more work to do when there is no production (the machines being idle), these people therefore work harder for less money. This is productivity in reverse.

The history of the whole factory is one of total inefficiency and penny pinching by the bosses. At one stage earlier this year, men were laid off because the old paint shop for the car bodies was closed before the new one was brought into operation. Car bodies piled up, and more men were sent home. Another example: over

the last two years, two machines, costing a total of between £10,000 and £12,000 when new, were bought at scrap value of about £00 and attempts were made to put them into operation. One has only just been put into operation after two years, because the worn-out bearings were outdated 20 years ago. The other was set up incorrectly and now produces inferior work.

## STANDARD WORKERS BEAR THE FRUIT

So while they blame the men on strike for having no social conscience, the bosses, through their pennypinching, make millions at the expense of both men and production.

Even before these issues led to a strike in the factory, the toolroom men and maintenance staff were reluctantly considering strike action, as

a result of a breakdown in negotiations over a pay rise. Since the very nature of the jobs prevents 'productivity deals', no rise was permissible, and thus there was deadlock. The productivity policy was blatantly being used to keep wages down and caused more strife than enough. In such a situation, only a wage rise tied to the cost of living index could meet the needs, but this is an issue still to be resolved on a return to work.

While the Government preaches productivity and industrial peace, workers at such places as Standards have to bear the brunt of the capitalist system. It's about time the Government sided with the workers for a change and fought for a decent standard of living, equal pay, a real industrial training scheme etc., and takes big steps towards ending industrial strife.

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producing material by Monty Johnstone on Trotsky and by Betty Reid on the 'Ultra left in Britain.' Clearly they see a threat which they must at least attempt to answer. (For a detailed Marxist reply to Johnstone's pamphlet, see the Militant pamphlet 'Lenin and Trotsky: what they really stood for').

That these pamphlets should have been produced in the period after the Czech occupation is no accident. Like the wave of resignations over Hungary in 1956, there have again been resignations and a growing questioning within the party. The spectacle of "fraternal" Czechoslovakia being invaded by "fraternal" Warsaw Pact armies at the same time as "fraternal" Moscow is involved in a border dispute over the boundaries of nineteenth century imperialism with "fraternal" Peking, has perplexed and dismayed many of the best members of the Communist Party.

## "MISTAKES" ?

When Khrushchov denounced Stalin, after the repression in Hungary, and again after Novotny was ignominiously bolted out we were told in each case, that "mistakes" had been made. How is it that these mistakes only come to light when the old leader is dead or kicked out? How is it that the Party leaders never notice or criticise these manifold mistakes until after the event? As Jim Brookshaw wrote in 'The Morning Star' on September 23:

"Of course, what is necessary now is for our Communist Party to get away from the conception of the invasion as an "error" or "mistake" and make a thorough analysis of the situation in the Socialist countries. When we do so, I fear we shall find that ... the "apparatchiks" run the show, and if something is against their group interest it becomes anti-Socialist and counter-revolutionary."

Similarly Allan Baker asks in a letter to the Star on September 29: "Was only Stalin to blame for all the crimes, errors and the stifling of initiative? Where were all the other people in leading positions throughout the USSR, and what did they think about things in those days... I believe that bureaucracy and methods of "administrative Socialism" still exist on a wide scale in the USSR (not basically altered since 1956)".

It is through discussions like this in the British party, like others internationally, that many comrades are coming to the conclusion that the invasion was not just a "mistake" but had a purpose, and flowed from a definite policy. After all, when "mistakes" are made as consistently as the Kremlin makes them, we are entitled to assume that either the successive Soviet leaders are all inept or, on the contrary this is deliberate and calculated policy which is being implemented.

Thus we read in the letter from

Ivor Jordan in the Star on September 10:

"... today the whitewash slogans in practically every village and the photos of Dubcek which still appear in shop windows, tell their own tale. Were the Czechs wrong to want reforms? Were they wrong to expect that Socialism should give them the same opportunities to foreign travel that capitalism gives to us? Are they wrong to want full investigations into past violations of Socialist legality and guarantees for the future? Is it wrong to want an end to censorship? Can the Soviet troops give them these things?"

## MOVEMENT AGAINST BUREAUCRACY

This is the whole point! The portraits of Dubcek and the slogans on the walls ("Wake up Lenin, Breshnev has gone mad!" for example) indicated to the bureaucrats of the Warsaw Pact the vast anti-bureaucratic movement that was swelling beneath their feet. It wasn't Dubcek, the man who kept silent under Novotny, who worried the Russian bureaucracy, but the people of the whole of Eastern Europe who are tired of the parasitic caste which thrives at their expense. The overwhelming majority of the Czech workers no more wanted a return to capitalism than British workers want a return to feudalism. Instead they want to go on and complete the revolution begun in 1917 in Russia. This is what terrifies the men of the Kremlin. Lenin's programme against bureaucracy (strictly limited differentials, no official to receive more than a skilled worker, all officials to be subject to instant recall and for an armed people) would have an electric effect throughout the workers' states. It terrified Dubcek too, but the movement threatened to go beyond him. In the Soviet Union itself, the stirrings of the intellectuals were an omen to the apparatus men. That is why they invaded. To use comrade Baker's words from his letter in the 'Star' of September 29: "To them it is not a "tragic error" but a logical view of how a Socialist State should develop. Everything points to the view that they see democracy under Socialism, and especially the open clash of contradictory opinions, as not being essential."

## C.P. MEMBERS MUST FIGHT FOR MARXISM!

The fight for a return to Marxism and internationalism is crucial if members of the Communist Party are to play a part in the struggle for socialism in the capitalist countries. Jim Brookshaw concluded his letter in the STAR by saying that: "...the course of events in Czechoslovakia has shown that these selfish groups will not change or be changed until we in the capitalist countries have won our revolution." Whilst it is true that a proletarian victory in the West would have a shattering effect on the grip

of the bureaucracy, it is also true that a victory against the bureaucrats in the workers' states would have an equally shattering effect on imperialism throughout Europe and the world.

The leadership of the Communist Party is in hopeless confusion and disarray. Two thousand members have been lost and even Palme Dutt is in opposition. Those comrades who have understood that the policies of the Kremlin are not merely a "mistake", not just an "error" but are part of the conscious policies of a bureaucracy frightened of losing its power, have a duty to raise these points at the Congress and throughout the party. The controversy in "COM-MENT" and the "MORNING STAR" on Czechoslovakia and party policy generally are only a beginning in what must become a serious fight for the ideas of Internationalism—the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and the October Revolution.

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