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ON MAJORITIES

LIMITED SOVEREIGNTY

COMMENT

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"THE LIBERATION OF THE PROLETARIAT IS
THE TASK OF THE PROLETARIAT ITSELF"

From the Editorial Committee:

Rising production costs faced us with two alternatives: An increase in price or a more economical method of production.

The first alternative was discounted because it would hinder our efforts to increase sales, particularly in the factories.

The second alternative could only be achieved if we undertook to do it ourselves.

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PERSPECTIVE FOR TRADE UNIONS

by Frank Huscroft

In "Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder", Lenin replied to German 'lefts' who were arguing that revolutionaries could not and should not continue to work within reactionary trade unions but should rather form revolutionary or 'Red' trade unions.

"Further, in countries more advanced than Russia, a certain reactionariness in the trade unions has been and was bound to be manifested to a much stronger degree than in our country. Our Mensheviks found support in the trade unions (and to some extent still find in a very few unions) precisely because of the craft narrowness, craft egotism and opportunism. The Mensheviks of the West have acquired a much firmer footing in the trade unions; there the craft unions, narrow minded, selfish, case-hardened, covetous, petty bourgeois, 'labour aristocracy' imperialist minded, imperialist bribed and imperialist corrupted, emerged as a much stronger stratum than in our country."

Many workers today, in conflict with their employers and looking vainly for support from their union organisation, might feel that Lenin, in his assessment of unions in the West, understated his case. Within these circumstances it is not surprising that the question of alternative organisation is being raised again and very sharply. The example of Pilkington's will be fresh in the minds of those reading this article. There the rage and frustration engendered by the betrayal of members by officials at

all levels expressed itself in an explosive and abortive attempt to set up an alternative union.

The specific question being considered here is whether an attempt should be made to form a revolutionary or 'Red' trade union in Britain and this question has to be examined in the light of present circumstances. For, as Mao points out in "On Practice", the development of knowledge is a continual process of trying to bring our ideas into correspondence with the outside world as it actually exists.

The trade union movement in Britain has, if one judges by actions rather than words, always been more concerned with its position within the 'corridors of power' than with any serious attempt to further the class interests of its members. In fact, trade union leaders have repeatedly attacked the basic concept of class struggle declaring it to be out-of-date, irrelevant, as it most certainly is for them. Not even the minimum role that Lenin cast for trade unions - that of introducing the workers to the rudiments of class organisation - has been fulfilled. In fact, as Lenin stated, the trade unions have performed a valuable service to the employing class by maintaining and even multiplying the many divisions craft, social and petty, that exist in the movement today.

As a criterion of leadership in the hand-to-mouth struggle between workers and employers, the T.U.C. is surely an example of everything it should not be. The fact that

there exists a sort of inverted pride that it is referred to as an old cart-horse suggests that its true affinity is bovine rather than equine.

In July of this year the Confederation of British Industries made proposals for a 'stand-still' on prices. This hollow gesture was further qualified by the exclusion of food prices as "they are governed by international circumstances". Nevertheless, Victor Feather, General Secretary of the T.U.C. reacted to this insulting gesture as a well-bred but starving pony reacts to the offer of a withered carrot. His eagerness to establish harmonious relations displays a statesmanlike attitude and bubbles out uncontrollably. His passionate avowals of faith in the courage and determination of the workers to fight are matched by timely and equally passionate assurances that he has no intention of exposing them to the rigours and sacrifice of open conflict. In all this he is the personification of the T.U.C., an animated illustration of its record through the years.

How is it that over such a period of time, the leadership of the trade union movement can have established such a consistent record of subservient complicity without apparent or effective action on the part of the workers to counteract and reverse the situation.

Effectiveness of Social Democracy

This speaks highly of the efficiency of the employing class, the effectiveness of a social democratic system and, above all it is a sobering comment upon the state of affairs existing among the mass of the workers at shop floor level. For, whilst some unions operate a system of appointments to official positions, there are also those whose posts are filled by a democratic pro-

cess and their record of leadership is as dismal as any. One only has to mention the late Lord Carron of A.E.U. and Bank of England fame and little remains to be said.

From Executive Councils down to shop stewards committees in the larger factories, far too much time is taken up with the struggle between various militant and reactionary elements seeking to provide 'leadership' at the expense of each other and, inevitably, at the expense of the workers they are ostensibly representing.

At intermediate committee level - district, regional, area or whatever - this struggle is often bitter and is fed by an apparently never ending supply of office seekers whose sole aim is to hitch their chariot to an ascending star. The only part the membership is called upon to play is to get out and vote at the appropriate time for the appropriate candidate and as the shop steward is in immediate contact with members he is in the most favourable position to influence both time and candidate.

So the conflict finds expression on shop stewards committees with decisions often taken with an eye to the 'league table' rather than in the interest and understanding of the members. In this situation it is difficult to get an objective decision as to the best method of dealing with a problem, it is impossible to involve the membership in the taking of such decisions. In fact, the all too rare meetings between stewards and members are generally called to report decisions already taken.

The one-day strikes called by the A.E.U.W. in opposition to the Industrial Relations Bill provide an example of bad methods of work. At a meeting of factory convenors in one particular district a large number of

those present made it clear that they had no intention of calling meetings on the issue. The official notice from District Office would be used as a bludgeon. No discussion of the issues involved, no attempt to win political conviction.

An opportunity missed, the store of resentment added to, members angry at the loss of wages, with only the Press and Television to explain why.

It is not surprising that, with the influence of the mass media on one side and the involvement of their immediate representative in some petty wrangle on the other, the mass of workers feel that it has little to do with them. Further, since most of the factions have initials attached denoting one or another variation of the Left political scene, there develops what appears to be an anti-political attitude.

In all this we have been considering only those elements that should be expected to provide some form of leadership. For if we are discussing the issue of forming a revolutionary trade union, then the question of where the necessary forces are to be found is relevant.

On the other side, the employing class recognises that the critical situation it is in will increase the divisions within its own ranks and that the measures necessary to maintain its rule will unite and arouse the working class. Even that toothless old cart-horse, feeling that his dignity has been affronted might be sufficiently aroused to savage someone with his gums. So steps had to be taken not only to contain this unlikely eventuality but in particular to induce the industrial workers to co-operate in the destruction of their defences against the employers' attacks.

In Easy Stages

Rapid development in the field of mechanisation and automation led to an enormous increase in the capital investment necessary before production could begin. Since these large sums can only be raised by the largest units it was inevitable that many small and medium-sized manufacturers would go to the wall.

Added to this was the fact that the rapid rate of development also leads to an increasing rate of obsolescence. It is essential that equipment that is both expensive and quickly out-dated should not be left idle for any part of the twenty-four hours. So the ground was prepared for developments to come.

First the 'Package Deal' which, after some initial resistance against the substance, established the idea that wage claims were not to be considered unless linked with some concessions on the part of the workers. This lead naturally to the 'Productivity Agreement' which was designed to establish the new conditions - shift work, measured day work, etc; and overall to achieve increased production with a reduced labour force.

But before either of these, and after a suitable campaign in the mass media pointing out with some emotion how unfair it was that only the bosses got a golden handshake, a 'Workers' Charter' was introduced which permitted a sort of 'copper handshake' for us all in the form of redundancy payments. This was to ensure that the unemployment resulting from mergers, takeovers, rationalisation, productivity agreements, etc. would take place with a minimum of fuss. How effective this measure has been

may be measured by the fact that it is no longer the long established 'principle' of "first in, last out" but often "first in, first out" at their own request.

The Industrial Relations Act

Lastly, the Industrial Relations Act, which is intended to bring about the absorption of the trade unions into the structure of the State machine. Thus we have moved from the concept of workers combining to curb the greed of the employer, through their development in practice as a divisive force on the basis of craft and social distinctions, to the present day where it is intended that they should become a means whereby the employers can organise, control, and discipline the workers.

Making full use of the report by the Devlin Commission on which every aspect of trade union organisation was analysed, (with the enthusiastic co-operation of the trade unions), this legislation seeks to crush those who would to any degree provide leadership in the day-to-day attempts by workers to establish or maintain wages and conditions. And if those leaders choose to operate in isolation from the workers they profess to lead, they make the task of this repressive act that much easier.

That some change is necessary to meet these changing conditions is beyond question. But will the formation of another, albeit different, organisation do much more than add another set of initials to an already overcrowded arena. Surely it is our method of working that needs a reappraisal, agonising or otherwise and this is a political question in the most fundamental, initial free sense, not an organisational one.

One of the many reports submitted to the Devlin Commission was a comprehensive study of workshop organisation. In that report this area was referred to as a 'jungle', a description so accurate that it could only have been conferred by one of the 'denizens'. For the open confrontation that is a strike is the rare occurrence. For most of the time engagements are brief and are won or lost on the basis of a superior knowledge of the terrain, little known paths, forgotten clearings but above all dependant upon the tacit approval and support of the people.

To take the jungle analogy a little further, there is a basic principle which determines in the long run the success or failure of a guerilla campaign and it applies equally here. To succeed, any action must have the interests of the people at heart and thereby command their support.

It is precisely for this reason that the Industrial Relations Act seeks to increase the isolation of the leadership from the members and of the militants from both leadership and members. Further, by defining procedures, establishing a common rule book and introducing a legislative context for agreements, it attempts to 'defoliate' the jungle, thus rendering the enemy more easily recognisable.

Any action that would assist this aim must inevitably play into the hands of the employers and it is difficult to see how the attempt to form a 'revolutionary' trade union could avoid doing just this.

Whilst in Britain unions are divided on trade and professional distinctions, in Europe the divisions are political or religious. But there is no marked difference in the situation there that can be traced

back to this organisational variation. It must be assumed therefore that the intention is not simply to create an organisation in which, whilst its policy proclaims revolutionary aims, the vast majority of its membership is in no way associated with them. To mean anything at all, a revolutionary trade union must not only work in accordance with Marxist-Leninist principles but would restrict membership to those who accept and are prepared to work for those principles.

Without the existence of a Marxist-Leninist Party that had reached the stage where it could command support from a broad strata of workers, such an organisation would be an anachronism. In present circumstances at best it could collect all the most politically active elements into a neat and easily identifiable bundle, whilst at worst it would be merely another fringe fragment to join in the internecine struggle.

It would certainly increase the seating capacity for the Chiefs but it would do remarkably little for the Indians.

The fact is that with all the conflicting groups and all the squabbles between cliques within the groups, little attempt is being made to involve the broad mass of workers in development. They are seen as so many potential voters and there it ends. Of course, the task of involving them is a difficult one, often frustrating. When workers stubbornly refuse to want that which you consider best for them, it requires effort to pause and consider that they might be right. In this respect, however, even the Industrial Relations Bill could have a positive effect for, with the union structure being drawn further into the State machine, militants will have to

pay more attention to the securing of their foundations.

Workers' Control

This will not be sufficient. With the increasing bitter struggle for survival within the employing class there will be no shortage of 'allies' anxious to help us achieve the change in society. But if we are to achieve the change in society that we desire we must ensure that the leadership and control of the movement is firmly in the hands of the workers. To achieve and maintain this degree of control we will need a good deal more than a thin veneer of militants. There has to be an integrated leadership that will extend down into the broad ranks of workers, establishing a confidence based on consistency of policy, sincerity of purpose and above all, the ability to interpret and utilise the vast wealth of understanding that exists but is unrecognised because it is not expressed in the accepted terminology.

Thus we need a dialogue, not a monologue and if it is to be of any value it must involve a much broader strata of workers than is the case at present. A difficult and laborious task for it means that we must address ourselves to the issues that are concerning them, we must express ourselves in a language that seeks understanding and not obscurity and we must be prepared for many failures and frustrations along the way. We must also be prepared to submit all our philosophy to the test of concrete practice and not reserve the status of scripture for some areas because they are thorny or because they have been handed down on tablets of stone. We can do no less if we are to ask workers to question concepts that they have come to regard as basic tenets of their very existence and, what is more, we will in the process be

educating ourselves and establishing a confidence in our beliefs that will be based on something a little more substantial than blind faith.

The task is not made any easier by the fact that the idea of being involved in discussion and decisions is a novel one for many workers. The participation of rank and file that is so essential a part of electing a candidate to office becomes interference with the normal democratic process once he is elected. So there is an understandable reluctance on their part to become involved and a desire to transfer the responsibility for decisions to others 'better qualified'. This can and must be broken down, despite the many diversions this society provides to occupy our 'leisure time' - television, bingo, sex films, etc., etc. - once this reluctance is replaced by an enthusiastic insistence that they should be involved more often, then leadership begins to develop at many different levels and sometimes in the most unexpected places.

Also to be broken down are the divisions that Lenin referred to and that still exist today. A means towards this end would be the bringing together on a regular basis of workers with various occupations, union membership and degree of skill from different factories in the locality.

Not that this idea is a novel one, it is the application that is as important. Careful attention must be given to the basis upon which the meetings are called. The purpose should be to exchange information, to share experience gained in struggle and to consider common problems both within and without the workshop.

Whilst common action may be the except-

ion rather than the rule, discussion should centre around what method could be used to meet the requirements of given circumstances. To employ as a subject for this purpose "The Relevance of Dialectical Materialism" could not be expected to yield a large attendance and should be avoided. But we might have the opportunity of applying it instead of talking about it.

Perseverance, even persistence is required but there are consolations. When workers who have a touch of 'tradesmen's elbow', (they give it to non-craftsmen), meet semi and unskilled workers who have not previously encountered this phenomenon the ensuing meeting can be lively and instructive. Here you not only have an excellent example of a non-antagonistic contradiction but also the opportunity for gaining experience in how to deal with it. Such meetings and groups will assist in establishing the idea of operating as a class notwithstanding union, craft or social distinctions. This way the basis for an alternative organisation will be built up from the foundations. Any other way would be an attempt to apply an organisational solution to a political problem.

In our enthusiasm to contribute a degree of leadership we must avoid the error of dismissing all development arising from actual struggle as spontaneity, particularly when such development happens to run counter to any pre-digested thought that we may have had on the subject. This may appear very elementary and in fact it is. For years we have preached the need for common action within the working class movement but this is not enough. We must work to create the desire for it and this means starting where one should always start - at the beginning.

OKINAWA

BREAKING DOWN THE JAPANESE MENTAL BLOCK

One of the greatest obstacles to rebuilding Japan as a full-fledged military power is the stubborn and naive belief of a great part of the Japanese public that the Peace Constitution means what it says. And at the centre of this is the bitter hatred of nuclear weapons, something Sato always apologises for as a 'peculiar' Japanese attitude. For years the conservative government has sought for ways to break down this popular attitude, gradually building up the 'Self-Defence Forces' and permitting visits of U.S. nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. Part of Sato's sudden interest in returning Okinawa is his realisation that it could be used as a powerful device for further changing the public mind. Okinawa is a nuclear base with both B-52s and Polaris bases. Thus the national determination never to have nuclear weapons on Japanese soil will suddenly become a dead issue in 1972 when Okinawa officially becomes Japanese soil. Sato's vague reassurances that nuclear weapons will be removed by 1972 are believed by no-one, certainly not by the U.S. Air Force.

There is another way in which Sato hopes that the return of Okinawa will change public opinion. In his Press Club speech, he referred to the Okinawa issue as a 'mental block' for the Japanese people and as a 'symbol of defeat'. Of course, what Sato hopes to unblock is Japanese militarism. By calling Okinawa a 'symbol of defeat' (rather than a symbol of imperialism and war) what he is saying is that war is not so bad in itself; what is bad is losing. By getting Okinawa back he hopes to give the Jap-

anese people a small taste of what it would be like to win. The first seizure of Okinawa in 1879 can be seen as the first step in Japanese imperial expansion which led into Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria and, finally, the rest of China. It is quite clear that Sato wants to interpret the present return of Okinawa in a similar way, as a symbol of national strength and as something to whet the nationalistic appetite. It is no accident immediately following the agreement to return Okinawa he has started making renewed demands on the Soviet Union to return the Kuriles.

The new Japanese Commitment to 'Security of the Far East'

But aside from these symbolic uses, Sato has used the return of Okinawa to concretely set Japanese foreign policy on a very new course. First of all it is important that the return of Okinawa was announced simultaneously with the renewal of the Security Treaty in order to divide and weaken the opposition to the treaty. However Sato's statements at the time indicated that the Treaty was not only renewed but was given an entirely new meaning. Until 1970 the Treaty had been understood as a bilateral decision in which the U.S. agreed to 'protect' Japan proper in return to the right to keep bases here. In his Press Club speech, Sato radically expanded the meaning of the Treaty by making the following statement:

"In the real international world it is impossible to adequately maintain the security of Japan without international peace and security in the Far-East."

To further clarify what this means in the immediate future, Sato made a point of saying (in the Joint Communique) that the security of the Pak dictatorship in South Korea is 'essential' to the security of Japan and that the security of the Chiang-Kai-Shek dictatorship in Taiwan is 'very important' to the security of Japan. This is equivalent to announcing that from now on South Korea and Taiwan are to be considered as Japan's special 'sphere of interest'. (While constitutionally the 'Self Defence Forces' are not supposed to be able to go outside Japan, it is public knowledge that the operation plans exist for their entry into Korea. It is also known that they are studying the Korean language.)

For Okinawa: Double Occupation

Thus Sato's reversion plan has absolutely nothing to do with the removal of bases from Okinawa or liberating the Okinawans from their bondage to the war machine. On the contrary, bases there are being steadily expanded. After the beginning of the informal reversion talks in 1965, the U.S. budget allocated the following amounts for base construction on Okinawa:
 1966 - \$30,000,000; 1967 - \$66,500,000;
 1968 - \$45,800,000; 1969 - \$29,000,000.
 During that period two new runways were built at Kadena, concrete slabs 4,000 metres long (13,120 ft.) and 98 cm (38 ins.) deep. At the same time expansion was begun on several naval ports including the fitting out of the base at Chura bay to accommodate Polaris submarines. And so on. U. Alexie Johnson reassured the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as follows:

"Certainly I think you understand that the question of reversion of administrative rights of Okinawa has nothing

to do with our getting out of our bases there. We maintain our base structure in Okinawa."

It is obvious that the U.S. would never have considered agreeing to reversion if there had been any doubt on this point.

But this is not all. One of the very first concrete results of reversion will be that U.S. forces will be joined on Okinawa by Japanese 'Self Defence' troops. Defence director Nakasone has already visited Okinawa and SDF troops have several times been sent to Okinawa for joint training exercises with the U.S. military. Immediately after reversion takes place in 1972 the SDF plan to send 3,300 troops, along with anti-submarine reconnaissance planes, F104's, mine sweepers and other warships, to be permanently stationed in Okinawa. Six months later it plans to send 3000 more troops to man radar sites, ground-to-air missiles (Nike and Hawk) and other equipment.

The announced purpose of sending these troops to Okinawa is to take over the task of the direct defence of the islands. It is important to be clear about what this means. It does not have anything to do with the defence of the Okinawa people whose lives are only put in greater jeopardy the more troops gather on their island. In the strategy of Far Eastern politics the only thing on Okinawa likely to be attacked is the U.S. bases. It is to defend these bases that the SDF forces are being sent to Okinawa.

The above extract is taken from an issue of A.M.P.O. the journal of the Japanese New Left.

OPEN LETTER FROM ITALIAN WORKERS

from the "TRIBUNA ROSSA"

What is distance when one considers modern means of transport and communication: with supersonic aircraft, direct telephone links between countries, radio waves encircling our globe in a fraction of a second? We produce the airplanes, trains, radios and phones, yet what do we know of each other? What does the Italian worker know of his fellow workers in Britain, Germany, France - or vice versa.

Successive waves of workers rise against the monstrous economic yoke of the imperialist bourgeoisie, surmounting the obstacles put in their path by unions and 'workman's' parties. Yet these often powerful struggles, such as the last one by the British dockers, are but flashes in the dark and, even when the light penetrates the frontiers, it has no voice. There is enveloping us a cowl of silence, we know nothing of each other.

What are the thoughts of the protagonists in these struggles, of the growing army of unemployed, of the millions existing on or below a mere subsistence level in a society that is plagued with over production? We know nothing of them.

Tens of hundreds of thousands of workers out of a mass of many millions are pushed to the forefront of struggle. They learn in a few hours, days or weeks the power of working class solidarity, they make it live and win. They rudely shake this or that section of the ruling class, challenge the domination of the capitalist system and

then seem to sink, leaving no face, no voice, back into the mass that gave them birth. And with them sinks the unknown and valiant John, Jack or Willie who organised and led them.

What dissolves them?

What happens to dissolve the improvised but strong workmens' armies which, in all our countries, appear time and again upon the factory walls but are as yet unable to destroy the gates. In our opinion the reason lies outside the factory; it is in our society.

At our place of work, by force of numbers, we can divide, paralyse and crush the enemy but outside the power relations are reversed. On the one hand our mass is scattered and isolated, separated into individual workers or families. On the other hand we are no longer facing a single capitalist or a handful of capitalists but a ruling class that is politically organised to scatter and disperse us. For a moment, for some days or even months, we can drag the capitalist organisation of society into chaos, either in one department or another, one factory or another, one branch of production or another. But as soon as we are back home we are, in our turn, overwhelmed by the capitalist organisation of society, the sole aim of which is to disperse and divide us.

Our strength is based on a workshop, a factory or, at the most, a category of labour but our enemies' organisation is based upon all workshops, all factories,

and all categories over the entire country. All that exists as social power exists in their interest, that is, for the general interest of the monopolistic bourgeoisie and their allies.

During a strike, on the picket line, with our discussions and projects for achieving our aims, we break the capitalist cadences. But afterwards it is our cadences that are broken. All powerful in the factory when we rise - because it is obvious that no factory or workshop can function without our work - outside we are crushed, not by the omnipotence of this or that capitalist, union, party or government but by the omnipotence, impersonal and irresponsible, of the entire capitalist system, with its social relations of property, institutions, laws, all of which are supported when necessary by the use of armed force.

This is why our forces dissolve, born out of the relations of production, they are crushed by the property and social relations - economic, political, ideological, cultural and military - by which the ruling class exploits us in every field.

If this is the fate of our armies, what of their 'staff officers', the Johns, Jacks or Willies who provide the leadership in the day to day economic struggles? What disperses them? In our opinion it is not simply the predominant society but, above all, the predominant politics. As Mao says

"If we turn to examine history, we can see that all historical movements were born from the association of some people. For bigger movements a bigger association is necessary and for the greatest movements, the utmost association is necessary."

Not only is this true, it is well known

to the ruling class. They have long used the method of isolating the Johns, Jacks or Willies, scattering and dividing their forces. Their task is made much easier while we are a few. Who are we and what do we represent? Singly we are nothing, represent nothing and can be eliminated with ease; we are crushed by the weight of our isolation.

Only as a Collective Force

We can only exist as a mass, as a collective force and not even then without a John, Jack or Willy to organise the mass politically. In the early stages we must move forward in our small groups and, while we are divided, the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and semi-proletarians, however many the divisions between them, are united against us. To the weight represented by our lack of activity and effectiveness is added the crushing weight of the political force which is their cause.

Added to this, history shows us that the ruling class, whether in slave, feudal or present times, has always sustained its domination by using the organisations, ideals and theories of those they ruled. To control the slaves and eliminate rebellion they used former slaves to crucify the rebels. In the fourth century, failing to control rioting slaves, they seized their symbol - a cross - and their god, employing both to perpetuate their system of society.

The feudal lords used priests and monks who were in the main former serfs, bursars and quartered - living heretics. Faced with rioting serfs, the feudal lords resorted to organising religious orders, incorporating the equalitarian and communist ideals of peasants to oppress and dominate them the better.

In our age, the employing class, having tried by all means to prevent workers organising themselves in union or political parties, now subvert and absorb them into the state apparatus. Now the political agents of the capitalist class with their forces composed of military police, judges, bureaucrats and reactionary intellectuals have the task of defending, whether with politics or force, the 'salary rope' by which the capitalist holds tight our throat. The reformist, with his bureaucrats, trade union officials, members of Parliament and progressive intellectuals, has the task of supporting the noose of exploitation so that, ever as we are loosing it, it slips from our grasp.

The Role and Dream of these Dogs

The role and dream of these dogs is to keep us all on the lead, for the cookies and caresses of their masters. Whether they are called labourites, social democrats, reformists or revisionists, not only do they not allow us to break this noose, they fly into a rage in an attempt to convince us that it is a charming ornament.

When in government they assure the ruling class the social peace and democratic legality they need to exploit us peacefully, that is, without the need to resort too frequently to the use of the handcuffs and the gun. When they receive the boot of the masses, as happened in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France and Britain in 69-70, they make the jump of the quail and all rush to the left.

To regain control of the masses they speak strongly against capitalism, they ask us to be reasonable and put our trust in the next

elections. In return they ask little, only that we should not think, speak, act or struggle. In fact, not to exist independently of them. They will attend to us from birth to death and we will not need to pass the mental age of a child. We should have neither dignity nor strength of character, no idea or interest distinguishable from their own. Finally, they see us in their own image and when some of us shatter this dream by rising and opposing them, they use all means to reduce us to their own baseness.

These lick spittles and puppets work to obtain the favours of their masters by maintaining our submission. They differ from their masters as plague differs from cancer, the one exploits us, the other lives on that exploitation. They present themselves as heralds of our ideals and lawyers of our economic and political interests but they are enemies far worse than the capitalist who presents himself openly as an enemy and that experience teaches us to treat as such.

They have existed, along with their methods, since men first rose against the oppressive society that ruled them. Their aim is to disperse the Johns, Jacks and Willies who, not being satisfied with, as Lenin put it, "the penny on the shilling", seek to struggle for the emancipation of the working class and of our entire society.

What entitles us to state

If such obstacles and so many enemies exist and, having existed for so long, are yet strong enough to obstruct our attempts to form an independent proletarian movement, what entitles us to state that a proletarian revival is in progress in our countries?

In the first place, though they have

existed for all this time, they were unable to prevent the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Nor have they been able to prevent the establishment of proletarian power in China. The British, Italian, German, Dutch and Belgian Empires have fallen and will not rise again. The old Imperialism has been replaced by American Imperialism which has extended over a large part of the world's surface. But it can develop no further than a man can lift himself by pulling his own hair. It is so weak that a small people like the Vietnamese inflict burning defeats on its policy which is based on the gun. Added to this, it is increasingly forced to confront with fire and sound the spreading revolt within its own metropolis.

Crisis, Stagnation and Slump

The economic crisis, stagnation or slump existing in some of the larger European countries, (e.g. Britain, France, Italy), is the driving force behind the capitalists effort to 'rationalise' their productive forces. Correspondingly, workers rise not only to improve their wages but also to resist this 'rationalisation' which they recognise as being improved and intensified methods of exploitation. This imperialistic rationalisation arises from the absolute necessity for the employing class to increase their returns on investments, both at home and abroad, in order to postpone the eventual bankruptcy of their society. Our reaction is brought about by the relative inability of the system to meet our economic demands and its absolute inability to meet our social and human demands and the resulting conflict brings the day of their bankruptcy nearer.

Thus the tendency towards even fiercer

exploitation by the imperialists and the responding upsurge of proletarian struggle are not casual or temporary but will extend and intensify.

Marx - Mao - Fiat!!

It is true that reformism and revisionism, along with the politicians that peddle them, still dominate the scene in our countries and succeed largely in controlling the situation. But it is also true that increasingly working class struggles are developing outside of and in spite of this framework of imperialist domination over our way of life.

The wives of French miners who, when invited to persuade their menfolk to return to work, instead besieged the bosses in their offices and forced them to capitulate, provided a shining example of the tendency of economic struggle to move out from the workshop and develop the characteristics of proletarian struggle.

Such struggles develop not only the cadres to lead them but also a realisation of the need to demolish the ghetto of economism and invade the political field.

From Marx, - "The emancipation of the proletariat must be achieved by the proletariat itself", - through Mao, - "The workers must lead everywhere", to the workers at Fiat's who, striking in defiance of the attempts by trade union leaders and 'working class' parties to get them back to work, produced the slogan - "We don't need them, we will do it for ourselves."

In different languages but expressing like aspirations among increasing masses of workers in many countries.

Let the Johns, Jacks and Willies in all our countries organise themselves politically and we will overcome every obstacle and rout every enemy. They are as yet among the masses but the masses are pressing them and will continue to press them until they come forward and give voice and a gun to our aspirations.

For us it is Dawn

All this has nothing to do with a dark conspiracy by some angry workers, nor is it the idle dreaming of idealists; it has to do with the potential that is within the proletariat in all our countries - as the dawn has within itself the day. Because we are at the beginning it may appear to us muddled and contradictory - and undoubtedly it is, just because it is the beginning.

Who are we

As we are but wage slaves and 'have nots', we are not supposed to have a voice in our affairs. But we do not wait to be given our opportunity, we take it and because we are proletarians, in proletarian language we denounce our oppressors and organise to overthrow them. We educate ourselves to print and propagate from factory to factory, crossing all frontiers, expressing our ideas, feelings and class aspirations.

The imperialists and reformists are in all countries. Their unity is around the U.S. guns of NATO and its economic and political organisations and it is a strained unity. They give as many 'national routes' to Socialism, the British Road, the French Road, the Italian Road - all are intended to isolate British worker from British worker and then separate British workers from Italian workers, German from Chinese, dividing everyone from everybody.

In reply we must organise our capabilities and resources, we must communicate to the English Channel and beyond, to our class brothers in Britain and in other countries. We must let them know of our existence, our experience and our activities.

We know that we do not offer much to the British Proletariat, some lines, some ideas, this publication and ourselves. We are the product of a specific class situation in our own country. We reflect its contradictions, the advances and retreats, even more we are also the product of these contradictions with our limits and our weaknesses.

Over a century and a half ago, the English Chartist movement, with its vigorous economic and ideological struggles, gave to the proletariat of all countries the first historical example of class conflict. England was the second fatherland of Marx and Engels and London was, in the distant 1864, the fatherland of the glorious International Workingmens' Association, founded and led by Marx and Engels.

We live in the Centenary of Lenin, we can read, write, we are not dumb, neither are we beggars. We are proletarian revolutionaries and we live in an age when, as Mao put it, "the main tendency is towards revolution."

That is why we define ourselves as 'Red Tribunists'. The limits of this publication are our own limitations and do not belong in any way to the greatness of the age in which we live.

In China it is day. For us it is the dawn. But in any case we must awake and rise up for ourselves.

MAJORITIES

by Shirley Cooley

People who believe in the justice of majority rule and simple basic democracy are most reluctant to accept that a socialist revolution does not take place as a result of taking ballots or the showing of hands in a capitalist society. In no country where the state has been replaced by a people's government has the majority of the population either willed the revolution or in fact even seen the possibility of achieving it before the event. The majority of the working class involved in struggle see the possibilities. "Public Opinion" does not.

The state of Public Opinion depends upon what it regards as inevitable rather than what is desirable. This is as true today as it has ever been. Recent I.T.V. polls conducted during July were reported to show how the majority opposed to Britain's entry into the Common Market was sharply decreasing as the 'favourable' arguments became appreciated. What they did demonstrate was how opinions polarise in favour of a progressively inevitable decision.

This is not to say that people can for ever be conned for, although the ruling class have ever-increasing opportunities for the manipulation of opinions through the mass media, people are thereby becoming more informed and better equipped to recognise its basic dishonesty. One of the major functions of a revolutionary party through its activities in the labour movement is to accelerate the awareness amongst the working class that it is being tricked into agreeing with a system which ostensibly is organised to give them equal rights

and opportunities but which in essence only supports the 'Wage Slave' system.

However, it is a mistake to assume that mass awareness will give rise to angry upsurge. People do not behave like that. People are angered by incidents, by personal attacks and isolated injustices but not by an overall oppression; indeed working classes throughout the world have shown an infinite capacity for suffering which far outstrips the deprivations experienced in Britain. The African in South Africa is acutely aware that he is being oppressed. It is obvious how the fascists grow rich at his expense but the instruments of repression are correspondingly acute and there is every reason to suppose that with the growth of awareness in Britain there will be a parallel increase in the vigilance by the state machinery to forestall any resultant activity, progressing from the Bill which is only a feeble beginning.

Englishmen are conditioned to accept that 'natives', 'blacks' and 'wogs' can be mown down when they get stroppy but he can see quite well that those being assaulted in N. Ireland are like himself and he doesn't need to be too intelligent for the idea to occur to him that the same things could happen at home.

The Role of a Revolutionary Party

Accepting its duty to accelerate the awareness of the working class, a revolutionary party does not count heads. It prepares the vanguard, develops leaders,

cadres and loyal and active supporters. It wins the respect and allegiance of the working class movement and then it strikes when there is a chance of success immediately destroying the instruments of the capitalist state. "Force", said Marx, "is the mid-wife of the old society when it is pregnant with a new one." He stressed that it is absolutely necessary to shatter the old structure by force and to do it immediately, within a few hours. The unfortunate leaders of the recent left wing coup in the Sudan learned this to their cost when they allowed themselves the luxury of demonstrations and celebrations rather than destroying the state. Marx pointed out that every failed uprising provides valuable lessons for all revolutionaries. Here is one lesson we can learn from the Sudan. The same terrible revenge would most certainly occur here in Britain should any attempted takeover fail. Revolutionary and working class leaders would be shot as traitors. They could have a steak dinner, prayers and chess with the warder but they would be shot and capitalism would have no qualms about it. British Capitalism has always made a great deal of its 'humanity' and fooled people by it. Joseph Plunkett was allowed to marry his fiance and sleep with her on the eve of his execution. James Conolly was allowed to sit in a chair to be shot.

In spite of this 'humanity', failure results, as it did then, in the shattering of the revolutionary movement by the ruling class government. The working class must not forget this when it puts its own humanity before everything else.

Socialists are uneasy about the assertion that there will not be a majority subjectively desiring a people's government

until the processes of obtaining it are set in motion but they confuse this 'democracy' with the necessity of the majority (the working class) to govern itself. It is for the vanguard to see the objective need for working class power and to lead a protracted struggle. This in itself gives the workers the desire to win and take control and, when they are in command and have forcibly excluded the exploiters from participating, haven't they an automatic majority?

The most desperate mistake would be to look upon this majority as a safeguard for socialism. Majorities have never bothered capitalists, therefore defence of the revolution by the people's militia is the primary task. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is indeed an essential stage in the defeat of reactionaries and the prevention of counter-revolution, indeed although this was achieved to a certain extent in the Paris Commune, the neglect of military vigilance compared with other activities is one of the factors attributed to its final collapse.

A Marxist-Leninist leadership might have altered the outcome for those unfortunate heroes of 1871 and established a People's Republic of France and, had this occurred, would anyone in the Labour Movement today have castigated them for not being voted in by the people of Paris?

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REVOLUTION IN CHINA'S EDUCATION

by Colin Penn

Long before Liberation in 1949 there had been agitation, mainly among students, for reforms in China's educational system. Basically feudal in outlook it aimed, by old-fashioned and rigid methods, at a high standard of literacy, respect for tradition and authority and little else.

The great majority of the people got no formal education at all but those who did found it almost useless in the modern world. Education was essential to become an official, with a graded system of examinations fitting one for higher and higher posts but it was not of much use to anyone wanting to be a scientist or technician.

Western achievements in technology and science became known in China, for it was partly by their use that western imperialists had succeeded in exploiting China. So the cry went up for a western type of education and gradually some small progress was made.

It was only with the setting up of the People's Republic, however, that a really modern educational system became available - at least in theory - to all. Thousands of new schools were set up and hundreds of thousands of teachers were trained. The old system was formally abandoned.

China's education then began to make

rapid progress. Literacy became nearly universal, apart from those too old to learn and agriculture, industry and science rapidly showed the value of the new system.

It was easy to forget that this system was, basically, one that had been worked out in the West, under capitalism and had evolved to serve the needs of capitalism. It is true that in China the education had a socialist content and that splendid work was done in bringing up young people with a selfless, socialist outlook. But can a system developed by capitalism for its own needs be simply taken over and used by socialism without a radical re-examination of all its ideas? Increasing numbers of Chinese, especially students, began to criticise the system.

Though schools and institutes of higher education were, in theory, open to all and though the majority of students at universities was supposed to be the children of workers or peasants, such students were, in fact, in a minority and found it very difficult to keep up with the children of cadres and intellectuals.

In an educational system based, like that of the West, on reading and writing and the discussion of theoretical ideas, students from families with a tradition

of literacy, brought up to be familiar with books and writing, found learning much easier than did the children of workers or peasants, from families that had always been illiterate. Some members of teaching staffs discriminated against students from worker and peasant families, marking them down in examinations and often trying to persuade them to go to work in factory or commune.

Revolt in the Schools

In education, as within the Communist Party and in all spheres of life, a battle between two lines was taking place: was the socialist revolution to continue or was there to be a return to capitalism? Was the superstructure of ideas, of which education was the most important part, to be brought into conformity with the socialist economic base or was it to assist in the gradual erosion of that base? The Soviet Union was an example of what would happen if the superstructure was left to look after itself - socialism would be abandoned.

Fortunately there were many students who were not satisfied with the way things were going. They began to criticise. Mao Tse-tung supported them and the Cultural Revolution began as a revolt among the students.

This is not the story of the Cultural Revolution. It is enough to say here that, as a result of it, the whole of China's educational system was overturned. A visit to China in April this year showed me the extent of the revolution that had taken place.

This revolution is not yet over. There

is still widespread discussion on methods and organisation but from the many experiments that have been made some decisions have emerged and new forms are taking shape.

Sympathetic westerners have sometimes expressed fears that Chinese children may grow up with stereotyped ideas and ways of thought. I believe this is completely wrong; socialism needs a variety of ideas, personal initiative, the fullest use of the individual talents of all.

The aims of socialist education are new ones and it is no good using the western system as a yardstick to measure success or failure. A graduate from a Chinese university will be quite different from one from Oxford or Cambridge. The only way to judge the success of the Chinese system is to ask: how far is it helping the building of socialism and the development of socialist man? All the evidence suggests that the new Chinese educational system will be very flexible, closely tailored to the needs of the people of each locality and varying as the needs vary.

Politics in Command

In the process of reorganisation first place was given to politics. Unless the political purpose of the new system is kept clearly in mind its results cannot be satisfactory. In the 1950's and 60's a good deal was said about the Thought of Mao Tse-tung but words were not always translated into action. Now Mao's thought is consciously used in the solution of all problems, both long-term and immediate.

The Cultural Revolution provided a firm grounding in this method of working and

today, in schools and elsewhere, study of Mao's works is being extended to the study of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Their works are to be seen in the windows of all bookshops.

In 1968 Mao Tse-tung said:

"To carry out the proletarian educational revolution, it is imperative to have the leadership of the working class and its participation, together with the revolutionary three-way alliance of the soldiers of the PLA, students and teachers and the activists among the workers who have resolved to carry the proletarian educational revolution through to the end."

No longer are schools run by a Head with a staff of teachers but by a Revolutionary Committee on which are representatives of the staff, the pupils and local workers and peasants.

At the No. 31 Middle School in Peking for instance, the Revolutionary Committee had four members of the Mao Tse-tung Thought Propaganda Team (workers and PLA), six representatives of the old teaching staff, three from the new teachers, one worker from the school staff and four pupils elected by their fellows.

All the children at this school (1500 of them) came from a single neighbourhood. The workers came from factories in the same district and there were thus natural ties between them. It was clear at the meeting we had with members of the Committee that it was a body on which real discussion took place, usually until full agreement was reached and that the pupils were by no

means overawed by the presence of their teachers.

Knowledge Comes from Practice

A second feature of Chinese education today is its emphasis on practical work and on combining theory with practice. Mao has always advocated this, many times pressing for the extension of the system of part-work, part-study schools, long before the Cultural Revolution. It is only recently, however, that his ideas are being adopted in a thoroughgoing way.

Thus at the Peking school already mentioned there were workshops where the pupils began to get acquainted with industrial methods and actually to take part, in a small way, in production. Some of the younger ones were assembling oil filters for motor vehicles, some were making lugs for the handrails of buses, some were putting together fuel lines for lorries. These operations involved simply processes like filing, fitting and machine stamping - great care being taken about safety.

Older pupils were making printed circuits and simple transistors, some of which had to be assembled under a microscope and in a dust-free atmosphere. Much of the machinery had been made at the school, largely from scrap metal or worn-out parts. One could readily understand the value of this as training in self-reliance and also in removing some of the mystery from such subjects as electronics.

All the articles made at the school were sold to the state but it was emphasised to us that production targets were not thought important and that the main purpose was to understand something of industrial methods

and to come to see labour as part of life.

In line with this emphasis on practical work, textbooks are being rewritten with questions based on situations the pupils are likely to meet in everyday life rather than on abstractions. Rewriting cannot be a speedy process, involving as it does endless consultation and experiment. The writing is a collective affair and only when a method has been thoroughly tested will it be incorporated in a textbook.

Simpler Courses; No Examinations

In general courses have been shortened. Chinese young people want to take part in production as quickly as possible and they now think it absurd that a university student should spend so much time learning in an abstract, theoretical way things which he could learn quicker and more easily in the factory or on the commune.

It is not considered that there are any disadvantages in shortening university courses from six or seven years to four.

Another radical change, and one that has come to stay, is that no one can now go straight from a middle school to an institute of higher education. After middle school everyone must work for two years, after which the workers of the commune or factory will decide which of the young people are most suitable for further education. In coming to a decision they take many factors into account, the attitude to work being an important one.

Everyone to whom I spoke thought this a very good way to choose university students. The two-year period of work was not looked on as something to be endured for the sake

of a university education. Rather was work considered to be its own reward. Anyone chosen for further education felt it to be more a responsibility than an honour. The purpose of such education was not to enable one to enter another world, that of the intellectual, but simply to help one to work better for one's fellows.

Now that all university students have had experience of production, whether in industry or agriculture, they are more mature and learn more quickly because they understand the purpose of learning and some of the real problems of life. At Tsinghua, Peking's famous technical university, we met such young people and were impressed by their determination to learn well and to make good use of their knowledge. A girl who had been a peasant only three months before and who already had an excellent command of English, said: "We work very hard because we are working for the revolution. And", she added, "we are working for the world revolution, too." Some of the students here had been in the armed forces but they too had experience in production, following the tradition by which the PLA produces a large proportion of the food and other things it needs.

At this university the undergraduates were making, as part of their courses, advanced electronic apparatus, computers and motor lorries. This work was not just a matter of assembling purchased components - 85 per cent of the motor lorry parts had been made on the premises.

As regards examinations, Chairman Mao had this to say in 1964:

"The present examination system is more suited for enemies than for the

people; it is like an ambush because the questions are remote, strange and still in the old tradition of the eight-legged essay. My suggestion is to publish the questions first, let the students study them and answer them with the help of their books."

This is what is being done everywhere now.

Education in the Countryside

Agriculture is still the foundation of China's economy and the improvement of education in the countryside is therefore especially important. The linking of theory and practice here will help young peasants to bring a fresh, scientific approach to the problems of the rural areas. At the same time, however, much can be learned from the old peasants who have gained their wisdom through practice.

Many young people from the cities are now going, when they have completed middle school, to work in the country instead of in a factory. This means that they are prepared to spend the rest of their life there. After two years or so some of them may be chosen to go to university but they will probably return to a commune when they have completed their course.

While we were in Yen-an, the cradle of the Chinese Revolution, so rich in memories of Mao Tse-tung, we were visited one evening by six young people who had come from a Peking middle school to settle near Yen-an. They told us of their experiences; how hard they found the work at first, how homesick they were, how they had tried to help the peasants but had received more than they had been able to give. In fact

they spoke of themselves as being 're-educated' by the peasants.

They were now on the way to earning the honourable title of peasant, full of self-confidence and vigour, trying all the time to learn more so that they could serve the community better. It was interesting that the girls were less shy and more eager to talk than the boys; two of them had taken a course and become 'barefoot doctors'.

For the first time in the history of the world we are seeing the birth of a system of education that is truly socialist, from bottom to top. Mistakes will be made but the Chinese people now have the political experience to correct them. China's young people are already a reliable force for carrying revolution through to the end. Their motherland will grow in strength as a result of her educational reforms and experience will be gained that will be of inestimable value to other nations that will follow China along the road to socialism.

THE RED TRIBUNISTS

The Red Tribunists, whose letter appears on page 9 is an organisation composed of workers who do not simply pay lip service to the statement by Marx, "The emancipation of the proletariat is the task of the proletariat itself" but take the statement literally.

Associated with it is a students' organisation which accepts the leading role of the workers and does excellent work in many fields.

THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN THE SIX COUNTIES

by C S G

The situation in Northern Ireland is a classic example of the way in which a ruling class can maintain itself in power by denying equality of treatment to one section of the working class and getting the support of the other sections on the basis that their 'privileges' are threatened by the deprived minority.

There is a similarity between this situation and the relation between the British working class in the heyday of imperialism and the workers in the colonial countries.

One major difference is that in Northern Ireland this inequality is within the same geographical and national area which makes it all the more obvious to those who hold the mucky end of the stick.

People will often put up with extremely bad conditions as long as they feel that they are receiving equality of treatment but when they become convinced that they are constantly at a disadvantage, rebellion begins to grow.

The fact that this may express itself in the early stages as Catholic v Protestant or Black v White should not blind us to the class nature of their exploitation or their revolt.

Whether it develops into a class struggle which unites the majority of the people irrespective of race, colour or religion against the handful of capitalists or degenerates into a mere nationalistic or religious crusade is largely dependent upon the

degree of leadership which Marxists can exercise.

Resentment against Stormont

In Northern Ireland the resentment of the Roman Catholic population against the Stormont turned into active opposition to it when its armed forces did not protect them from the mobs activated by Paisley and Co. The R.U.C., long hated, was so exposed that it had to be at least formally disbanded. British troops were at first welcomed by the Catholic population as protectors but this honeymoon could not and did not last for long because it soon became evident that they were there, not to protect them but to protect Stormont. This being so, the forces which Stormont relied upon had to be protected but not to the extent desired by the more extreme Protestant elements, therefore in spite of the efforts of the Government in Westminster to smooth over the contradictions between the two sections of the community, polarisation continued apace.

Chichester-Clarke had to give way to Faulkner who is now himself under attack from those even further to the right who want to activate and legalise an Ulster Defence Force as a counter to the growing strength of the Provisionals.

On the Catholic side, the failure of the British troops to protect them from attack by gangs whipped up by Paisley led to efforts to defend themselves by the setting up of barricades which the British troops were then given orders to demolish. In these

circumstances it is not surprising that the Provisional's policy of armed resistance gained support.

The pressure on Faulkner from the right which resulted in the decision to bring in internment without trial was not on the basis of the strength of Stormont but was born of the desperation and confusion which now besets both Stormont and Westminster as the former institution rapidly loses all credibility as a viable government. In the event it simply served to polarise the situation still further. There are indications that this is expressing itself in a coming together of some of the anti-Stormont forces so what started as a predominantly Catholic rebellion now displays signs of developing into a wider non-sectarian movement aimed at the abolition of Stormont.

Although the Catholic working class see Stormont as the enemy but not necessarily from a class point of view, the Protestant workers tend to see it as a protection against absorption into Eire. As Stormont is objectively a hindrance to the unification of the working class irrespective of religion, the Catholic workers must be seen as the shock force around which all other workers must be rallied.

This can only be achieved by a simultaneous process of armed struggle, civil disobedience and political explanation aimed at destroying the credibility of Stormont.

The foregoing may appear to be an oversimplification of events in the Six Counties but like all situations, simple or complex, one is faced with the choice of deciding which of the numerous factors existing at any given time is the one which must be strengthened in order to prepare the condi-

tions for advancing to the next stage.

The main objective at this stage can only be defeat of the Stormont and of course it would be infinitely preferable if all the forces opposed to it at the present moment did so for the correct political reasons, i.e. the advancement of the interests of the working class but in real life choices such as this rarely exist.

Some oppose it from the standpoint of the working class. There are those who would swing back to giving it their support if it would become 'more representative'. Others would settle for its continued existence if it only exercised its control over a smaller geographical area and the nationalists who see it simply as a stage in the fight for a united Ireland.

The Government in Westminster are evidently of the opinion that it should be reformed so that the 'moderates' can be weaned away from the more radical elements but every attempt to institute reforms leads to an increase in the pressure from the right. It is evident that such a contradiction exists and the continuation of armed struggle and civil disobedience campaigns will serve to sharpen them. Any 'cooling down' of the situation can only serve the interests of those who seek to preserve the status quo.

The armed struggle in the Six Counties also faces the Government in Westminster with another dilemma. If it is seen to make concessions under such pressure it will strengthen the idea that the taking up of arms is a surer method of bringing about social change and at the same time weaken its support among the very elements which have been the strongest advocates of union with Britain.

If on the other hand it is unable to bring about a 'conciliation' in the Six Counties and the armed struggle gains momentum, the successes obtained in that struggle will have repercussions outside the immediate area of conflict.

Withdrawal of support from Stormont

The best way in which outside people can

help is to demand that the Government in Westminster should withdraw political support from Stormont, withdraw all British troops and end all forms of financial help.

In England there is little support for maintaining British troops in Ireland; what is needed is a campaign in the factories to turn this negative feeling into a positive demand.

LIMITED SOVEREIGNTY

by A King

The refusal of Rumania to abandon its policy of self reliance and independence in the face of pressure from the revisionists in the U.S.S.R. and the surrounding countries is of great importance to all who wish to see socialism encompass the whole world.

As this pressure increases, so the international prestige of the C.P.S.U. declines as the consequences of the doctrine of limited sovereignty become clearer even to those whose political vision has become distorted by revisionism.

There are those however who, whilst opposing any armed intervention by the other Warsaw Pact states, feel that Rumania is weakening the socialist front by refusing to integrate its economy more fully with those of the other members of Comecon. They still feel that socialism can best be fostered by a division of labour within the socialist camp under the direction of a supra-national organisation such as Comecon.

If one accepts this concept one must also accept that any disruption of this interde-

pendence is harmful to the overall interests of the other member states, therefore it cannot be permitted, hence the theory of limited sovereignty.

It must also be recognised that in any such arrangement the largest single economic unit will play a dominating role.

If one sees this as the way in which socialism will extend its influence over the whole globe then it is only a simple extension of this to conclude that relations with the less economically developed nations should be on the basis of gradually assimilating them into the 'socialist system'.

Countries which have succeeded in throwing off the old imperialist powers now see the danger of being dominated by a new kind of imperialism.

This is the reason why the Soviet Union is now losing influence among the former colonial countries and is increasingly being implicated in coups in attempts to

retain its influence in government circles.

Sudan Coup

The attempted coup in the Sudan is one such example.

The reluctance of Numeiry to be sucked further into the Soviet economic orbit was presented as a move to the right under the influence of the western imperialist powers and the Coup was an attempt to remedy that situation.

It is unlikely that Numeiry will lead the Sudanese people to socialism but the indications are that he is adopting a policy of non-alignment with any imperialist power and this means that objectively he is acting in a progressive manner even though his subjective reasons may differ from those of Marxists.

Numeiry and others like him will be thrown on the scrap heap when the internal contradictions dictate the change and not when outside interests desire it.

Many comrades in the Sudan have paid with their lives for mistaking the interests of the revisionists in the Soviet Union for genuine proletarian internationalism.

Rumania

The Rumanian comrades do not make this mistake and the result is a great deal of difficulty for the revisionists.

Unlike Czechoslovakia, there is no Dubcek to provide the excuse nor a danger of invasion from the capitalist countries.

Propaganda attempts to shake the resolve

of the Rumanian Party leadership have failed and moves to exacerbate internal contradictions do not seem to have met with much success either.

The contradictions already existing within the Communist Parties and states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will be sharpened tremendously if Rumania is allowed to assert its independence, particularly if that country can expand its production at a greater rate than that of its neighbours.

The political and economic support given by China and Albania will ameliorate if not completely neutralise any attempts by the Comecon countries to apply economic pressure and although those of us who made the mistake of assuming that Czechoslovakia would not be invaded hesitate to express similar views with regard to Rumania, there is one vital difference which may well tip the scales against intervention.

The Party leadership in Czechoslovakia were completely demoralised. This meant that there was unlikely to be any determined organised opposition to the imposition of a Government which would obey the dictates of the Soviet revisionists.

In Rumania, however, there is a strong, united Party which is generally accepted as having mass support among the people.

In the event of armed intervention it is highly likely that armed resistance would be organised which may well spread across the frontiers and create instability in the surrounding states.

This factor is likely to carry more weight with Brezhnev and Co. than any concern about 'world opinion'.

COMMENT

by Tom Hill

Proof of Mao's statement that the principal contradiction in the world today is between imperialism on the one hand and the national liberation forces on the other is underlined by the present U.S. crisis.

Whilst the underlying causes of the crisis are inherent in the capitalist system itself these contradictions have been brought to a head more quickly by the failure of United States imperialism to subjugate the people of Vietnam.

It is not simply the cost of the war which has helped bring about this crisis but the fact that United States companies can no longer look forward to extending their opportunities for extracting super profits from the peoples of south east Asia.

In addition, the peoples of South America are increasingly taking measures to limit the power of American imperialism to interfere in the internal affairs of their states.

Japan

Japan, long regarded as a protege of the U.S. imperialists is now flexing its muscles.

The efforts being made by the Japanese ruling class to create the political conditions in their own country in which militarism can be revived is an indication that they are not prepared to put their faith in economic power alone.

In "Economic Problems of Socialism", Joe

Stalin said:

"It is said that the contradictions between capitalism and socialism are stronger than the contradictions among the capitalist countries. Theoretically, of course, that is true. It is not only true now, today; it was true before the Second World War. And it was more or less realised by the leaders of the capitalist countries. Yet the Second World War was not a war with the U.S.S.R. but was a war between capitalist countries. Why? Firstly, because war with the U.S.S.R., as a socialist land, is more dangerous to capitalism than war between capitalist countries; for whereas war between capitalist countries puts in question only the supremacy of certain capitalist countries over others, war with the U.S.S.R. must certainly put in question the existence of capitalism itself."

"Some comrades hold that, owing to the development of new international conditions since the Second World War, wars between capitalist countries have ceased to be inevitable. They consider that the contradictions between the socialist camp and the capitalist camp are more acute than the contradictions among the capitalist countries; that the U.S.A. has brought the other capitalist countries so much under its sway to be able to prevent them going to war among themselves and weakening one another; that the foremost capitalist minds have been

sufficiently taught by the two world wars and the severe damage they caused to the whole capitalist world not to venture to involve the capitalist countries in war with one another again - and that, because of all this, wars between capitalist countries are no longer inevitable.

These comrades are mistaken; they see the outward phenomena that come and go on the surface but they do not see those profound forces which, although they are so far operating imperceptibly, will nevertheless determine the course of developments."

The prediction that the contradictions between the capitalist states could become stronger than those between the capitalist states on the one hand and the socialist states on the other, is now being shown to be correct.

The difference in the situation is that the sharpening of the contradictions between the capitalist states is now more likely to lead to revolution than imperialist war.

Europe

Although the sharpest contradiction is between the United States and Japan, the contradictions between the European capitalist states and the U.S. are not to be ignored. The strength with which the former refused to accept the U.S. dictate in regard to the ten per cent tariff on imported goods is a new feature of the post war situation.

Nixon has been forced to admit that it is an indication of the relative decline of American economic power but it would be

a mistake to assume that the ruling class in the United States will passively accept this position. It will do everything in its power to re-establish its former dominant position and this will serve to further sharpen the contradictions between itself and its 'allies'.

Nixon's proposed visit to China is one of his moves in the game of American one upmanship and the Chinese Government would be failing in their duty to the world revolutionary movement if they failed to take advantage of the situation in order to increase the divisions amongst its enemies.

Britain

The continues rise in unemployment figures is bad enough but other related things are taking place that serve to underline the seriousness of the situation.

Part-time jobs, which for many couples with young children made the difference between existing and living are now becoming scarcer. Wages are tending to go down in some factories as piecework earnings fall as a result of shortage of work.

The uncertainty regarding job security is making itself felt but given favourable conditions there is a growing willingness to resist redundancy as more workers come to realise that redundancy payments are not of much use if one is forced to accept a worse paid job afterwards.

It is interesting to note that some managerial types are now feeling less secure than the workers they control.

Their 'loyalty' to top management is beginning to show cracks as it dawns on them

that they are just as expendable as anyone else.

The situation at U.C.S. shows the possibility of establishing a united front with some of them but its desirability is open to question when one realises that the 'successful' managers are those who can get the most out of 'their' workers.

Unity

The T.U.C. conference has come and gone with scarcely a ripple of interest among the people it is supposed to speak for. Perhaps the disinterest in the proceedings derives from a recognition by militant workers that, as one delegate put it, workers have had enough of being used as stage armies by their leaders.

The air of unreality was probably best summed up by the reporter of The Times who wrote that in spite of the harsh words during the debate on the Industrial Relations Bill, the passing of contradictory resolutions enabled delegates on both sides to draw "immense satisfaction from the outcome apparently feeling, like Alice, that all had won and all should have prizes."

Probably the most classic statement of social democracy made at that Congress was the one by Vic Feather:

"The real issue before us is this. Not the Bill, not the Act. The real issue is unity. What is the best way in which we can ensure that unity? Everything else is secondary."

As Mao Tse-tung and other Marxists before him have pointed out - Unity is relative and transitory, whilst contradiction is

absolute.

It is the working out of contradictions which brings about change. If there were no contradictions there would be no change, and indeed there would be no life itself.

As there can never be a situation, object, organisation or anything else in which changes are not taking place it follows that contradiction is a natural law that cannot be nullified by burying one's head in the sand.

If the latter method is tried, the contradictions find ways of expressing themselves, usually in a destructive manner.

Whilst Feather was the person who put this point of view into words, most other Union leaders are afflicted in different degrees by the same disease.

They are all caught in a cross fire which is likely to intensify rather than diminish.

On the one hand they are being pressed by Employers and Government to "put their own house in order" and discipline recalcitrants who will not accept the class collaborationist policy of the leadership.

On the other hand they are being faced with increased pressure from the membership to show some indication that they are earning their wages and otherwise justifying their existence.

Their inability to agree on a policy of out and out support for all rank and file activity against the employers is compelling each of them to try to establish his own Half-Way House. And as half-way, in this context, means different things to different

people, each group is in fact concerning itself with looking after its own sectional interests..

It is this social democratic approach to the question of unity, coupled with the contradictions outlined above, that account for the contradictory resolutions passed by Congress.

The main contradiction between the union leaders at the moment is over the question of registration.

The competition for members is their Achilles heel in this respect. For instance, there is competition between the N.U.G.M.W. and the T. & G.W.U. in many industries including engineering where the A.E.F. is also involved. The technicians' section of the A.E.F. is in competition with A.S.T.M.S. The Bank Clerks are in competition with Company unions, and so on. Amalgamations are being considered which may eliminate some, but not all, of this competition.

In these circumstances, a union which registers and establishes Agency Shops will have the edge over non-registered unions, at least organisationally.

The only way in which non-registered unions can improve their membership is by demonstrating that they give their members full support in struggle and full scope in using their own initiative.

However, irrespective of the reasons for each union leadership taking up its respective position, we need to view the situation objectively.

Some of us are of the opinion that the

unions will inevitably be drawn further into collaboration into the day-to-day working of capitalism as the desire of the union hierarchy to maintain their organisation at all costs gradually leads to more and more accommodation to the new situation.

A campaign to prevent Registration is therefore a sure way of gathering forces opposed to a policy of class collaboration whatever form it may take.

What the leaders do is relatively unimportant. For them to decide against sitting on this or that committee is little more than a gesture.

Militants on the other hand will have to take decisions on the best line to put forward to their fellow members in order to maintain maximum unity in the struggle against the particular employer, the employing class as a whole and also against all those who favour class collaboration.

This is the real unity.

The other is just a sham.

ULSTER

As every militant knows, the moment when you have the boss over a barrel is, by some queer coincidence, just the moment when he is only prevented from being reasonable by the fact that you are standing on his chest.

After fifty years of oppression the Catholic minority are now told that all past

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LETTERS

The Editorial Board,
The Marxist

July, 1971

Dear Comrades,

It is a pity that the article on the Paris Commune in No. 17 of "The Marxist" is marred by an insupportable statement.

Virginia Penn wrote, "On March 18th the people of Paris awoke to the jubilant call of the Commune leaders, the armed workers. Having made careful preparations for months the day had arrived to go into action."

The fraternisation between the regular soldiers and early risers of Montmartre on the morning of March 18th was quite spontaneous. It is true that there had been a call for a Commune from the downfall of Napoleon III but there is no evidence of a planned armed uprising. The Central Committee of the National Guard, of course already armed, was taken by surprise but rallied and announced, on that same day, "The proletarians of Paris, in the midst of the defeats and betrayals of the ruling class, have come to understand that they must save the situation by taking the conduct of public affairs into their own hands ...". The C.C. quickly organised itself so that a placard appeared on the morning of the 19th March calling for an improved barricade arrangement (an original is in my possession).

Now follows the important point that Marx, in September 1870, warned the workers of Paris against precipitate action but, when

they took the revolutionary steps in March 1871 he defended their action, applauded their courage and then said that they did not go far enough.

This is the crux of the argument of Lenin against Plekhanov who, after the 1905 Russian Revolution said that the Russian workers should not have taken up arms.

Obviously the statements by Marx and Lenin have, today, great importance and need reading and re-reading. Which better to suggest than "The Civil War in France" by Karl Marx (the best and cheapest edition is the Chinese one in the English language, which contains his preparatory notes) and "The State and Revolution" by Lenin.

Anyhow, "All for the Commune - the Commune for all!"

Stanley Hutchins

FAITH IN THE MASSES

Theoreticians and leaders of parties, men who are acquainted with the history of nations and who have studied the history of revolutions from beginning to end are sometimes afflicted by a shameful disease. This disease is called fear of the masses, disbelief in the creative power of the masses. This sometimes gives rise in the leaders to an aristocratic attitude towards the masses who, although they may not be

versed in the history of revolutions are destined to destroy the old order and build the new. This aristocratic attitude is due to a fear that the elements may break loose, that the masses may "destroy too much"; it is due to a desire to play the part of a mentor who tries to teach the masses from books but who is averse to learning from the masses.

Lenin was the very antithesis of such leaders. I do not know of any revolutionary who had so profound a faith in the creative power of the proletariat and in the revolutionary fitness of its class instinct as Lenin. I do not know of any revolutionary who could scourge the smug critics of the 'chaos of revolution' and the 'riot of unauthorised actions of the masses' so ruthlessly as Lenin. I recall that when in the course of conversation one comrade said that "the revolution should be followed by normal order", Lenin sarcastically remarked "It is a regrettable thing when people who want to be revolutionaries forget that the most normal order in history is revolutionary order."

Hence Lenin's contempt for all who superciliously looked down on the masses and tried to teach them from books. And hence Lenin's constant precept: learn from the masses, try to comprehend their actions, carefully study the practical experience of the struggle of the masses.

Faith in the creative power of the masses, this was the feature of Lenin's activities which enabled him to comprehend the spontaneous process and to direct its movement into the channel of the proletarian revolution.

Speech delivered by J.V. Stalin at a memorial meeting to Lenin.

January 28th, 1924

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wrongs will be righted but first the 'terrorists' must be defeated.

In other words, "disarm yourselves and put your trust in us".

Any militant also knows that, once having disarmed, the boss will put the boot in.

The urban guerrillas in Ulster are not likely to capitulate at the time when they are proving that all the Queen's horses and all the Queen's men cannot cope with the situation.

The Split in the Working Class

As far as the split in the working class is concerned, it was already in existence but covered up due to the passivity of the oppressed minority.

It is not the first time that a minority of the working class has had to sharpen contradictions within the class in order to break down the hold of reactionary ideas and organisations over it.

The most reactionary organisation in Ulster, apart from Stormont, is the Orange Order which has attracted large sections of the Protestant working class because it gave them 'security' against the Catholic who may be in competition with him for a house or job.

Stormont is now being challenged and so is the omnipotence of the Orange Lodge. Any force which challenges this reactionary set up is not only fighting for its own liberation but also for that of the Protestant workers as well.