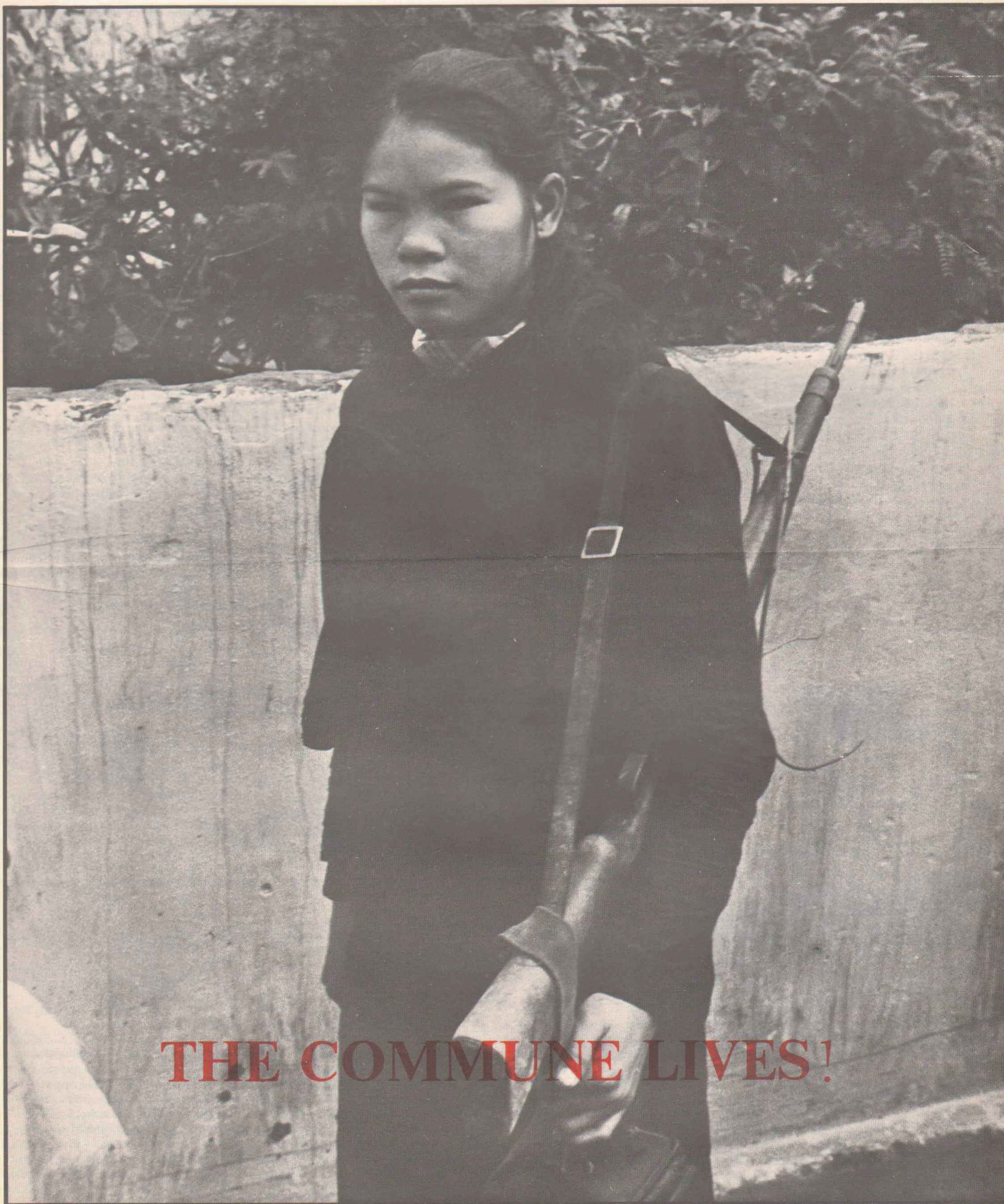


The Red Mole



THE COMMUNE LIVES!

PARIS COMMUNE, GREECE, ARAB GULF INTERVIEW, LOW PAID WORKERS

The ceaseless victories of the Indo-Chinese revolutionaries against the most powerful imperialism the world has ever seen, inspire the revolutionary movement throughout the world and add to the disarray of Capital. These victories and the continuing struggle in Indo-China come to mind as we celebrate the centenary of the Paris Commune, for they represent the highest point of the international class struggle today. However, one has to stress at the same time that the problem which confronted the Communards nationally, today confronts the revolutionary movement internationally: the need for a strong, determined and decisive leadership. This problem is today posed extremely sharply in the face of the continuing rise of the world revolution.

The degenerated bureaucratic caste which rules in Moscow and Eastern Europe acts today quite openly and shamelessly as a counter-revolutionary buffer and exceeds even Stalin in its willingness to stab revolutions and revolutionaries in the back. Thus we see the disgraceful support which the Soviet Union extends to the Bandaranaike Coalition government in Ceylon against that country's revolutionary forces. Side by side with imperialism, the Soviet bureaucracy hurries to defend its interests in the island of Ceylon; it fears the existence of a Cuba in Asia and under a leadership which contains revolutionary Marxists. To add to the existing confusion in Asia, the Chinese leaders, not to be outshone by the Kremlin, abandon without pretence the limits of state diplomacy and their own rhetoric and rush to aid the military dictatorship of General Yahya Khan against the mass uprising in Bengal. This is the way in which the Indo-Chinese revolution is betrayed in both Peking and Moscow.

For let us not be in any doubt as to what the upsurge in East Bengal and the uprising in Ceylon represent. As we described in detail in the last issue, they are the logical outcome of the accumulated contradictions of the Indian peninsula and represent a very welcome extension to the Indo-Chinese struggle. The extension of the front line would have put tremendous strains on U.S. Imperialism, militarily and, in particular, logistically, if the Chinese had backed the Bengali struggle for national self-determination *despite* its leadership (after

all what better way would there have been of deepening the struggle and imparting to it a permanent revolutionary direction?) and if the Soviet bureaucracy had kept its blood-stained hands out of Ceylon. Apart from the military and strategic considerations, the support by Peking and Moscow to bankrupt reactionary bourgeois governments creates a political atmosphere which hampers the development of the struggle and disorients the revolutionary movement.

At a time when the Indo-Chinese people need all the help they can get, we see the short-sighted manoeuvres of the Chinese bureaucracy involving them in supporting a brutal military dictatorship in Pakistan—Chou en Lai's letter of April 12th to Yahya Khan exceeds all precedents in grovelling before a bourgeois state. Chou writes:

"I have read Your Excellency's letter and Ambassador Chang Tung's report on Your Excellency's conversation with him. I am grateful to Your Excellency for your trust in the Chinese government ...

"Your Excellency and leaders of the various quarters in Pakistan have done a lot of useful work to uphold the unification of Pakistan and to prevent it from moving towards a split ..."

The complete text of this appalling communication was printed in full on the front page of the leading government newspaper in Pakistan, *The Pakistan Times*, underneath the lead headline which proclaimed: **PEKING SUPPORT REAFFIRMED**, on 13 April 1971. In this fashion the Chinese leaders betrayed the interests of the Bengali masses and exposed themselves to be as opportunist as the Soviet bureaucracy. Their ringing declarations in support of Marxism-Leninism today seem like a cruel joke to many revolutionary militants in East Bengal who are fighting for their life. The continuing struggle in Eastern Bengal, its spread to Western Bengal and a joint struggle for a Red Bengal will show the Chinese masses how their leaders have misled them. There are signs today of similar upheavals in West Pakistan in the very near future and then all the cheap and vile propaganda hacks of the Yahya regime in West Pakistan and abroad will have to think up new stories to deceive themselves about the nature of the struggle. Will the Chinese government help Yahya to crush a revolt in West Pakistan as well? Where do they stand on

the question of the revolution in the Indian sub-continent? Their supporters on an international scale should begin to ask that these questions be answered immediately.

Not satisfied with their support of the Yahya military clique and their silence on the events in Ceylon, the Maoist regime chooses this particular time to improve its relations with U.S. imperialism. Mao Tse Tung's interview with Edgar Snow (*The Times*, 28.4.71) reveals an element of both opportunism and senility. Thus the arch-imperialist Nixon is invited to visit Peking, where he "would be welcomed" and Mao expresses "admiration for American decentralisation which spread wealth and responsibility among 50 states". We wonder what the American supporters of Mao (in particular the black militants) would make of that particular "Marxist-Leninist" analysis. But certainly the most devastating effect of "ping-pong diplomacy" has been the statement of a senior Chinese diplomat to Edgar Snow that "Nixon is getting out of Vietnam". At a time when the Indo-Chinese comrades have registered a big success in Laos, this is hardly the time to accommodate imperialism and at the same time the anti-war militants who led the new upsurge in the United States as shown in the massive demonstrations of April 24, 1971, are given a stab in the back by Chinese "diplomacy". Hardly the best way of helping the revolutionary movement either in Asia or anywhere else in the world.

Chinese foreign policy has now reached the end of the road. From Geneva in 1954, where they openly pressurised the Vietnamese to accept an imperialist-sponsored Agreement, through the Indonesian debacle in 1965, via the isolationism during the "cultural revolution" and the opportunism vis a vis the military dictatorship in Pakistan and the monarchy in Nepal, right through to the invitation to Nixon to visit Peking. Having consistently refused to utilise Ho Chi Minh's call for a united front to aid the Vietnamese struggle, the Chinese leaders now seek a rapprochement with U.S. imperialism, no doubt based on the "five principles of peaceful coexistence". What price the Chinese Khrushchev now, comrades of the Chinese Communist Party? All these factors will no doubt also affect the Vietnamese leadership in Hanoi, and it is to be hoped that the latter's fighting

will is not impaired by Chinese opportunism.

The most urgent task is the bringing together of the three different sectors of the revolutionary struggle in Asia to form a revolutionary united front in order to hasten the destruction of U.S. Imperialism. The downturn of the struggle in Palestine has not affected the comrades in the Arab Gulf (cf. interview with PFLOAG militant elsewhere in this issue) and the latter struggle combined with that of the Indo-Chinese, in addition to the explosive situation in the Indian peninsula, makes the future seem a bright one. Despite the betrayals of Moscow and Peking, the struggle will move forward, but the lack of a coordinated leadership between its different sectors will slow its pace and hinder the unifying process which leads to a Red Asia.

The tasks confronting the militant Fourth International (F.I.) seem overwhelming in the face of the extremely limited resources at the latter's disposal but the fact that the F.I. does not lack state power should be an added impetus to its militants in the metropolitan countries to give all possible support to the comrades in the colonial and semi-colonial world, who struggle against imperialism. The need for a mass revolutionary international has never seemed greater than it does today and the centrists (i.e. the "non-sectarian" sectarians) who avidly searched for crumbs from the Maoist table and condemned the F.I. as being sectarian, now begin to ask themselves certain questions relating to the new turn taken by the Maoist leadership. They should also not be too surprised if within the next year the Peking leaders begin to regret their breach with Moscow.

For the militants of the International Marxist Group and the Spartacus League the struggle to build a large and viable section of the Fourth International in Britain, based on the working class, to continue, and we will carry out our nationalist duties as best as our limited resources will permit us. The problems which have to be surmounted are numerous, but then the possibilities are also immense.

APRIL 24th. DEMO

On April 24th, some 3,000 to 4,000 people gathered in London's Trafalgar Square for a rally and demonstration in solidarity with the struggle of the peoples of Indo-China. The mobilisation had been called by the Vietnam Solidarity Committee in response to American appeals for the international coordination of actions on that date.

A rough survey of the banners carried made it clear that the backbone of the mobilisation were the International Marxist Group and the Spartacus League branches which had been active in organising it at the local level. However, sufficient banners of local Labour Party Young Socialists, Communist Party, International Socialism and Maoist groups were present to suggest that the lack of greater representation of these tendencies on the mobilisation was not on account of their principled opposition to it. What precisely it was due to is perhaps for these groups to make clear. However, the banners of groups expressing solidarity with the Irish, Spanish and Ceylonese peoples were prominent. Although the Schools Action Union

and certain universities and technical colleges were represented, the virtual coincidence of the mobilisation with the beginning of academic term had made the contacting of the bulk of the student population impossible.

Group '68, whose members include a wide spectrum of U.S. citizens resident in Britain opposed to their country's involvement in S. E. Asia, took an active part in organising and mobilising for the action, although making clear their pacifist rather than solidarity position. In particular they provided the recordings of the Winter Soldier Investigation into army war crimes which were played to the assembling crowds in the square.

Of the three speakers, Group '68 spoke first, giving some idea of the scope and scale of the American mobilisations, and their place in the resurgence of the anti-war movement. Ernie Roberts, of the Engineering Union, then spoke on the internationalist obligations of the British Labour Movement and the irresponsibility of its leaders in remaining so apathetic over

VSC, by putting the Indo-Chinese struggle in its international context, was able to stress how central its role continued to be.

The demonstration passed through the central shopping districts on its way to the U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square, where a delegation handed in a letter expressing disgust with U.S. policies and solidarity with the peoples of Indo-China. The body of marchers themselves found the military-style formations of police surrounding the Embassy both infuriating and illuminating. An American flag was burnt, and the mood of the demonstrators took a markedly more militant turn. However, the closed ranks of the marchers, particularly of the Spartacus League at the front, prevented many arrests on the march (two arrests were made in all). Dispersal at Hyde Park, in previous demonstrations the scene of victimisation by the police, was this time accomplished swiftly and efficiently.

Demonstrators were subsequently amazed to read in the *Observer* the next day that the mobilisation had involved only some 350 people

This report was echoed in the *Workers Press* report of 400, and more "generously" in the 1,000 given in the *Morning Star*. In fact 2,000 leaflets had proved inadequate to cover the Square, and this does not count the sizeable numbers joining the march immediately before it left or along its course.

VSC, incensed at this treatment of a mobilisation markedly more successful than all its immediate predecessors, has sent a strong message of protest to the *Observer*. They point out what is at issue is a lot more than mere big over numbers. There has in fact been a new access of strength, ending the downswing in the anti-war movement, reflecting that in America although still on a more modest scale. This upsurge has expressed itself in both the quantitative and qualitative strengthening of the demonstration. The bourgeois press and its Stalinist and sectarian derivatives must not be allowed to obscure this fact.

Duncan McNiven

HOUSING: A Problem Capitalism Never Solves

The economic boom since 1945 saw an increase in the wages of large sections of the working class. What it disguised was that in many areas the social services, in education and in health care, the situation of the working class had got no better. In fact in some areas it had got worse. Probably the most obvious example of this is housing.

The situation in 1945 was extreme. Of the 10½ million homes which had stood at the beginning of the war, half a million were either completely or partially destroyed, another 250,000 were severely damaged, and three and a quarter million needed repair. Yet when the post-war Labour government faced its first Balance of Payments crisis in 1948 housing was amongst the first things to be cut (from a programme of 10,000 to one of 200,000).¹ Throughout all the fiddles of the '50s and '60s the situation has not improved materially. In 1965 there were 13,500,000 houses which were either slums or not worth repairing.² Even in relative terms the rest of Europe Britain's record is appalling. In 1965 6.9 houses were completed per 100 of the population compared to 7.6 in France, 8.1 in Italy and 9.7 in West Germany.³ It has been estimated that 500,000 houses per year must be built simply to replace those coming unfit.⁴ But the highest figure that has been reached for slum clearance is just over 1,000.⁵

The last period of the Labour government in office was actually marked by a decrease in house building—particularly council housing. A real start in this direction was made in the post-devaluation cuts when the number of council houses to be built was cut by 15%. The same idea of the cuts involved can be judged from the figures for the following boroughs:

	No. of houses built in:	
	1968	1969
Wolverhampton	952	669
Nottingham	720	641
Sheffield	1393	496
Leeds	3345	430
Manchester	1317	688
Cardiff	298	18
London	406	87
Walsley	181	6

the fine record for the last full year of Labour government!⁶

The housing conditions this added up to were appalling. In 1968 for example there were 110,000 families waiting to be rehoused by the GLC and 45,000 in Birmingham.⁷ In 1967 it was found that there were 1,700,000 houses unfit for human habitation, of which 79 out of every hundred lacked a wash basin, 77 out of every hundred lacked an inside lavatory, and 60 out of every hundred had no proper bath.⁸ In London there are 155,000 one-room households. Of these 84% have either no bath or only a shared one, 80% share a lavatory, and 20% of these do not even have their own sink or stove.⁹ It is undoubtedly the disgusting housing conditions and the large rents that have to be paid that are a contributory factor to the fact that in 1968 48% of all British children fell below the British Medical Association's "optimal" nutritional standards.¹⁰

OVERCROWDING

The conditions needed to qualify for overcrowding are unbelievably barbaric. "Provided that each room is a minimum of 10ft by 10ft—three good steps in each direction—the rules are as follows: each room may have up to two people in it, so long as they are married or of the same sex. Children under ten count as half and those under a year are not counted at all. Thus even if a family had quads in one room, until they reach their first birthday there is no overcrowding, as they do not officially exist.

officially overcrowded even if they are an elderly widow, her fifty-year-old daughter, and a grandson of twenty."¹¹

The type of conditions this produces for racketeering is of course fantastic, and, to put it in a form that will avoid libel, the role of the police is not all that could be desired. Similarly with magistrates. The maximum fine they can give for harassment is now £750 but the average is only £16.¹² The Milner Holland Report found that only in one quarter of cases where clearly illegal acts had been committed were the police successfully appealed to.¹³

Here is a description of one such incident: "violence of this kind (for eviction) was expected by a family (which was under the protection of a tribunal) consisting of a married couple, three small children, and their grandmother. The landlord ... had already carried out the same threat against another family in the house, with the help of two strong arm thugs. And he had done this on the day (it was the day he always collected rents) and at the same time that he had said he would. In order to prevent this happening twice, the police were informed and were all the more urgently asked for help because the mother of the family was a polio cripple. They said that they were extremely sorry but they could not afford the time or the men. The right thing would be for the family to telephone if help was actually needed. If they had no telephone there would be a box not far away. The landlord's threat was duly carried out. The children were dragged from their beds, the father knocked down, and their mother and grandmother dumped on the pavement."¹⁴

FURNISHED ACCOMMODATION

There is least protection where conditions are worst. For example, 75% of all furnished accommodation is in houses built before 1914 and in furnished accommodation there is virtually no protection for tenants.¹⁵

Again in this situation the police give no help. An example of this was given in a letter to the *Evening Standard* of 19th Feb. 1971. This read: "One mother I visited had all her possessions, including every item of clothing and bedding, removed by the landlord so that she had no change of clothes for the children nor any bedding. Not only had the landlord taken the tenant's refrigerator, but he had left all the food in it, so when she would eventually get it back it would be stinking and crawling. Why had he done this? Because after paying him the exorbitant rent of £9 per week for two rooms, the tenant had had the temerity of applying to the rent officer for a fixed rent. The tenant went to the police and accused the landlord of theft as well as harassment, but they refused to take any action, saying that no theft was involved, as the landlord had taken the tenant's possessions only temporarily—promising to return them when they moved away."

It is a superb indictment of a period when there had been no less than twelve years of Labour government that the following type of conditions could still be described:

"Home was one fairly large room, with a double bed and two cots touching it which took up half the floor space. In a kitchen area there was a plastic bowl for a sink. All the water had to be carried in buckets up two flights of stairs, there to be heated on the gas stove. The one lavatory and bathroom were shared by 18 persons. Two easy chairs took up the rest of the room. Every available inch was festooned with laundry, as both children were still in nappies. Her husband, a builder's labourer, brought home about £15 a week, and the rent of this one room was £3.10. Yet because the room was dry and reasonably large, and sun came in in the morning, she was immensely proud of her husband's efforts which had

directly attributable to capitalists and not merely the system they represent. To take just one staggering fact, the amount of private investment in housing actually went down by 14% between 1964 and 1969. But the capitalist system fouls up every part of housing.

If a person buys his own house, then at least 100% profit in interest will be made by the firm lending the money. On Council housing, the vast bulk of rent payments also go to money lenders. For the GLC in 1969-70 for example it was estimated that 18/3 out of every £1 income from rents will go to money lenders.¹⁷ Under the Labour government the proportion going in this way went up steadily from 79% of all income from rents to 89% of all such income. The biggest racket is of course privately rented housing. To begin with, private landlords charge the most. For example, on a house worth £3,750, the average rent charged by a private landlord is three times as much as that charged by a local authority and half as much again as it would cost the occupier to buy the house himself.¹⁸ The housing conditions in privately rented houses are also the worst. An official survey in 1967 found that 35% of all privately-rented housing was unfit.¹⁹

In the light of all these features of the situation, it is no surprise that for many people the housing situation has now become a nightmare, and that whereas for the average family expenditure on basics such as food, heating, etc. is going down as a proportion of the family budget, for housing it is going up.²⁰ In many places the situation has become extreme. For example, the average rent for furnished lettings in London is 25% of the national average wage.²¹

In other words, many people are paying more than a quarter of their income just to keep a roof over their heads. The Tories announce plans to end the control of all homes with the situation still worse. It will affect 1.1 million tenants or roughly 4,500,000 people.²²

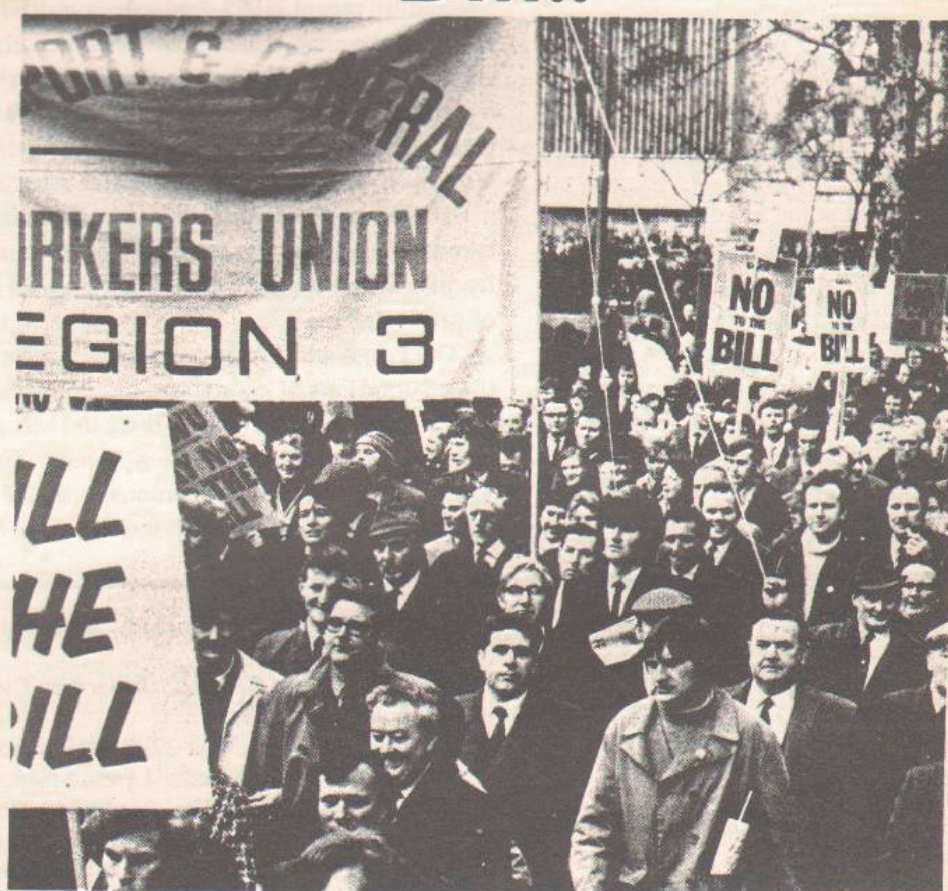
All these facts show two things. Firstly they show that even in the most favourable circumstances—that of a 20-year economic boom—capitalism cannot solve the problem of elementary social requirements such as adequate housing. Secondly the situation figures reveal means that we must expect an increasing struggle on the housing question. The problem of housing will become even more pressing for the working class as the government policies make it harder to make relative gains on the wages front. So far most campaigns around housing have been dominated by the reformist politics of the C.P. But there is another tradition—that of the great Glasgow rent strike of the First World War. It is this tradition and that of using industrial action in defence of housing conditions that revolutionary parties must revive in the coming period.

J. Marshall

NOTES

1. H. Rose: *The Housing Problem*—2. Kincaid
3. *Ibid*—4. *The Times* 24.10.63 cited in A. Harvey: *Tenants in Danger*—5. Kincaid op cit—6. Not a
7. *on the Rents 1970*—7. Rose op cit p. 20 & 27—
8. *Prest: A Manual of Applied Economics*—9. *Ibid* op cit p. 35—10. *Ibid* p. 36—11. *Ibid* p. 38—12. *T*
13. 12.3.71—13. Rose op cit p. 43—14. A. Harvey p. 101—15. Holman: *Socially deprived families in Britain*—16. Rose op cit p. 37—17. Not a Penn
18. *Rents 1970*—18. Holman op cit—19. *Prest op cit*
20. *Between 1959 and 1969* it went up from 9.4% to 12.2%. The price of housing in the same period went up by 65%—21. *Tribune* 12.3.71—22. *Ibid*.

The Industrial Relations Bill..



A Declaration of WAR

by Peter Hampton

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LOW PAID WORKERS

No satire was intended when the Wilson Government published its last White Paper on Incomes Policy, proclaiming "The challenge which faces us as a socially just society is what steps we can now take to improve the lot of the low-paid in an increasingly affluent society."¹ On the contrary, every government that our "socially just society" ever fostered has sworn, hand over heart, to speedily improve the tragic position of the badly-paid and raise them higher in the class system.

Fortune has now presented us with an instructive guide to just how much they all failed. It appears in the form of a report by an institution now closing down because it, too, failed to solve such embarrassing problems for the ruling class as low pay. The doomed and unlamented National Board for Prices and Incomes has just produced its final official Report, some 200 pages on "General Problems of Low Pay" It's worth looking at.²

VERY LITTLE CHANGE

The experience of the past is considered and summarised as follows: "the position of low paid workers in relation to better-paid workers has changed very little over long periods of time". Indeed, this reality is central to the Report. It is readily proved by the figures of earnings for men in full-time manual work. The Report looks at the median (or middle) earnings level for these workers and then considers how the lowest 10% of them have fared, in the light of that level. The results seem astonishing:

% of median earnings level earned by bottom tenth in:

1886—	68.6%
1906—	66.5%
1938—	67.7%
1970—	67.3%

In short, a century of regular and severe inequality. Now, of course, there are qualifications (the surveys carried out in those different years varied in coverage; general economic progress means that today's bottom tenth are not so badly off as those of 1886; tax and social security arrangements have helped the low-paid to some extent). However, the message comes over loud and clear—marked inequality amongst workers is a fact, unchanged for generations.

HOW TO HELP

Everyone agrees that some action must be taken to assist the low-paid. However, the Report says, "There always will be people who are low-paid in relation to their fellows"³, and restricts its solutions to trying to raise the bottom 10% of workers to a position somewhat nearer to the middle level of earnings. In other words, the Prices and Incomes Board insists on limiting its study to the "fellows" of the low-paid, to other workers. It, therefore,

ends by calling on the workers and the trade unions to recognise that "a relative improvement of the position of some must mean a relative worsening of the position of others".⁴ The "others" it refers to are the better-paid workers. The reader is tempted to shout out: "What about the Bosses?"

THE BOSSES' SHARE

Nowhere in the Report proper is the question of low pay considered other than in relation to other workers. It is entirely incidental to the body of the Report—and not referred to elsewhere—that, delving deep into the pages of statistics following the text, we discover a table covering the national income as a whole.⁵ It is a vital piece of information:

U.K. Shares of Pay and Property Income in the Net Domestic Income:

Year	1911	1924	1965
Pay	77%	81%	86%
Property Income	23%	19%	14%

(To make the table easier to understand, the incomes of the self-employed are not included and anyway, represent only a small % of national income). So, PAY, meaning both wages and salaries, is slowly taking an increasing share of the national income, and PROPERTY INCOME, meaning rents and profits, is declining in relation to pay. From the point of view of capitalist economists, higher profits are crucial to the health of the system. Only with higher profits can investment be stepped up and the economy expanded. To consider, instead, a further reduction of the share of the national income going in profits and rents through a major redistribution of wealth towards the low-paid workers is unthinkable. Capitalism cannot seriously aid the low-paid without throwing the burden upon—the other workers. It cannot further reduce the bosses' share.

THE WORKERS' EFFORTS

Everybody knows why the workers are winning an increasing share of the wealth. Their own efforts, expressed through trade union militancy, are piling up the pressure upon the ruling class, and squeezing profits. The Report particularly locates three industries where pay is low (each covered by recent NBPI studies)—laundries and contract cleaning, where union membership is very low, and Health Service ancillary workers, where the unions have members but "have been inactive locally". The conclusions are obvious. Workers in the worst-paid industries must organise and struggle for better returns of their labour. No reforms can be expected from above, from a capitalist government watching the rate of profit decline.

The Prices and Incomes Board, by accepting the assumptions of capitalism, impliedly calls for restraints by militant workers in their pay claims. The capitalist press (e.g. *Sunday Times*, 3.5.71) openly brands the unions as the villains for not sharing out Labour's wealth more evenly

amongst the workers. For these "experts", profits are not to be mentioned. Or the reality of declining British capitalism might suddenly be revealed. And rejected.

J.C.

NOTES

- 1 "Productivity, Prices & Incomes Policy after 1969", para. 61.
- 2 N.B.P.I. Report 169. From H.M.S.O. Price—£1.50.
- 3 Page 39.
- 4 Page 43.
- 5 Page 159

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EVENTS

MONDAYS: Birmingham Red Circle meets, 7 Black Swan, Bromsgrove Street, Digbeth.

TUESDAYS: Oxford Red Circle, 34 Minster Road (Contact Martin Meteyard, 46127).

THURSDAYS: Glasgow Red Circle, Christian Bothwell Street, 7.30.

THURSDAYS: Stafford Red Circle, Dog & Pa South Walls, 8 p.m.

THURSDAYS: Norwich Red Circle, 8 p.m. Fe House pub. (opp. St. Andrews Hall).

EVERY FRIDAY: Black Defence Committee, George IV pub, Pentonville Road (corner Cum St.), N.1. (Kings X).

MAY 11th: North London Red Circle—"The Paris Commune & present revolutionary trends." 8.15 182 Pentonville Road (Kings X).

MAY 10th: West London Socialist Woman Group, Ring 574 7407 for details.

MAY 11th: Central London Socialist Woman Group, George IV pub., Pentonville Road (corner Cum St.). (Kings X). 7.30 p.m.

MAY 14th: IMG Public Meeting—"Ceylon, Bar Desh Erupt—Forward the Indian Revolution." Roebuck pub, Tottenham Court Road (Warren tube).

MAY 15th-16th: Paris Commune Demonstration, Paris. Contact Spartacus League, 837 6954.

MAY 15th-16th: Socialist Students Federation conference, Nottingham. Contact Mike Hamlin, c/o Nottingham University Students Union.

MAY 18th: North London Red Circle: "What is Trotskyism?" 182 Pentonville Road (Kings X).

MAY 20th: Irish Solidarity Campaign Public Meeting "Expose Ulster '71!" Speakers include Bowes Lee, Sean Matgamna (ISC), Dermot Kelly (London NICRA), and a speaker from the Belfast Republic Movement. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Hob tube). 7.30 p.m.

MAY 21st: Oxford Red Circle Public Meeting: Ring Martin Meteyard 46127, or 34 Minster Road.

MAY 26th: Oxford—Public Meeting & Film Show "Urban Insurgency in Northern Ireland". Ring Martin Meteyard, 46127 or 34 Minster Road.

MAY 30th: Clann na hEireann—Irish Freedom Movement. Guest speaker: Eoin O Murchu, Gealtacht Organisation for Sinn Fein. Parade from Speakers Corner, 3 Trafalgar Square.

WEDNESDAYS: Oxford Red Circle, 34 Minster Road, 7.30. Ring Martin Meteyard, 46127.

JUNE 11th—13th: "Fascism—Past & Present"—Weekend School at Bristol University. Conference 50p, accommodation free. Further information: Conference Organiser, Socialist Society, Students Union, Queens Road, Bristol 8.

WE RECOGNISE OUR OLD FRIENDS. OUR OLD MOLE, WHO KNOWS SO WELL HOW TO WORK UNDERGROUND, SUDDENLY TO APPEAR—THE REVOLUTION.—MARX

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THE COMMUNE AND THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL



Confronted by the concentrated power of capital which for the individual worker each capitalist represents, the workers' only defence is to organize themselves to oppose their collective solidarity to the bourgeoisie's money. Workers' associations and their permanent

Workers' associations and their permanent form -the unions-are thrown up spontaneously in the course of the class struggle.

For a strike to succeed, the workers in struggle must win over the majority of their workmates. To break this strike capital calls in the reserve army of labour whose miserable living conditions and lack of political experience makes them play the role of strikebreakers. These reserves tend to disappear however, since the experience of class struggle rapidly moves in the direction of establishing a more even level of consciousness in each country. Capital then has to fall back on foreign reserves of labour.

The workers' struggle to organize workers all over the world in a single solidarity movement is the answer to these efforts of the bosses. Proletarian internationalism sprung up in this way as a spontaneous result of the class struggle.

PRACTICAL INTERNATIONALISM

The first attempt at Union organization came in the first country to establish large industries, Great Britain. The British trade unions, established around 1860 were to suffer a great deal from strikebreakers imported from across the Channel and from the bosses' efforts to push wages down by relying on immigrant labour. They thus quickly revived the old tradition of plebeian solidarity which had sprung up during the French Revolution and which had caused an association of English workers to conduct a campaign against the counter-revolutionary war which the English reaction wanted to stifle the revolution. In 1862

means of communication and that each day will see the forging of a new link in the armour chain which will unite the workers of the world".

THEORETICAL INTERNATIONALISM

Fifteen years before in 1847 two young Germans ended their "Appeal" with almost the same words, "Workers of the world unite!".

Proletarian internationalism is not just an empirical given revealed in the course of the class struggle but a basic element of class consciousness, which was formulated in the communist programme even before the workers' vanguard became conscious of it through their concrete experience.

Since 1845 Marx and Engels had come to the conclusion that communist society could only be a world society, since it would be based on the development of productive forces realized by capitalism through the world market.

When they wrote the "Communist Manifesto" they had become internationalists in action through their membership of the Communist League, the first international workers' organization which lasted from 1836 to 1852.

The First International was created from the fusion of these two internationalist currents, the empirical current which the British trade unionists represented and the politically conscious current which Marx and his friends represented.

THE DUAL FUNCTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL

From its creation in 1864 Marx defined the "International Workingmen's Association" as having a dual function: on the one hand to gather together all genuine workers' organizations and on the other to infuse them with a clear communist consciousness and to bring the best elements of the different tendencies in the International to marxism.

Two distinct stages of the development of the

that the International then represented the actual movement of the working class: at the same time a political international (the movement for universal suffrage in Britain; the struggle against war) and an international federation of unions (no strike took place without the strikers contacting it).

THE PARIS COMMUNE

The most brilliant success of the International in action was unexpected and unprepared: the Paris Commune. Although the members of the International did not play a decisive role in the preparation and leadership of the revolt itself, the influence of the International over the rise of the French workers' movement in the preceding months and years was sufficient for one to be able to consider the first proletarian revolution in the world as the logical crowning of their work.:

"...the success was the Commune which was intellectually undeniably the daughter of the International, although the International had played no part in its preparations and the International was, with justification in this case, held responsible for it. When the International had become as a result of the Commune a moral power in Europe, discord immediately broke out". (Engels, Letter to Sorge 1874).

The Paris Commune ushered in the second phase of the International's existence, the phase of intense ideological struggle which rapidly led to the organization's decline.

IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE

From its very beginning the International had been a "marriage of convenience" between the British trade unionists and the weaker but more politicized continental workers' movement. The Commune put an end to this alliance. As they were trying to win seats in parliament, the Commune was altogether too revolutionary for the

International workers' movement suffer organizational setback.

Within this framework the struggle between the different tendencies became the primary characteristic of the International's last years. The ideological struggle between marxism and the anarchist currents (Bakuninist, Proudhonist etc) in essence represented the struggle between the sectarian utopian petty bourgeois of the workers' movement and its communist future. The rapid collapse of the International after 1871 should not make us lose sight of the importance of this struggle and of its results to unify on an international scale the political ideas and principles of the workers' vanguard.

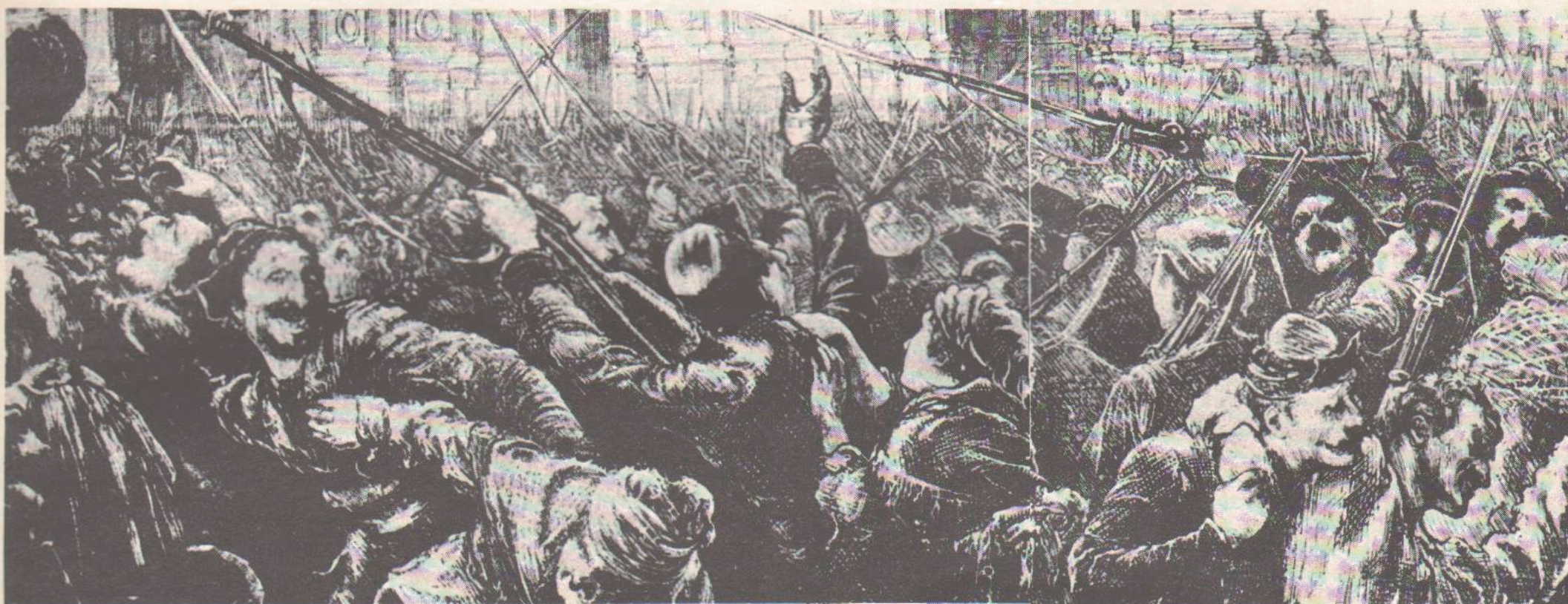
THE BALANCE SHEET

When the International was formed, the groups which constituted it had a mass of differing and unformed political ideas. In 1864 and thereafter in each of these countries existed a conscious determined marxist nucleus. In 1864 Marx and Engels had only a group of personal friends around them. In 1872 there was a nucleus of organized marxists in almost every European country.

This balance sheet is all the more revealing when one remembers that, with the exception of the German party, there was not one single organized national workers' party in Europe at the time of the founding of the International. Those who pretend with good vulgar sense "to begin with it's necessary to build a national organization" the example of the I.W.A. shows that it's precisely through the building of an international organization that the tasks of constructing national organizations can be fulfilled.

It's true that the International split up as national parties had developed. But that's an argument against the organizational efficacy of an International: it only shows the limitations

CENTENARY OF THE



Women and the Commune

The Role of Women

Faced with the spontaneous insurrection of the Paris proletariat on March 18th 1871 the bourgeois government under Thiers fled from the capital and the armed working people took the power into their own hands. In the classic writings on the Commune by Marx the heroic role played by women is pointed out, and even contemporary bourgeois commentators were forced to admit the importance of women's participation in the Commune. In Benoit Malon's words: "One important fact among all those brought to light by the Paris revolution is the entry of women into politics. Under the pressure of circumstances, and through the spread of socialist ideas . . . they felt that the cooperation of women was indispensable to the triumph of the social revolution." Moreover, the official parliamentary inquiry into the 18th of March insurrection confirms this: over 1,000 women were arraigned before the Councils of war. How many others were killed at the barricades and in the great slaughters during the "bloody week" will never be known.

Although women had actively participated in the great battles of the 1789 revolution, and in those of 1848, they had received no recognition of their rights. The Jacobin Republic of 1793 had proclaimed universal male suffrage, the right to work and the right to education, but had not extended these basic rights to women. When the First International was founded in 1864, the French section was more or less dominated by Proudhon's reactionary ideas on women. Not only was Proudhon very hostile to the idea of women going out to work but he also attempted to demonstrate that women were inferior to men from a physical, moral and intellectual standpoint. His advice to young men was "If you want to get married, understand at the

outset that the prime requisite for a man is to dominate his wife and be the master." His influence within the French section was such that in 1866 it had drawn up a statement against the participation of women in industry. This however did not prevent women from belonging to the First International and from challenging these views by actively organising themselves around basic demands.

During the Second Empire the only way women in Paris were able to earn a pittance, and this for an 11-hour day, was by doing needlework. But the convents and religious orders gave the dressmakers great competition by supplying work at prices 25% lower than those of the working women. This competition was not, perhaps, irrelevant to the anti-clericalism of the Commune women. As it was virtually impossible for women to live off their starvation wage alone they were forced to "marry", whether legally or not, and keep house and children into the bargain. Conditions became even more appalling during the great siege of the 1870 winter; unemployment had become rampant; with the capital cut off from the rest of the country, food was almost unobtainable. Women had to queue for hours for rations, in the snow and cold. It was at this time that some women, especially two members of the International, Louise Michel and Nathalie Lemel, began to set up organisations which were to lay the foundations for the Commune. Food kitchens were started to provide workers with food at a low price; an organising committee was set up to integrate the various catering, supply and production cooperatives. In certain areas Vigilance Committees run only by women were created. Apart from these activities, the women were also acting as nurses and ambulance carriers for the National Guards. More important still, all this work was combined with intensive political education and propaganda work for the First International.

The Actions of the Commune

When the victory of the Commune was proclaimed, "largely due to the intervention of

the women who had covered the artillery with their own bodies, and even placed themselves at the muzzles of the guns, to prevent the latter being fired", the women had good reasons to support the new regime. In spite of the backward views held by most of the Commune leaders on women (for example they did not foresee for one single instant that women might have civic rights), certain measures were passed which affected them concretely. The Commune decreed that any rent payments made during the siege of Paris were to be deducted from future payments, that any tenant could cancel his lease during the next six months, and that tenants could not be evicted. They also decreed that pledges left at pawnshops could not be sold until further decrees established the regulations for dealing with these articles—especially tools—the loss of which would hinder a worker finding new work. A decree of the 10th April affected the women even further; a pension of 600 francs was to be granted to the wife, legal or not, of any member of the National Guard killed while defending the Commune, and any children, legitimate or not, could collect a smaller pension until the age of 18.

Thus the recognition of free unions, outside the religious and bourgeois laws, were an important step forward. Similarly, any married woman who asked for separation from her husband was to receive an alimony.

With regards to education it was immediately seen necessary to organise a secular system of free education, and to make provisions for new schools for girls whose schooling had been so badly neglected. Workshops where women could apprentice to a trade, as well as schools of technical and industrial arts, were opened for women.

A law passed by Edward Vaillant guaranteed equal pay for women teachers.

Many of the activities which had been initiated by the women during the siege were continued and developed. For example, to meet the problem of unemployment, the workshops that had been created offered women employment in the manufacture of military outfitings, cartridges, sandbags for the barricades, and other military equipment.

Through the organisation which they had established, for example the Clubs, many of which were open to women only, the work of political education of all women was taken up on a far more intensive scale. (They would for example hold regular discussion groups in the Clubs on such topics as the oppression of women under the Catholic Church, prostitution, their right to education, etc.) Some women also realised the necessity of making appeals to gain support from the provinces.

Up to the last desperate battle and bloody slaughter, the women continued to provide all

the essential nursing and canteen facilities in town, without which Paris would have succumbed much sooner.

The Meaning of Revolution

To show not only the political awareness women had of the role they were playing in the fight for workers' emancipation, but also to illustrate the relevance these have to the situation today, we are reproducing below parts of official statements drawn up by women in the Commune.

"REVOLUTION WITHOUT WOMEN", by Andre Leo. May 8th 1871.

"Can the revolution be made without women? ... The first revolution gave women the title of citizens but not the rights. It left them deprived of liberty and equality. Repulsed by the Revolution, women fell back on Catholicism and its influence made up that great reactionary force, imbued with the spirit of the past, which strangles each revolution at its birth.

When will it be realised that this has gone on long enough? When will the intelligence of republicans be able to comprehend their principles and serve their interests? ... The willing woman should not act against them; she should reject her assistance ...

Why? Because many republicans have only dethroned Emperor and God to take their place themselves. And naturally to serve this desire they must have subjects, male or female ... Woman must be neutral and passive, under man's direction: she has only changed her confessor ...

But the Revolution means liberty and responsibility for every human being, with common rights as their only limit and without any privilege of race or sex ...

Now, who suffers most from the present crisis, the dearth of food and the cessation of labour? The woman, particularly the isolated woman whom the new regime takes no more care of than the old. Who has least to gain immediately at any rate—from the success of the Revolution? Again, the woman. It is men's enfranchisement, not hers, that they are fighting for ...

From one point of view the history of France since '89 could well be written as the 'History of the Consequences of the Revolutionary Party'. The woman question would take up the longest chapter, and in it we should read how this Party managed to hand over to the enemy half of its troops, who asked no more than to be allowed to march and fight in its ranks.

Anna de Kasparis



PARIS COMMUNE



Following passage is an extract from an article by Andre Marty published in a special issue of *Regards* May 1933 on the Paris Commune.

... social democrats fallaciously want to reconcile their 'socialism' with a defence of the bourgeois State that is trying to crush communists. They put forward the 'taking of power' by 'democratic means', without violence, without a proletarian revolution, without the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is why they have to falsify the whole history of the heroic revolution of 1871. They ignore its profoundly proletarian character and pretend that it set up an ordinary 'democratic' government, which was only a cover for capitalist dictatorship in reality.

This is the theoretical basis on which the social democratic leaders justify their integration in the bourgeois State apparatus whose interests they defend as sacred once they have been assimilated into the bourgeois milieu. If he were rejected by the bourgeois State the social democrat official would be trampled in the dust. So he will never hesitate to change his label and when fascism, which he has been making, comes to power, he will change sides, taking arms and baggage and trying to take the mass of the proletariat along with the party, with him.

What are the consequences today of this betrayal of the most precious lessons of the Commune and with it the basic Marxist doctrine? Instead of crushing the bourgeois State in November 1918 and installing the German Commune on its ruins, social democracy proclaimed that socialism could and must be achieved 'peacefully' in the framework and by the means of the 'democratic', that is, bourgeois, Republic. In the name of this democracy, the Kautskys and Scheidemanns have massacred the leadership of the German working class in the revolutionary struggles in 1918-1919. The 'big piece' of social democracy, the Weimar Republic, was built on the corpses of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. And this so-called 'popular' Republic gave the workers not peace but murderous repression, progressive liquidation of the gains of the working class legislation that existed, the rise of fascist assassin bands. And each time social democracy persisted in integrating itself in this republic, that became more and more fascist and in defending the preparations for a bourgeois terroristic-fascist dictatorship. In the name of the lesser evil, social democracy dissolved the organisation of proletarian defence that had 300,000 members—the Red Front—and massacred workers on May Day, the main agent being the chief of Berlin's police. From one betrayal to another it finally pros- trated itself in front of the fascist hangman of

that it had succeeded in weakening and dividing more and more and breaking up the Second International at the same time.

"Mr. Blum may very well, today, reproach the German social democracy for not having installed the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1919! Didn't he himself and his party violently attack the Spartakists at the time? Didn't he himself recently declare, in the name of his party, 'the undeniable right of France to indemnity', thus feeding fascism through his defence of the Treaty of Versailles? Didn't he with his party, continuously defend the policy of the 'lesser evil'? The famous campaign of Mr. Blum and *Populaire* against the Communist Party—guilty of wanting to oppose the workers' united front to Marshal Hindenburg—is not so different! Right now in France itself, aren't Mr. Blum and his party practising the policy of the 'lesser evil'? It is nearly a year now since the Chambre has been elected. By supporting a government that has not achieved even one of its electoral promises and is disillusioning the workers, isn't the socialist party making the bed for fascism?"

"There is only one way to escape this threat, the French workers only have one answer—the answer of the Paris Commune, of the Soviet countries, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is why, united for action, grouped in larger and larger numbers—socialists and communists—under red flags, reaffirming their alliance with the peasants, workers and enslaved people of the colonies, led by the Communist Party, the only heir of the traditions and methods of the Commune, they will march in larger and larger partial struggles, against capitalist exploitation and its regime towards the final struggle for the setting up of the new French Commune and the solid long lasting dictatorship of the proletariat and of socialist society, without classes.

Andre Marty

14th March 1933

Marx and the Commune

Two days after the defeat of the Commune Marx presented to the General Council of the International his address on *The Civil War in France*. In this document Marx took up, first through the General Council then in his own name, unconditional defence of the Commune and everything it had done and stood for. He accompanied this uncompromising stance with an analysis which he was not to surpass in incisiveness and brilliance, cutting straight through to the underlying process behind the confused happenings (distorted to an incredible degree by the bourgeois press in Britain as elsewhere).

Today when even the bourgeois press join in the celebration of its centenary, thereby attempting to appropriate a movement whose major aim was to destroy them, Marx's position is unchallengeable. This was not so at the time. Indeed, he himself expressed misgivings before its proclamation of the efficacy of the Commune. The leadership of the Commune was by no means in the hands of the International and of those thirty or so from the International, only perhaps two could be said to be under the hegemony of Marx's thought, the rest of them were Proudhonists of one sort or another. But by far an overwhelming majority of the Commune were Blanquists and Jacobins.

This lack of a unified, not to say Marxist, leadership was of course reflected in its policies and decisions. It was quite true, Engels said in

the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice . . . the Commune promulgated decrees that were in the direct interest of the working class and, in part, cut deeply into the old order of society. But even after two months the Banque de France had not been touched and the only factories that were put in the hands of the hands of the workers were those closed down by the capitalists and even those were not nationalised, but transformed into collectives. Again, the Commune was inept in dealing with its enemies, especially in relation to the bourgeois government at Versailles under Thiers, and its provisions for the defence of Paris were inadequate to say the least. For these and many other reasons, the Commune was less than a perfect model for the unequivocal support of Marx. The fact that he nonetheless took up the Commune, weaknesses and all, was not a reflection of Marx's ignorance. On the contrary, all the factors Marx mentioned and criticised in private letters to friends and participants in the Commune. His position on this question was determined by his Internationalist principles which demanded unconditional support of all those in the vanguard of the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. In the short term, this principled position cost Marx and the International dear. In the tradition of British chauvinism and philistine corporatism, the British trade union members of the Council took this opportunity to split with the International. At the same time the sections in various European sections were subject to severe repression from the bourgeois state for their association with the "Red Doctor", defender of the Commune.

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Whilst the Commune was deficient in many respects there is one fundamental theme which revolutionaries today must defend not only against the bourgeoisie but also against its "friends" in the C.P.s and elsewhere. It is beyond question that the brief weeks and days of the existence of the Commune witnessed a democratic structure which has been unsurpassed. But to see in this a mere "extension" and "advance" for democracy is to miss that aspect of it which was to change the thinking of Marx and Engels on the question of the state and fundamentally influence their future thinking. For, as Marx was to explain in his *Address*, the Commune's "real secret was that it was essentially a government of the working class, the result of the struggle between the producing and expropriating classes, the finally discovered political form under which the economic emancipation of labour could take place." Or, as Engels more briefly expressed it, it was the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat". For what the Commune had revealed was that the state was no mere machine which the working class had simply to lay their hands on, but was a structure which was part and parcel of capitalist society and as such had to be destroyed root and branch and replaced by institutions which would be the content of a workers' state. Of course, Lenin understood this, relying on this conception for his analysis in *State and Revolution*. It is precisely this conception of the Commune which the bourgeoisie cannot celebrate and it is only with this understanding that we can agree with Marx's concluding proclamation in *The Civil War in France* that "The Paris of the workers with its Commune will be commemorated for ever as the glorious herald of a new society. Its victories are

Its destroyers have already been pilloried by history and not all the prayers of their priests and parsons will be able to set them free."

J. R. Clynes

Trotsky and the Commune

... The Commune shows us the heroism of the working masses, their capacity to unite into a single bloc, their talent to sacrifice themselves in the name of the future, but at the same time it shows us the incapacity of the masses to choose their path, their indecision in the leadership of the movement, their fatal penchant to come to a halt after the first successes, thus permitting the enemy to regain its breath, to re-establish its position.

... If the power was found in the hands of the proletariat of Paris on March 18, it was not because it had been deliberately seized, but because its enemies had quitted Paris.

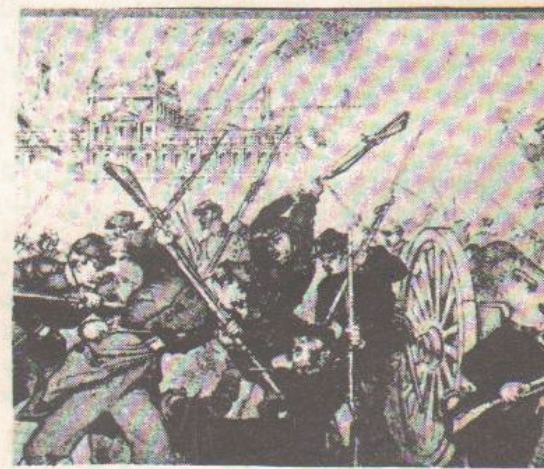
These latter were losing ground continuously: the workers despised and detested them, the petty bourgeoisie no longer had confidence in them, and the big bourgeoisie feared that they were no longer capable of defending it. The soldiers were hostile to the officers. The Government fled Paris in order to concentrate its forces elsewhere. And it was then that the proletariat became master of the situation.

But it understood this face only on the morrow. The revolution fell upon it unexpectedly.

The first success was a new source of passivity. The enemy had fled to Versailles. Wasn't that a victory? At that moment the governmental band could have been crushed almost without the spilling of blood. In Paris, all the ministers, with Thiers at their head, could have been taken prisoner. Nobody would have raised a hand to defend them. It was not done. There was no organisation of a centralised party, having a rounded view of things and special organs for realising its decisions.

... The real revolutionary task consisted of assuring the proletariat the power all over the country. Paris had to serve as its base, its support, its stronghold. And to attain this goal, it was necessary to vanquish Versailles without the loss of time and to send agitators, organisers and armed forces throughout France.

... We can thus thumb through the whole history of the Commune, page by page, and we will find in it one single lesson: a strong party leadership is needed. More than any other proletariat, the French has made sacrifices for the revolution. But also more than any other, it has been duped. Many times has the bourgeoisie dazzled it with all the colours of republicanism, of radicalism, of socialism, so as always to fasten upon it the fetters of capitalism.



POLITICAL CRISIS IN THE ARGENTINE

The new coup by the officers who have just replaced Levingston with Lanusse came as a shock to no one in Argentina. For some time, all of the classical symptoms of an impending coup had been appearing more and more plainly, and open polemics were taking place between the leaders of the different tendencies. Fundamentally, the events of recent weeks are simply a confirmation of a crisis involving actual political and social disintegration of the system, which is incapable of projecting even minimally effective solutions to the most pressing problems or to produce a political leadership of any homogeneity or stability whatever.

With the Onganía military dictatorship, which attained power in 1966, the Argentine bourgeoisie was able to think for a short period that it had entered a phase of relative stability. In fact, thanks to increased exploitation of the working class and pauperization of plebeian and petty-bourgeois strata, it was possible to achieve a certain economic recovery. At the same time, the maneuvers of the ultrabureaucratized trade unions, which in fact were collaborating with the regime, helped to bring about a stagnation in the mass struggle. The interlude, however, was brief. In May 1969 large mobilizations by the workers and students in Córdoba and Rosario marked an abrupt turn. The revolutionary crisis shaking the Latin American continent was also enveloping Argentina.

The history of the past two years is the history of the Argentinian bourgeoisie's desperate attempts to find an alternative solution. Its response to the 1969 upsurge was repression, but repression could not halt the mass movement. This is why the life of the Levingston regime—which, from the standpoint of its social content, was no different from that of Onganía—was distinguished by constant factional warfare taking place, broadly speaking, between the advocates of a policy of more determined repression and the advocates of a "nationalist-populist" operation aimed at winning a certain mass base for the regime and assuring the collaboration of the traditional political forces. The polemics over political orientation dovetailed, moreover, with those over economic policy. The supporters of a more "national" policy tinged with protectionism clashed with supporters of a "liberal" policy, which in fact would promote the penetration of foreign capital (American, in the first instance).

The question of whether a Peruvian-style solution should be expected in Argentina has in fact been discussed in Argentinian political circles.

A few weeks ago, for example, ex-president Frondizi made a prolonged visit to Peru, during which he voiced significant judgments. In the petty-bourgeois left also there are currents that openly praise the regime of Velasco Alvarado (e.g., the Izquierda Nacionalista [Nationalist Left] of Abelardo Ramos, which publishes the articles of the capitulationist Ismael Frias, who left the Fourth International in 1965 along with Michel Pablo).

For their part, the Argentinian revolutionary Marxists consider a Peruvian-style solution as a rather unlikely variant. In fact, Argentina differs structurally from Peru, where both before and after the 1968 coup the

vian army, above all in a context of relative stagnation of the mass movement, offered assurances for carrying out a cold transformation. There were many opportunities for keeping a check on the process from above, at least for one entire stage. But this is not the case for Argentina, where the army itself is deeply divided and—in the last analysis, the decisive factor—the masses have been on the offensive since 1969.

In fact, a turn in the Argentinian political situation would be possible only on two conditions: (1) if the government made important economic concessions to the masses, thereby broadening the unions' margin for maneuver and refurbishing their credibility somewhat; (2) if an agreement were reached with the political formations believed to hold real influence over the electorate. This poses the problem of a compromise with Peronism. It could even, at last resort, raise the question of the exile returning from Madrid. But, in the specific case, in the context of militant mobilizations of the working class, of a radicalization of broad petty-bourgeois layers, of the development of new revolutionary vanguards (inside the Peronist movement as well), such operations would entail enormous dangers for the bourgeoisie. A process might be touched off that no one could control, and the system itself would be threatened with collapse. This is why it is easier for politicians or military officers playing political roles to talk about "national-popular," "constitutional," or "Peruvian" solutions than it is for them to indicate the precise forms by which such solutions could be implemented. This is why it is easier to promise elections as a basis for returning to "normality" than to set a date for voting and, most of all, stick to it.

During the last two months, student, popular, and working-class mobilizations have continued almost without letup. Sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and even the professionals have been involved. The epicenter was the large industrial city of Córdoba, where the workers staged several general strikes and organized big street demonstrations including thousands and even tens of thousands of participants. It was the working class in the big factories of the city that led a movement which, while stimulated by the continual deterioration in the standard of living (according to official figures prices rose 29.9 percent between February 1970 and February 1971), acquired the increasingly political content of a struggle against the military dictatorship and capitalist exploitation in general. Moreover, precisely in Córdoba, the process of the political ripening of the new working-class vanguard has gone the furthest. Militant unions like those in the automobile industry (SITRAC [Sindicato de Trabajadores de Concord—Concord Workers Union] and SITRAM [Sindicato de Trabajadores de Materfer—Materfer Workers Union]) have opposed the old capitulationist, corrupt bureaucracy. Student youth have participated in the struggles of the workers. Organizations devoted to armed struggle have won considerable influence and staged spectacular actions. The lessons of May 1969 and the latest repressions have made clear to thousands and tens of thousands of workers that class struggle in Ar-

unquestionably been the Latin American country where urban guerrilla actions have developed most spectacularly (in certain aspects they have reached a higher level than in Uruguay itself). Five organizations have played a leading role—the FAP [Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas—Peronist Armed Forces], the FAR [Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias—Revolutionary Armed Forces], the Montoneros, the FAL [Frente Armado de Liberación—Armed Liberation Front], and the ERP [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—People's Revolutionary Army]. The first three groups claim to be Peronist (suffering deepgoing differences that simply reflect the differentiation in the Peronist movement as a whole. The FAL claims to be Marxist-Leninist (it arose partially out of the PCR [Partido Comunista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Communist party], which in turn was founded by youths who left the CP a few years ago). The ERP was created as the result of a decision by the PRT [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers party], the Argentinian section of the Fourth International, which provides the political and organizational leadership. In the recent period, owing both to its own increase in strength and the difficulties experienced by the other organizations, the ERP has emerged as the most dynamic force, the one most capable of carrying out spectacular actions of the sort that can win very wide sympathies.

The strategic perspective the Argentine comrades are following is the one laid down by the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International—elaborated and made more precise by the last two national congresses of the PRT—of a prolonged armed struggle, a revolutionary war, which might involve the intervention of the imperialists and thus could not be waged without profound ties to, and increasing participation by, the masses. The Argentinian comrades have no illusions that they can deal the class enemy a death blow through the activity of small vanguards, and they have rejected from the start *foquista* theories like those formulated in Régis Debray's celebrated pamphlet, which were more or less openly taken up by nuclei of revolutionary militants in Argentina and elsewhere. For the Argentinian revolutionists the battles of the last months are only the initial phase of the revolutionary war that is shaping up. Their actions represent only the beginning of a struggle that will of necessity be prolonged and very difficult. Their goal is to build up their forces, to train militants for combat, to win influence and sympathy by forms of armed propaganda, to establish the first direct links between armed struggle and the specific dynamic of workers' struggles.

These actions, which have come in rapid succession since the start of the year, especially in February and the first half of March, and which have made a very great impression on the daily and weekly bourgeois press, can be categorized as follows:

a. Actions aimed at acquiring funds by expropriations carried out in the old Bolshevik tradition (the most spectacular stroke was the one in Córdoba which, according to the Argentinian press, brought its organizers 121,000,-

c. Actions designed to win the sympathies of the most deprived by handing out food (meat, milk) taken from big distributing firms.

d. Actions linked to workers' struggles (the most important so far was the one carried out by an army detachment which invaded the factory in Córdoba and held a strike there).

All these actions have effectively achieved their objective of spreading propaganda. At the present time the ERP is the best-known revolutionary organization and has won very wide sympathy—in some big plants. From the technical point of view the enemy has had to recognize that the ERP has scored some points.

Any fear that such armed actions might isolate the organization from the masses is absolutely without foundation in the Argentinian context today. The converse is true. The mobilizing masses, the student movement, activists, and the plebeian strata in the big cities warmly welcome the initiatives of the revolutionary organizations. During a general strike in Córdoba, the banners of the ERP were greeted with strong applause by thousands of demonstrators (even the bourgeois press itself had to admit this). The same day, despite the position of certain so-called revolutionary groups, including the Peronese, thousands of persons went to the city prison, where the activities of the armed organizations were confined, and listened enthusiastically to short speeches that some prisoners (belonging, according to the press, to the Montoneros and the ERP) were read from their cells. A few days later 5,000 persons joined the funeral procession of a young worker killed by the police. The coffin was draped with the flag of the ERP. Finally, no distribution could be carried out without the active participation of the population in the districts where the operations take place.

Let me repeat again. This is only the initial phase of a very prolonged struggle. Our PRT comrades are perfectly aware of this. They are also that future developments depend to a decisive extent on their ability to transform the sympathy and influence they have won into solid ties with the mass movement, on their ability to integrate armed action in the dynamic of the struggles of the working class and all the poor strata of their country. Their basic strategy does not prevent them, moreover, from exploiting the few opportunities that exist for legal or semilegal activity and will not prevent them from exploiting more extensive possibilities that may be offered by conjunctive turns in the political situation—which at present are improbable—which cannot be absolutely excluded. In any case, the initiatives our comrades have taken in recent months are a milestone in the experience of the armed struggle in Argentina, which will be analyzed with the greatest interest by other revolutionary movements in Latin America.

This is why the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at its meeting drew "the attention of the international and of the revolutionary workers' movement to the importance of the Argentinian events and the tasks of international solidarity that flow from it," sent its warmest

[The following statement was issued by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International April 19.]

The government of Ceylon has declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew throughout the island; they have suspended all democratic rights, imposed a strict press censorship, and arrested hundreds of militants of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (the People's Liberation Front—JVP). They have proscribed the JVP and have started shooting prisoners without trial.

The leaders of the coalition government have used their monopoly of the communication media to lie about the JVP, misrepresenting them as a "fascist" and right-wing organization. At the same time the government has not dared to inform the public that it has sought and received aid from the imperialist governments of the United States and Britain; that it is using Indian and Pakistani gunboats and helicopters; that it has expelled the North Korean diplomats from Ceylon.

The Bandaranaike popular front government came to power in May 1970 by promising the masses that it would usher in a "new era" and build a socialist Ceylon. One pro-Moscow Stalinist and three renegades of the reformist Lanka Sama Samaja party (LSSP) were included in the cabinet in order to bolster up the "socialist" image. However, despite all the rhetoric, the coalition government has demonstrated that its real role is to maintain capitalist property relations and preserve the imperialist stranglehold on the Ceylonese economy.

During its ten months in power, the coalition government increased the police force by 55 percent and set up an antirevolutionary committee in the army. "Socialism" of the Bandaranaike variety means the denial of such basic democratic rights as joining or forming a trade union, as shown in the cases of the Velona factory, Dawasa Publishing House, and the Norwood Tea Estate. Workers who resort to strike action in struggling for union rights face bullets from the "people's" police.

The first budget of the coalition government submitted by N. M. Perera offered precious little to the masses. The budget demonstrated to the local and foreign capitalists that they need not have any fears or anxieties about the Bandaranaike government or its "Marxist" ministers. Of course they explained that they had not forgotten about socialism, but right now

it was not "practical" and socialism had to wait. Neither the "Save the country fund" nor the autumn budget could help the government avert the deep financial crisis it faced. Ceylon already owed the World Bank more than \$50,000,000 and has been unable even to pay the interest on it. And yet it desperately needed more hard currency to pay for even the most essential imports. The World Bank would not grant any further loans until the government agreed to follow a course of "austerity." This meant the imposition of further burdens on the masses, such as withdrawal of the rice subsidy, pruning of social services, and the imposition of a wage freeze. The coalition government accepted the strictures. These developments have confirmed the position of the Lanka Sama Samaja party (Revolutionary) [LSSP(R)] that the coalition led by the Sri Lanka Freedom party [SLFP] is a capitalist government dependent on imperialism for its survival.

Under these conditions the government had no alternative but to impose more and more burdens on the masses. The masses rapidly became disillusioned with the coalition government. The government had failed even to project any solutions to the problems of rising prices and constant erosion of the masses' living standards. Unfortunately for the coalition leaders, they now had to contend with another factor: the emergence of a revolutionary united front between the JVP and the LSSP(R), the Ceylon section of the Fourth International, and the newly formed revolutionary nucleus in the tea plantations, the Young Socialist Front. This united front rapidly gathered momentum, and the disillusioned masses were attracted to it. The Bandaranaike regime realized that the movement stood in the way of their "austerity" course.

On February 6, 10,000 people held a rally in Colombo sponsored by the JVP, the LSSP(R), and the Ceylon Mercantile Union [CMU], the most important trade union of the Ceylonese urban working class. The gathering condemned setting up a U.S. imperialist base in the Indian Ocean, called for Ceylon to immediately leave the British Commonwealth, demanded nationalization of the banks, plantations, and foreign trade, and appealed for defense of the masses' standard of living by an all-out war on unemployment and rising prices.

Faced with this situation, the government decided to try to isolate this political movement and to destroy it before the masses mobilized. The immediate aim



was to destroy the JVP. After alerting the army and the police, the government staged a provocation on March 6. This provocation was a petrol bomb attack on the U.S. embassy by an unknown organization called the "Mao Youth Front." The government attributed this action to the JVP despite its denial of responsibility, and invoked special powers under the Public Security Act. The government then imposed emergency regulations, and began to arrest all known militants and leaders of the JVP.

The JVP realized that they were faced with a critical situation. Rather than being decimated without a fight, they decided to resist the government repression. The clashes that followed between the JVP and the security forces were thus the direct consequence of the government action. The government miscalculated. They did not expect the JVP to resist. They did not realize that the JVP and its allies would have such solid mass support.

The Fourth International recognizes that the struggle broke out before all the sections of the oppressed masses, particularly the urban and plantation workers and the Tamil minority, had become politically united so that they were in a position to meet the bourgeois govern-

ment's provocation adequately and to accounts with the capitalist state and the Fourth International calls upon revolutionaries everywhere to break the spiracy of silence covering the repression in Ceylon. It declares its full support to the repressed and persecuted Ceylon revolutionaries. It calls upon the international working class, all workers and anti-imperialist organizations to do everything possible to block shipment of military supplies, and workers states to immediately stop sending military aid and equipment to the Ceylon government, which is used to murder and terrorize its own people. It calls upon the international working class not to be taken in by the "left" tenses of the Bandaranaike government and to recognize the basic capitalist nature of the regime and proimperialist nature of its repression. The state of emergency proclamation was approved by parties in parliament, including the Revolutionary United National party [URP]. The Bandaranaike government opened Ceylon's airfields to the use of the Pakistani government in transporting troops and supplies to suppress the rising peoples of East Bengal. Lieutenant Colonel Ranatunga of the Ceylon army, at a press conference April 18, justified the execution of JVP prisoners without a trial by saying: "We have learnt too many lessons from Vietnam and Malaysia. We must destroy them completely." (The London Times, April 19, 1971.)

Indian workers and anti-imperialist revolutionaries: oppose Indira Gandhi's pact with the butcher Yahya Khan and the British and U.S. imperialists in support of the Bandaranaike regime's war against the Ceylon working class, peasant, and student youth!

Down with the traitorous Keunem N. M. Pereras, Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, who, like their forerunner Noske, now arm reactionaries, a bourgeois army murder revolutionaries, support the murders or participate in the suppression of the masses of their country, and help suppress all democratic demands for the workers.

Freedom for Rohan Wijeweera and the other arrested JVP and revolutionary leaders!

Not one dollar, not one gun to the bourgeois army and state of Ceylon!

Long live the Ceylon socialist revolution!

GREEK MILITANTS IN PRISON

ist repression and provocation of revolutionary militants does not end once they have reached the prison gates or the concentration camps (our comrades learnt this difficult experience under the Nazi occupation).

the goals of the Greek dictatorship today, revolutionary Marxists are the victims of this repression—the worst type of repression, since it's practised within the working class movement itself.

Despite the disagreements and conflicts that have taken place between the degenerated leaders of Central and Eastern Europe and the "internal" fraction of the GCP, the GCP uses the same methods as the Bulgarian leadership against the Trotskyists. They dared to back our comrade Psaradellis, who had been arrested, to the Junta's torturers.

We publish below a letter from Trotskyist prisoners, who have been imprisoned for "life sentences", which has been sent to organizations fighting for revolutionary Marxism.

denounce to workers' organizations of the world, to vanguard militants, internationalist Communists, to the World Council of the Fourth International as well as to those who support militant internationalism throughout the world, the inhuman conditions of the prisons of Kerydalos and Egeine where we are serving long sentences inflicted on us by the officials of the Greek military capitalist dictatorship.

This is not the only price that we have to

"Side by side with this is Stalinist bureaucracy, whose decay and degeneration are obvious. It uses the most dishonest methods to hide its own decomposition, and to crush revolutionary ideas and their propagators.

"Its capitulationist role was again decisive during the defeat of the workers' movement in Greece in 1967.

"From the beginning of our time in prison the 'small' Stalinist 'chiefs' who were in prison tried to slander us by every possible method, to mutilate and block any thought or opinion in the minds of other prisoners who continue to listen to them through lack of political experience.

"These 'chiefs' don't hesitate in using lies and slanders to discredit Trotskyist prisoners and deform Marxist ideas. To achieve this, they don't hesitate to use Christian and petty bourgeois ideology, to make fun of the traditional workers' celebrations, to use cowardly, low means to isolate prisoners from us and to spread their reformist arguments among them.

"They aim to stop all criticism of the Stalinist bureaucracy, to stop all demands within the prison and to drown all revolutionary Marxist thought.

"When our comrade Panayotis Doumas was transferred at the end of November 1970 to Eptapyrgon Prison in Thessalonika, the Stalinists of the GCP's 'internal' fraction, accused him of being a security agent and saying that he had obtained a saw to escape.

"The Stalinists have played a suspicious role in the transfer.

"We emphasize that our comrade Panayotis Doumas is condemned to prison for life plus 8 years. When he arrived here his leg had been broken through the tortures he had undergone in the offices of the Athens secret service.

"We point out that the conditions in Eptapyrgon prison are very unhealthy (damp, rats, no daylight, etc.)

"Its personnel consists of ex-common law convicts, former collaborators, former members of the German security forces, the spoilt children of the present regime.

"We have had no news at all of our comrade since his transfer.

"A few days later on 10th December 1970, a group of Stalinists (from the 'internal' fraction) asked the officers of the Karydallos prison (still in the context of 'agreements' and 'collaboration') for our comrade S.P. to be transferred.

"Their argument was that this would isolate the other inmates from 'contamination' by his revolutionary ideas.

"We heard with our own ears the Stalinist delegation explain to the prison lackeys who took them to the warden '... if he stays here, he will hurt us and you.'

"At the same time they spread the story that our comrade was a Secret Service Agent.

"The reaction that followed from all the inmates delayed the transfer for several days. Our comrade S.P. (condemned to life plus four

Corfu prison. We condemn the 'internal' GCP clique, and in particular the 'delegation' of the Stalinists, Th.G., Th.P., and G.S., who took the initiative of making such bargains with our gaolers.

"We must point out that the Kolyiamist ('external') Stalinist inmates have not participated in the campaign against Trotskyist prisoners. But their neutrality is condemnable just as their refusal to take a position when faced with these events that are quite clear and concrete within the walls of the prison.

"Their methods are known to us and their methods are no better than those of the Stalinists of the Partsadist fraction.

"The fact that all rank and file militants in prison have directly or indirectly reacted against the anti-Trotskyist campaign allows us to believe that the decay of these 'leaderships' is beginning to be felt by their own militants.

"The anti-communism of the 'chiefs' is more and more flagrant. The rank and file militants of the GCP are beginning to become conscious of the 'leadership's' games.

"Workers of the world, vanguard militants: we submit this denunciation to your militant feelings, to your judgement. You are the only ones who can support us, the only ones who can contribute to the defence of our ideological integrity.

"We accuse the Stalinist bureaucrats of using reactionary and criminal measures against us. These measures go hand in hand with the bet-

EARLY TRADE UNIONISM

PART TWO

It was around this time that *national* trade unions first appeared. Early attempts, like the Journeymen Steam Engine Makers and the Friendly Society of Carpenters and Joiners of Great Britain were unsuccessful, mostly due to the unemployment caused by the economic recession, but in 1829 the Grand General Union of All the Operative Spinners of the United Kingdom was formed under the leadership of John Doherty, and met with immediate and great success.

Workers were now also turning their attention to the formation of big *industry-wide* unions, with a definite programme of demands not only for higher wages and better conditions, but also for syndicalist aims of eventually taking over the ownership and running of production on cooperative lines. The Operative Builders' Union, the first national industrial union, played the leading role in this.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs

In 1833 the "utopian socialist" Robert Owen formed the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, which was a federation of many industrial unions. Within weeks the GNCTU enrolled a million members, but it never really worked, however, for the individual unions refused to give up their autonomy and did not send in any funds. Thus it was easily destroyed—effectively within six months of its formation. In March 1834 the agricultural labourers of Tolpuddle in Dorset, who had formed a branch of the Grand National, were prosecuted under a law of 1797 for taking oaths of secrecy on their membership of the union. The savage sentence of seven years' transportation had a shattering effect of demoralisation throughout the trade union movement, and this, together with the employers' practice of compelling their workers to sign "the document", an undertaking not to belong to any trade union as a condition of employment, and the lack of funds, resulted in the disappearance of the Grand National before the end of the year. Another factor was divisions in the leadership of the union; one leader, J. E. Smith, got tired of Owen's Socialism, founded the Universalist religion, and went off to live a quiet and prosperous life as editor of the *Family Herald*.

The Labour Aristocracy

The collapse of the Grand National had repercussions throughout the labour movement. There followed a period of disillusionment and decline in trade unionism, in which the whole movement was reduced to probably little more than a few hundred thousand members. When the revival came, a new kind of union came into existence: the "new model" amalgamated unions, national organisations of skilled workers in the same craft. Power and finance were concentrated in the central executive committee and effective authority was placed more and more into the hands of permanent and full-time officials.

The rise of these unions marked an important turning point in the development of the trade union movement. Formerly, unions had tended to be small, both in terms of members and funds; control was much more effectively vested in the hands of the membership, and most of the funds were held by branches, or lodges. With the "new model" unions, high subscriptions were demanded, substantial friendly society benefits were provided for, and the policy of no strikes and cooperation with the employers (under the watchword "Defence not Defiance") was everywhere possible substituted for the old militancy. One economic historian, Arthur Birnie, said of these "new model" unions: "The typical trade union leader of the mid-nineteenth century was a man of cautious temperament and moderate

views, in politics probably a Gladstonian Liberal, with a distrust of revolutionary methods and a dislike even of the strike weapon to which he only resorted when all the resources of peaceful negotiation had been exhausted. British trade unionism entered on the most pacific stage of its history."

The first and most important of these unions was the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, formed in 1851, which was an amalgamation of several smaller craft unions. In its first 40 years of existence, the ASE expended £2,987, 993 on the various friendly benefits, but only £86,664 on strikes.

It was no accident that the so-called *aristocracy of labour* should consolidate itself over and above the mass of the working class in this period; the "new model" unions reflected the process whereby British capitalism, now confirmed in its position as the workshop of the world, conferred privileges which amounted to bribes upon an "upper stratum" of the working class, mainly from among the textile factory workers and the skilled artisans in the metal-working and building trades, upon whom this prosperity especially depended. In a letter dated August 11th 1881, Engels was to speak of "the worst type of British trade unions, which allow themselves to be led by men who have been bought by the capitalists, or at least are in their pay."

Despite some defeats in their early days, the amalgamated craft unions quickly gained massive strength. Meanwhile the workers of various towns were coming together to create trades councils, especially in Scotland. Glasgow had a General Union of Trade in 1833, and the Delegated Committee of Sympathy was founded in Aberdeen in 1846. By the 1860s the formation of local trades councils was everywhere well under way. Also around this time, the Trades Union Congress, summoned by the Manchester and Salford Trades Council, held its first conference, in 1868.

Illegality and How to Fight It

The year 1867 is memorable in the history of the labour movement. In the first place, a Reform Act gave the vote to the workingmen in the towns (the country labourers had to wait until 1884, the women until 1918 and 1928). Secondly, in a court case known as *Hornby v. Close*, where the Boilermakers' Society took proceedings against the treasurer of its Bradford branch for stealing £24, the magistrates declared that a trade union, being "in restraint of trade" was an illegal body. The implications of this decision were immediately obvious, especially since sections of the capitalist class began to call for the restoration of the Combination Acts and the outlawing of collective bargaining.

The decision happened to come at a moment when the Government of the day had decided to set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Trade Unions. The Majority Report of the Commission was very largely non-committal with regard to the status of trade unions, but a Minority Report was more favourable, proposing amendments of the law whereby no trades union would be illegal merely because it was in restraint of trade.

A hesitant Liberal Government pursued a contradictory course. Following the Minority proposals, the Trade Union Act of 1871 legalised the status of trade unions and accorded protection to their funds. But in another Act passed soon after, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the clauses on picketing and intimidation left trade unionists as vulnerable to criminal prosecution as ever. The contradiction was pointed out in a document called the "Digest of Labour Laws" published in 1875 by the TUC: "A strike was perfectly legal; but, if the means employed were calculated to coerce the employer, they were illegal means; and a com-

bination to do a legal act by illegal means was a criminal conspiracy. In other words, a strike was lawful, but anything done in pursuance of a strike was criminal."

The trade union movement did not accept this situation without a determined response, and in 1875 their newly acquired political influence was used to force the Conservative Government to repeal the second 1871 Act. It was replaced by the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, which legalised picketing and declared that no action by a trade union was a criminal offence if such action could be done legally by an individual person. Henceforth trade union activity could be carried on without the constant threat of the law courts (at least, that is, until the Taff Vale Judgement in 1901—but that is the story of the founding of the Labour Party).

Today the trade union movement is under a threat similar to that of exactly a hundred years ago. Gains that have been won by unionists in a century or more of struggle against the bosses and their governments are in danger of being removed at a stroke by the Industrial Relations Bill. A repeat performance of 1875 by the Conservative Party is out of the question today when the very survival of capitalism depends on

a quiescent trade union movement. Further the Labour Party has shown itself to be no alternative if trade union rights are to be defended and advanced, after having attempted to carry out its own attacks on the union.

Clearly the threat of the Bill will remain as long as the Tory Government does, so the present TUC strategy of Sunday demonstration meetings in the Albert Hall, lunch "protest" meetings, and so on, is totally inadequate to defend the trade union movement. One-day token strikes we have had up to now should be regarded as but dress rehearsals for an all-out General Strike to bring down the Government once and for all, and replaced with a workers' government based upon democratised trade unions.

Nigel Brown

For a further discussion of the bureaucratization of the trade unions, and the questions arising from this, read *The Fight for Control* by Jordan (price 5p, inc. post); and for a detailed analysis of the Tories' 1971 anti-union proposals, read *The Industrial Relations Bill: A Declaration of War* by Peter Hampton (price 5p, inc. post). Both are International Marxist pamphlets, available from IMG Publications, 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

CAUTION.

WHEREAS it has been represented to us from several quarters, that mischievous and designing Persons have been for some time past, endeavouring to induce, and have induced, many Labourers in various Parishes in this County, to attend Meetings, and to enter into Illegal Societies or Unions, to which they bind themselves by unlawful oaths, administered secretly by Persons concealed, who artfully deceive the ignorant and unwary.—WE, the undersigned Justices think it our duty to give this PUBLIC NOTICE and CAUTION, that all Persons may know the danger they incur by entering into such Societies.

ANY PERSON who shall become a Member of such a Society, or take any Oath, or assent to any Test Declaration not authorized by Law—

Any Person who shall administer, or be present at, or consenting to the administering or taking any Unlawful Oath, or who shall cause such Oath to be administered, although not actually present at the time—

Any Person who shall not reveal or discover any Illegal Oath which may have been administered, or any Illegal Act done or to be done—

Any Person who shall induce, or endeavour to persuade any other Person to become a Member of such Societies WILL BECOME

Guilty of Felony, AND BE LIABLE TO BE Transported for Seven Years.

ANY PERSON who shall be compelled to take such an Oath, unless he shall declare the same within five days, together with the whole of what he shall know touching the same, will be liable to the same Penalty.

Any Person who shall directly or indirectly maintain correspondence or intercourse with such Society, will be deemed Guilty of an Unlawful Combination and Confederacy, and on Conviction before one Justice, on the Oath of one Witness, be liable to a Penalty of TWENTY POUNDS, or to be committed to the Common Gaol or House of Correction, for THREE CALENDAR MONTHS; or if proceeded against by Indictment, may be CONVICTED OF FELONY, and be TRANSPORTED FOR SEVEN YEARS.

Any Person who shall knowingly permit any Meeting of any such Society to be held in any House, Build or other Place, shall for the first offence be liable to the Penalty of FIVE POUNDS; and for every other offence committed after Conviction, be deemed Guilty of such Unlawful Combination and Confederacy, and on Conviction before one Justice, on the Oath of one Witness, be liable to a Penalty of TWENTY POUNDS, or to be committed to the Common Gaol or House of Correction, FOR THREE CALENDAR MONTHS; or if proceeded against by Indictment may be

CONVICTED OF FELONY, And Transported for SEVEN YEARS

COUNTY OF DORSET,
Dorchester Division
February 29d. 1881.

C. B. WOLLASTON,
JAMES FRAMPTON,
WILLIAM ENGLAND,
THOS. DADE,
JNO. MORTON COLSON.

HENRY FRAMPTON,
RICHD. TUCKER STEWARD,
WILLIAM R. CHURCHILL,
AUGUSTUS FOSTER.

molehills

A number of delegates from Oxford Claimants Union (organisation of people claiming Social Security) were refused admission to last week's Conference of the Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions.

A credentials committee member justified his refusal by explaining: "The C.U. is not a bona fide trade union"—i.e. recognised by the TUC. The delegates' protests were brushed aside by the bureaucrat who said: "I have enough problems, look at those wreckers". He pointed to the various Marxist groups selling their publications. "Don't you give me any more, I shall have a headache before the day is out."

The C.U. delegates offered to buy him a bottle of aspirins out of their social security benefits but he would not budge. The Stalinists, like their right wing friends, have no programme to fight unemployment so they prefer not to acknowledge its existence, otherwise they might all get headaches!

The Zionist rulers of Israel resemble more and more the man who tried to quench his thirst by drinking salt water, only to find that this made him even thirstier. Two special prayers were recited in all Israeli synagogues on the eve of Passover. One asked the Almighty to secure the "liberation" of the Jews of the Soviet Union and the Arab world. The other gave thanks to the Holy One for having allowed the Israeli Army "to liberate the historic homeland of Israel to the west of the River Jordan as well as Jerusalem!" Why didn't anyone say Moshe Dayan was God's gift to the Arabs?

Talking of Israel, it has been announced that Menachem Begin, leader of the neo-fascist Gahal, will be touring these isles next month. Coming issues of the Mole will carry details.

GOVERNMENT BY THE RICH FOR THE RICH
Lord Crowther, on a visit to Hong Kong from Britain, remarked "I would like to do some research into how a country can manage to be so prosperous and busy with so little taxation. There may be some ideas we (in Britain) can follow." (SCMP, 5.3.71)

Lord Crowther, there is no need to do any research on the causes of Hong Kong's prosperity—they are almost self-evident. The government and the rich pay out next to nothing but reap the rewards of cheap labour; e.g. 1. No free education. 2. No national health service. 3. Worker exploitation (only 6 days' holiday a year for most of the working population, and a 12-hour day is common). 4. Inadequate social welfare. 5. Inadequate public housing (over 500,000).

These are the things which make Hong Kong fat and happy. When Lord Crowther speaks of the prosperity of Hong Kong he does not mean the people of Hong Kong but the rich few—the rulers, the government. The papers in the last few days have been reporting increased profits for a large number of firms. And is it the people who run these firms?

No, of course not. These are some details about some of the directors, the "people" who run these firms, and the profits of companies, in 1970.

HK Telephone: profit for 1970 after tax was \$53 million.

Directors: G. R. Ross, temporarily appointed to Executive Council; P. Y. Tang, EXCO.

HK Land Investment: profit \$51 million (19% increase on 1969).

Directors: S. S. Gordon, Exco; Y. K. Kan, Exco, Legco; M. A. R. Herries, Legco, temp. appt. to Exco.

Dairy Farm: profit \$17 million (\$3½ million increase on 1969).

Directors: Chau SikNin, Exco; G. M. B. Salmon, Legco; J. D. Clague, Exco.

Star Ferry: profit \$2 million.

Directors: H. M. G. Forsgate, appointed member of Urbco; G. M. D. Salmon, Legco; M. A. R. Herries, Legco.

Hutchison International: Increase of 14% given on share dividends.

Directors: J. D. Clague, Exco.

HK Electric: profit \$55 million.

Directors: G. M. B. Salmon, Legco; Sir Trun Nin Chan; Y. K. Kan, Legco and Exco.

This is obviously the lesson Lord Crowther wants Britain to learn.

Free Hong Kong.

British Army Boneheads in Ulster

Any illusions that the British Army is in Ulster to "keep the peace" were frighteningly shattered for one Scottish journalist who was in Belfast recently. He was on the spot when an Army officer very nearly provoked a riot out of nothing with his loud-mouthed arrogance. There was a minor car crash at a darkened street corner in one of the most inflammable areas of the city. No one was hurt and the small crowd which gathered after the bang were beginning to move back to their homes. But they stopped when they heard the roar of approaching Army Land Rovers and waited to see what would happen.

One patrol arrived, took a quick look at the situation and sensibly faded into the night when they were assured that no blood had been shed. But a few seconds later another patrol turned up under the command of a fine public-school-type First Lieutenant. He drew his revolver, called on his heavily-armed men to follow him, and elbowed his way through the crowd. He could barely hide his disappointment that there were no bodies needing to be swept up. But he turned back to the journalist, who had stayed on the fringe of the crowd, and said in piercing tones: "Have you heard of Danny O'Hagan, the petrol-bomber? Well, we dropped him at that corner over there." The situation, for those who need to know, was that a largely Catholic crowd in one of the tensest areas of Belfast were having the name . . . occupation. The crowd edged nearer to the lieutenant and made extremely menacing gestures.

But the officer was not to be put off. He pointed to some nearby high flats—"That's the worst place in Belfast for snipers," he said. "There could be some of the bastards up there just now taking a sight on us."

By now the crowd were properly incensed, and only decisive action by a corporal prevented a full-scale riot. He suggested, respectfully, that nothing was to be achieved by hanging around, took the journalist by the arm and led him back to the Land Rover. The officer, deprived of his audience, had no excuse for staying and regretfully turned back to join his troops.

The journalist had by now seen all he wanted to of British Army tactics. From this, and other incidents, he formed the impression that between raw boys and bone-headed officers, there are a few non-commissioned officers who are preventing the Army from making complete fools of themselves.

Normally there is no clear evidence of how riots start. It would seem, from most newspaper accounts, that crowds of people just decide to throw a few stones at the troops or are paid by the IRA to throw a petrol bomb or two. The truth may be quite different.

Some young man from an upper middle class home who failed to find any other kind of work for his under-developed intelligence, might find himself amongst a few Irish savages. He might treat them like dirt and find that, unlike the well-behaved savages of former times, they did not take to the idea. And before he knew what was happening to him, he might be in the middle of a battle. Perhaps that's what "keeping the peace" means to the British Army in Belfast.

Note: this article is taken from an excellent paper published in Glasgow called The Word. We urge all moles in Scotland, and even points south to have a glance at it. Enquiries to The Word, 3 Moray Place, Glasgow-S1.

The House of Lords debated Robert Owen the other day. Naturally the Tories decided that he had been a man of "enthusiasm and kindness", but that we must look elsewhere for "constructive policies for the 1970s". But it was Lord Greenwood, of Aldermaston and Aden, who made the most disgusting speech. He talked about "the nobleness of his aims, and the greatness of his achievements", but judged that "in some respects Owen was foolish and unrealistic."

You bastard, Greenwood. Owen was a utopian, but a revolutionary, socialist. The ideas which led him to create the model community at New Lanark were consistently materialist; he believed that environment determined human nature. Those same ideas led him on to reject capitalism, understand the class struggle, and take the side of the working class. It was then that he lost his former admirers amongst the moneylenders and landowners. His materialism was mechanical and one-sided, which led him to a fruitless utopianism, but everything he did was consistent and principled.

The Greenwood, who gathers his ermine around his fat arse and criticises Owen, for years masqueraded as a "left". At the first opportunity he jumped into the Cabinet, taking charge of the last futile attempt to beat the people of South Yemen into submission, before moving on to preside over slumlordism from the Ministry of Housing.

One hour of Owen's life was worth immeasurably more to the world working class than the entire lives of the whole gaggle of Greenwood and the other philistine "Labour" peers.

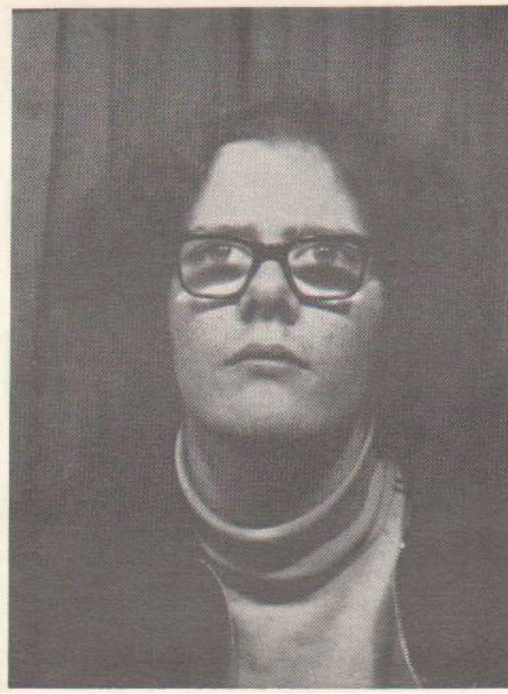
Question: What happens to women in Belfast who appear in public wearing combat jackets and carrying hurley sticks?

Answer: That's a gross violation of public order, they are whipped into prison right away.

Question: Who was the young woman photographed recently in Belfast wearing a combat jacket and firing a sterling sub-machine gun, while British Army officers looked on approvingly?

Answer: Her Royal Highness Princess Anne.

Did any reader see this comrade being arrested on the Vietnam demo., Sat. April 24th, at about 5.00 p.m. in South Audley Street (just after leaving Grosvenor Square)? If so, please contact the Mole.



SPECIAL FLASH

Belfast Republicans have asked the Mole to publicise the spate of intimidation which the British Army has been indulging in over the last few days. Jeeps have been careering round Lower Falls stopping people, sticking their noses against the wall and searching them; this is to be selective, with known militants coming for special attention. British soldiers broke up the McKelvie Club in Ross Street and wrote it, trampling over the Irish National Flag at the Starry Plough, in a clear insult to Socialist Republicans.

This is probably the Army's reply to the Fleadh (festival) which the Republicans organised in the Falls in opposition to Ulster during which they operated a pirate World Radio station, which played Irish folk music and gave out Socialist and Republican propaganda, while the forces of the Crown looked on in impotent rage at people enjoying their freedom in defiance of the might of British imperialism.

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The GREAT Speckled BIRD

LIBERATE THE ARAB GULF!

For the past six years, British imperialism has been fighting a "secret" war along the southern shores of the Persian Gulf and in the South-East corner of the Arabian peninsula, known as Oman and Dhofar. For this purpose Britain maintains the Salalah air base in Dhofar and with good reason, as the petroleum interests in the Gulf are threatened by the extension of the revolution from Dhofar.

Unfortunately very little is known on the revolutionary left in Britain and Europe about the revolutionary movement in that part of the world. That is why The Red Mole is pleased to publish an interview with Comrade Saleh Nasser, a leading militant of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG), and to extend to the comrades our fullest support.

—Could you give us a simple and brief account of the history and development of the struggle in the Gulf?

This is in fact a long subject if one treats it in detail, but it is possible to reduce it to the development of the National Liberation Movement (NLM) in the Gulf. The first signs of an emerging national movement in this region began to appear at the beginning of the twentieth century, which took different forms of struggle, strikes and demonstrations. This stage was in fact led by bourgeois layers, layers who had their class origins in certain feudal and bourgeois families. They were presented with the opportunity of leading the patriotic activities of the time.

With the development of the NLM in the Gulf, revolutionary elements made their appearance, elements who were able to learn from the experience of the NLM in the Gulf, the Arab world and various other parts of the world. They made use of several aspects of their experiences in terms of the methods of struggle. For it was a peaceful struggle which took a non-violent form in the shape of demands on the part of the workers and political organisations which were then operating in the region. The forces which were able to make use of these experiences arose as the opposite or the negation of the forces which controlled the NLM prior to 1965. The struggles prior to 1965 were scattered and isolated. There were for example separate struggles in Bahrain, Kuwait and Interior Oman; in the region of Dhofar also there existed regional separate organisations. The NLM represented the opposite of all these practices by unifying the struggles in the whole of the Gulf region. This we regarded as an important and fundamental step. The other important step was to adopt the method of organised violence in this region, the method of armed struggle.

The revolution was initiated on 9th June 1965 by some patriotic groups which bore the mark of nationalist ideology. They had split from nationalist organisations in the region and began their struggle in Dhofar. In that period the type of Marxism . . . Marxist ideology as such was put forward in a correct form. The dominant outlook was a nationalist-patriotic one.

The movement was influenced by the political experience of the region and the Arab world in general. Revolutionary groups emerged which began agitating for Marxist, socialist ideas. These groups began to move in and influence the situation in the region. In Dhofar they were able to intervene and enter into the ranks of the revolution, changing its orientation (this change took place at the Second Congress). We can thus make a distinction between 1965 and 1968. In 1965 the Dhofar Liberation Front was formed from localist, nationalist groupings. As a result of the influx of leftists and Marxist elements into the ranks of the revolution, and with the changed conditions in the Arab region, where Marxism began to take a more mature form, those elements were able to influence the orientation of the revolution in Dhofar and take it a few steps further.

With the continuation of the revolution from 1965 to 1968—that is over a period of three years—and in forging close links with the ranks of the Liberation Army and the masses of the region, these elements were able to change the course of the revolution, to give it its revolutionary character. This took place at the Second Congress, held on 1st September 1968

At this Congress the Marxist groups were

actually able to give a correct orientation to the revolution and change its strategy from a front for the liberation of Dhofar to include all the Gulf region. The name was also changed from DLF into PFLOAG (People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf). At this Congress the Front adopted Marxism-Leninism as a theoretical guide and the leading ideology for the revolution in all its successive stages.

We regard this period—from 1965 to 1968—as a wonderful leap, a qualitative leap which bypassed the NLM in the entire Gulf. It amounted to the transformation of a patriotic movement with a bourgeois, nationalist ideology into a Marxist, socialist one, whose ideas are now propagated throughout the Gulf. This was not a simple or easy task, it was one of the problems which the Front had to face after this Congress, and it suffered a great deal for the sake of this leap and its determination to spread these ideas throughout the Gulf.

—Could you tell us how it was possible for Marxism to replace nationalism in such a backward sector of the Middle East—and indeed of the world—as the Gulf?

The problem does in fact seem insurmountable if one clings to "Marxist" dogma. But the actuality is much more complex than it appears and the contradictions which exist in the area reveal this clearly.

What constitutes the first seeds of revolutionary consciousness is the existence of contradictions and the form they take. Marxist ideas can serve the exploited classes in any society independently of the way in which the contradictions manifest themselves.

In this region, despite its backwardness, contradictions do exist, but they are not similar to those that exist in developed capitalist societies. In the Gulf states the contradictions manifest themselves between families with economic and social privileges and the overwhelming majority of the population which feels this oppression, in addition, of course, to the basic contradiction with imperialism and its monopolies in the region.

That is one reason for the spread of Marxist ideas despite the backwardness, but there is another important factor. Bourgeois ideologies and petty bourgeois organisations were not able to penetrate the Gulf, especially Dhofar and the interior of Oman. Thus they were not able to establish a poisonous climate of their own. We regard these regions as virgin lands, clear from any obstacles, and ready to accept any ideas that were put forward. When Marxist ideas were put forward, they did not gain ground overnight as some imagine. It was a process which took a certain amount of time. After the revolution there were discussions among the young people, ever since 1965, centring on bourgeois and revolutionary ideologies. Since the vast majority of fighters came from extremely poor backgrounds, they were daily experiencing oppression as well as seeing the total failure of bourgeois organisations in other Arab countries to liberate the masses from the yoke of oppression and exploitation.

All these factors played a part in increasing the strength of Marxist ideas and the response to them. The 1968 Congress merely settled in a decisive way the state of affairs in the revolution and sealed the victory of the Marxist elements for a whole period. In addition these Marxists did not have to face certain problems and "hang-ups"—problems which other political currents, were entangled in—or have to compete with strong nationalist, political organisations for hegemony. Also the fact that large numbers of militants in the DLF (Dhofar Liberation Front) did not have any strong ideology and therefore it was possible for the masses to respond favourably to us because we were conscious of the nature of the contradictions. The masses were predominantly composed of rural poor and downtrodden elements. What was put forward was so obviously in their own interests. And the weakness of petty bourgeois ideology meant that the masses were untainted.

—What is the present stage of the armed struggle?

We can in fact say that our revolutionary experiment is going from one success to another on various levels, and not only the military one. The revolution started in very difficult conditions in 1965; it did not have any revolutionary ideology, it was encircled by a conspiracy of silence on the Arab and international level, it

was isolated from the revolutionary forces in the Arab region and the world. During the past period we achieved positive results on the military level; the revolution managed to achieve successive military victories in battles with the enemy forces. So far we have not fought a lost battle against the occupation forces. As a result we now control most of Dhofar, an area of 35,000 sq. miles, or three times the size of Lebanon. The puppet government now only controls the city of Salala and a few coastal villages. In any case these are not important, and the front is not interested in occupying them for the time being. Apart from that, we now have a politicised army experienced in battle with a high combat capacity, ready to face the most difficult of conditions. We can say the same thing about the people's militia, practically everybody in the liberated area is trained in the use of arms.

The second important task for us, apart from militarily consolidating the liberated area, was to raise the degree of awareness and political consciousness among the people. This task was given an urgent priority in view of the conditions of extreme backwardness in the area: schools were established (for the first time in the history of the region) to eliminate illiteracy, programmes of political education were shown on three levels—for the Liberation Army, the people's militia, and for the people of the region. We look upon this task as our surest guarantee of a firm base for the revolution and as absolutely indispensable to ensure the active participation of the people in the revolution, and hence its continuity.

Another task which the Revolution took on itself was the emancipation of women. As is well-known, women in our part of the world were doubly and triply oppressed, as part of an oppressed people and as domestic slaves. We started by abolishing polygamy and by formally recognising the equality of women. This was, in fact, initiated by our women comrades, who also demanded the abolition of dowries. We agreed, but suggested that this should be done in a progressive manner in order to avoid social tensions which this step might invoke. We limited the dowry to a nominal sum and all our women comrades in the liberated zones refused absolutely to recognise the dowry system. This is no mean achievement for an Arab Muslim nation where people still look upon the family as a holy institution. Women are now completely equal to men in the camps; they train and they live together in the same camps; they participate in all military and non-military aspects of the struggle. Therefore we say that women are playing an active and important role in the revolution today.

We can confidently say to you that our liberation army is not an ordinary army composed of regulars, but a principled, political army which struggles on a political basis and will not give up until final victory has been achieved.

—Knowing as we do the strategic and military interests of American imperialism in this whole area, and knowing their strength and that of

their puppets in this area, does the comrade think it will be possible to limit the struggle to the Gulf alone, or does he think that we will have to extend it, and if we have to extend the whole question of the Arab revolutionary party is raised. What are his views on that?

Actually this is a very important question. We believe that the region of the Gulf constitutes a part of the struggle being waged in the Third World against imperialism and its monopolies whether these are economic, strategic or ideological struggles. We also regard our struggle in the Gulf as part of the struggles of the oppressed people against this imperialist monster, whether it is in South East Asia, Africa, Latin America or any part of the world. We therefore feel the necessity for a revolutionary mass movement as many areas as possible. We regard the extension of these revolutions and movements as a victory in the Gulf also, hence we continuously work to establish contacts with revolutionary forces in Iran and the Arab world, so that there can be a revolutionary upsurge in the whole area. We are convinced of the necessity for unifying the revolutionary process not only in the Arab world, but also in East and South East Asia, Africa, etc. as the only solution to end imperialist oppression prevailing in every part of the world. With this in mind we aim to establish meetings and good relations with all revolutionary groups in the Arab world and countries outside it.

On the other hand we recognise that imperialism has a huge economic interest in the Gulf. For example, 90% of Japan's supply of oil comes from the Gulf, 55% of Europe's supply also, apart from British and American consumption. These interests are threatened directly by the revolution, by its extension and increased effectiveness. They will then have to make concessions to any revolutionary forces in this area to preserve at least part of these interests, rather than seeing them completely destroyed. But revolution did not advocate that power can be conquered in a short period of time. We appreciate that it is an enormous conflict with imperialism. Hence we struggle to ensure that the revolution can be a continuous, permanent one and not to simply reach a certain and limited objective. The struggle against imperialism will be a long one, and it is not confined to the region of the Gulf, but related to the international struggle also. This is how we educate our ranks and cadres, this is what we constantly put forward to them.

We hope to establish relations with all left organisations, not only in the Arab world, but also outside it. At the moment we are in contact with Tudeh party in Iran [Iranian C.P.—Ed.] and we hope to establish contact with left organisations in Pakistan and the areas near to the Gulf. Because the Pakistan Army plays a role in backing the reactionary state in Oman, relations with any revolutionary force in Pakistan will be very important—Pakistan, and India too.

