

The Red Mole



**IN LATIN AMERICA BOTH TROTSKY
AND CHE WERE MURDERED. TODAY
THEIR FOLLOWERS PAY THEM
HOMAGE BY TAKING UP ARMS,
DETERMINED TO LIBERATE
THE ENTIRE CONTINENT**

**Special Latin America Dossier
BENGAL: THE EAST GETS REDDER
MANCHESTER: COUNCIL OF ACTION**

OBITUARY

GEORG LUKACS: fate of the unattached intellectual

The death of George Lukacs breaks one more link with the Europe that existed at the time of the Russian Revolution. Like Amadeo Bordiga, who also died recently, Lukacs was a living representative of the disputes which, in its revolutionary period, took place in the Third International. However, unlike Bordiga, we cannot simply say of Lukacs that despite wrong theories, he nevertheless remained absolutely faithful to the proletarian revolution. We are regretfully forced to conclude that, no matter what his subjective intentions may have been, Lukacs became, by 1935 at any rate, an opponent of the working class revolutionary movement. He became a dazzling theoretical appendage of Stalinism. But in exactly the same way that Lenin always maintained that much was to be learned from Plekhanov, despite his counter-revolutionary political positions, so we must critically examine Lukacs's work to see if anything is to be taken from it.

History and Class Consciousness

Marxism did not spring fully formed out of nowhere. Neither did Marx develop his ideas in a vacuum. On the contrary the formation of Marx's ideas would have been inconceivable without the background of the economics of Ricardo, the philosophy of Hegel, the ideas of Owen and the Utopian socialists etc. Nevertheless, Marx did not just take these ideas and fit them together in some sort of easy synthesis. On the contrary, it was only by restructuring these theories totally, adding new discoveries of his own and refuting elements in previous theories that Marx was able to produce a logically internally consistent and coherent theory, which broke radically with all previous socialist theories. At various times other Marxists have engaged in the same sort of activity. Lenin for example recast entirely, but utilised many of the ideas of bourgeois theories of Imperialism such as those of Hobson and Hilferding. However no-one has ever tried to incorporate into Marxism so many bourgeois insights as Lukacs. In fact in one sense we can see his entire life's work as an attempt to combine Marxism and some of the ideologies and accomplishments of the bourgeoisie. It is this aspect of Lukacs which of course made him, or at least some of his writings, the idol of those, like Lucien Goldman, who wish to strip Marxism of its proletarian revolutionary contents and turn it into a shallow theory of Humanism. However Lukacs cannot be entirely blamed for the sins of his "followers". If at times Lukacs succeeds in restructuring Marxism so as to make it acceptable to the petty-bourgeoisie—and this is particularly the case in books such as "The Historical Novel", and "The Meaning of Contemporary Realism"—nevertheless in other areas and at other times Lukacs succeeds in enriching Marxism by his restructuring of bourgeois insights.

The bourgeois theories with which Lukacs was battling with when he wrote the famous collection of essays which became *History and Class Consciousness* were those of Hegel and Sorel. From Hegel, Lukacs took the concept of "totality" which he counterposed to the economic determinism of Kautsky, Bernstein, Alder and the other theorists of Social Democracy. In doing this it would appear that Lukacs was only following in the footsteps of Plekhanov who, in his essay "On the Sixtieth Anniversary of the death of Hegel", had himself counterposed the concept of totality to that of economic determinism. However the resemblance to Plekhanov, or even to the Lenin of the early writings on economics, which also deal with the question of the relation of the economic and the totality, is only superficial. When Plekhanov and Lenin, in their early works, used the concept of totality they were emphasising that in Marxism the political, the economic, the social etc, are merely differing types of abstraction and are not separate levels of analysis. For Lukacs however "totality" refers not to the total of all aspects of "reality",

but to a particular way of structuring that reality so that it can never constitute anything but a totality. This method of logical structuring is what Lukacs defined as Marxism. This is made clear in perhaps his most famous single passage, his definition of Marxism in *History and Class Consciousness*. He wrote that: "It is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality. The category of totality, the all pervasive supremacy of the whole over the parts is the essence of the method which Marx took over from Hegel and transformed into the foundations of a wholly new science."

The analysis which led Lukacs to this conclusion represents perhaps the most significant question asked in Marxism, outside the writings of Lenin and Trotsky. What Lukacs in effect did was to ask: How does the logical structure of a proletarian conception of reality differ from that of the bourgeoisie? We may well not agree with the answer that Lukacs gave but then in Marxism, as in any other science, it is frequently not those who give the right answer who are the most important, but rather those who think of the right questions. Lukacs, by showing that such a question existed settled at least two points which had previously bedevilled Marxism. On the one hand he showed that the differences with Alder, Kautsky etc. were questions of method and not of "fact" or interpretation, and in so doing he raised the whole polemic against reformism to a qualitatively more profound level. On the other hand Lukacs solved the problem of the relation of Marxist and bourgeois theory. Before *History and Class Consciousness* there had been a tendency to fall into one of two traps. Either the difference between Marxism and academic theories was held to be in the conclusions they reached, which reduced the difference between the two to a pure question of "fact", with Marxism bound to lose, as the bourgeois concept of fact was accepted in the initial premises, or there was a tendency to assimilate Marxism to bourgeois theory in those areas which Marx himself had never dealt with. This latter tendency is particularly marked in the case of Hilferding. Because bourgeois research was making remarkable strides in many subjects it was believed by the Social Democrats that these results could simply be incorporated as they stood into Marxism. However because these bourgeois theories logically followed from theories which dealt with areas Marx had touched on, a contradiction grew up between the parts of bourgeois theory accepted by the Social Democrats and those parts which conflicted with Marxism. Faced with this problem the Social Democrats either retreated into dogmatism, abandoned themselves to eclecticism, or renounced Marxism altogether. Lukacs solved the problem once and for all by showing that the incompatibility of Marxism and bourgeois theory lay not at the level of data but at the level of logical structure. Even if his conception of the nature of the difference involved is incorrect, the way Lukacs posed the question was precisely correct and establishes his claim to be noted among major Marxist theories.

"Lenin" and later works.

After *History and Class Consciousness*—which was at the time condemned by the Comintern and which Lukacs himself later renounced—Lukacs never wrote anything of equal intellectual power. His book on Lenin is thought provoking, and its concept of "The Actuality of the Revolution" is a key one, but unfortunately the book is marred by being based on a series of statements which are straightforward lies—such as for example that Lenin was initially alone in opposing the First World War from a revolutionary defeatist position.

Unfortunately from the late 1920's onwards Lukacs writings also become tinged with another theme which was to lead to an intellectual decay and compromise with Stalin the bourgeoisie. This was the theory of phenomenal as opposed to structural realism in art which is made most explicit in "The Historical Novel". This theory was used in attempt to how the products of high bourgeois art and the art of Stalinist Russia, with its "Socialist Realism", thronodies to departed tractors, the struggle for production on a collective farm etc, could be combined. Through the development of these type of ideas Lukacs must be held responsible for giving an ideological backing to much of the staleness and barrenness of Marxist artistic criticism, despite the fact that his own particular studies are interesting and in an episodic way brilliant.

Lukacs' own assessment of his role under Stalinism and in 1956

From 1924 onwards Lukacs came to support the Stalin faction inside the Russian Communist Party. He did this on the worst possible basis by accepting the totally ridiculous theory that it was possible to exceed the standard of living provided by the entire capitalist economies simply on the basis of the economic resources of the Soviet Union. This was the notorious theory of "Socialism in One Country". From then on, with a remorseless logic, Lukacs' theories and ideas degenerated.

Lukacs failures at a theoretical level were compounded by what can only be described as political cowardice. For example he notes of an inner party struggle that although he firmly believed he was correct, "When I heard from a reliable source that Bela Kum was planning to expel me from the Party as a 'Liquidator', I gave up the struggle, as I was well aware of Kun's prestige in the International, and I published a 'Self-criticism'." This was to be the first of many such "confessions" which at various times led Lukacs to denounce any number of his works. Lukacs was of course far too intelligent to accept all the grosser aspects of Stalinism but all he was prepared to do about it was to keep up an irregular sniping fire at some of its aspects in the aesthetic field. To those who eulogise Lukacs and his ilk we can unhesitatingly say that the struggle of even the most obscure Left Oppositionist against Stalinism contributed infinitely more to the cause of the proletarian revolution than did the entire output of Lukacs in this period. It is easy to become a communist, as Lukacs did, at a time when the enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution was sweeping the world. What is infinitely more difficult is to remain a communist in a period of 20 years of defeat, and by that criteria Lukacs, for all his brilliance, failed miserably. This failure extended even to his short re-entry into politics in 1956. Here he sided not with the workers councils and fighting proletariat of Budapest, but with the reformist Stalinist government of Nagy which would have been swept away with the Russian tanks if only the Hungarian workers had been victorious.

Marx once remarked that some people believe that an intellectual can soar above all classes. In so doing, he noted, they only reveal that they are the petty-bourgeoisie tossed helplessly back and forth between the working class and the bourgeoisie. This statement could be applied not only to Lukacs himself but also to those who will undoubtedly use the occasion of his death to try to glorify his undoubted intellectual achievements while ignoring his political activities. We should ignore neither and instead try to do what Lukacs himself was an advocate of—namely to try to restructure his own (bourgeois) ideas so as to enrich Marxism. The only difference is that revolutionaries must understand that this cannot be done as Lukacs tried to do it—in opposition to the interests of the working class and in abstraction from revolutionary practice.

Alan Jones

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ICI's UNORGANISED WORKERS

The indications are that, for the present, ICI's 43,000 unorganised so-called white-collar workers are going to remain without trade union collective bargaining rights. Under pressures from both staff workers and interested unions, notably Clive Jenkins' Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS)—which already claims a 12% membership across ICI—some months ago ICI commissioned the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations to an "attitude survey" of its staff workers. The main point of interest centred around the question of whether or not they wanted trade union bargaining rights to be recognised by the firm. ICI is the last major firm to hold out on giving recognition to the non-manual unions.

The results of the questionnaire, distributed in February, were published recently (May 4th) and show a considerable antipathy to trade unions, which in the section of the survey set aside for general comments, were variously referred to and criticised for "militancy", "political bias" and "extremist action". In fact, overall barely one-third (34%) of the ICI staff were in favour of joining a union, and over a half (54%) were definitely against this. Instead, support was given to proposals for staff committees (70%), which already exist and are not intended to be involved in bargaining, and a staff association (49%), which would have certain limited bargaining rights but would be a company organization.

These results, however, were contradicted in another section of the questionnaire where it was found that there was strong support—by

half the staff—for some sort of organisation which could bargain with the company. There is clearly some muddled thinking here on the part of the ICI staff as to just what an "improved system" of staff committees or even a staff association would mean.

A comparison with the bargaining situation at the Guardian Royal Exchange Insurance Group is useful at this point, for there the company has been opposing the staff turning the company-run staff association into a part of ASTMS, which would of course break the company's hold over it, on the grounds that "many members of the staff had not wished to be collectively represented in the past" (*Financial Times*, January 9, 1971). More likely to be worrying the Guardian is the fact that members of the Prudential and Norwich Union Insurance Company have gained themselves wage rises of 25% and 10% respectively since they started being represented by ASTMS. On the other hand, ICI have announced that there will be no general increase for staff workers at all in 1971.

The antagonism expressed towards the unions in the ICI-Tavistock survey suggests that the press and TV's current witch-hunting of trade unionists fighting the Tories' Industrial Relations Bill and striking to improve their living standards is having "beneficial side-effects" for the ICI management, which look as if they are going to retain, at least for the time being, their ability to unilaterally impose wage levels and working conditions virtually without restraint. It is certainly the case that the "Clobber these industrial wreckers" hysteria of the media in the present period is help-

ing to ward off the developing trade union consciousness among wide sections of "white-collar" workers—including those of ICI.

However, a more significant point to arise from the questionnaire is that there are some sections of staff where support for the trade unions is much more widespread. The term "staff" as it applies at ICI refers to a range of employees from technicians and supervisors to scientists and even top managers themselves. So it is not surprising to find that, say, technicians and supervisory staff tend to be generally very much more well-disposed towards the unions.

If ICI's staff are to win their right to be represented in negotiations by a trade union, and this becomes even more important now it is known that considerable redundancy is planned for staff workers with the forthcoming "rationalisation and reorganisation", then it is from amongst the technicians and works supervisors especially that any initiatives are likely to come. This will necessitate more than just "bringing pressure to bear" upon the company for union recognition; it is highly favourable to ICI that a large section of its employees remain unorganised, and that a struggle will have to be waged to force ICI to capitulate and recognise union rights. Action committees of staff workers committed to getting ICI fully unionised should be formed, and links with other sections of ICI workers who are organised should be sought, in order to effectively conduct an intensive campaign of propaganda in favour of trade union activity in the offices, laboratories and plants. *Red Mole Reporters*

The Decline of

Upper Clyde Ship-builders Ltd.

Ominous signs are filtering through from the bourgeois press giving the impression that another section of Scottish shipbuilding is about to crumble. According to the "Financial Times" of May 13th 1971, "the group's cash flow difficulties—aggravated by a five-month hold-up of credit guarantees while negotiations took place with the Department of Trade and Industry late in 1970 and earlier this year—had "not yet been resolved", "Further to this information, U.C.S. and especially the John Brown shipyard at Clydebank are about to be claimed by Cunard for £2 million due to their alleged late delivery of the Q.E.2.

It is certainly true that John Brown shipyard is in a bad way. Apart from the empirical data which shows its financial plight, one would only have to look at the yard itself to see that it could never compete with the Japanese or even Western European yards. This fact is the most important point, for the claim by Cunard is one which U.C.S. will meet with—

1) Cunard altered the internal design of the Q.E.2., 2) U.C.S. did not design the turbines for the ship; in fact the part of the turbines which caused the delay in putting the ship into service, the turbine blades, were not produced by the turbine manufacturers. The company which did produce the turbine blades is now out of existence.

It follows that Cunard would have a hard time pinning the blame on U.C.S. However, as said previously, this factor is not the most important. It is reported that the John Brown yard is the most out-of-date yard in the group and has the lowest level of productivity. In order to make the group financially viable the likely action which U.C.S. will take seems to be the transfer of workers from Clydebank and Scotstoun to the more modern Govan and Linthouse yards.

3000 worker will have to be moved in this process, and the employers seem to think that because no redundancies should take place the workers will not be concerned. However, the workers will not be too pleased when they are told that a double-shift system will be imposed then. Since 40% of the manual workers are in the Boilermakers Union and this body have resisted such moves in shift-working previously, it is quite clear that some sort of struggle is going to erupt very soon in the Clydebank area.

The yard at Clydebank has got into trouble basically because of the lack of re-investment since the Second World War. To modernise the yard suitably would cost £5 million. With the general position of British shipbuilding being in disastrous state; the Geddes Report shows a steady decline in the U.K. share of world tonnage from 43% in 1950 to to-days 6.5%, there will be no sympathy shown for "lame duck" John Brown.

With the rate of unemployment in the town of Clydebank at 10% amongst the male populace and, with hundreds of workers under phased redundancies at the giant Singer's factory in the past two years with more to come, the working class in this area are very angry. Not for nothing do the people in this area always return Labour and in certain wards the Communist Party candidates are returned faithfully, although they are elected on very petty and parochial issues. So to a certain extent the tradition of "Red Clydeside" lingers on.

In the present context the possibilities for mobilising the Labour Movement in Clydebank are tremendous. It has been reckoned that if an adequate number of orders are not received by September of this year, the close-down of John Brown's will take place. There are absolutely no possibilities of alternative employment in the area. The formation of action committees in the town which could meet the problems confronting the workers in the shipbuilding industry together with the question of unemployment are an absolute necessity.

John Anderson.

KENT WOMEN WORKERS

A recently concluded strike of 60 women workers at Reinforced Shuttlecocks Ltd. (Sandwich) illustrates a phenomenon which, although not exclusive to E. Kent, is typical of the area. This is the problem of a non-unionised labour force (and the general level of consciousness which this implies). Industry in E. Kent, apart from the Medway area and the coalfields, is typically situated in small labour-intensive factories. For a whole variety of reasons, including the agricultural history of the area and the consequent lack of a trade union tradition; the continuing importance of this type of work, albeit seasonal, which leads to a situation of underemployment; the large number of women in the labour force, especially part-time; for all these reasons, many of these factories are non-unionised. Thus we see a strike at this factory continuing for eight full weeks, not directly for wages but for union recognition.

It is not difficult to find the underlying reason for such a long fight over this question. The wage rates at this firm are abysmally low. The basic rate of pay is between 15p and 20p an hour, with the majority of women receiving only 15p. A bonus scheme operates, but on an extremely low level. Thus after one month's training period, the basic wage drops from £8 to £6 and the bonus scheme comes into operation, such that a typical take-home pay for a 40-hour week for someone who had been at the firm for 12 years was £9.50 p.w. Of course, young girls receive much less than this. The management itself is quite embarrassed by this low level of pay, so much so that in its efforts to recruit blackleg labour, it had to quote take-home pay at £12.50, the wage of a supervisor

Incidentally, the major result of this propaganda was to make the women aware of exactly whose side the local press was on and the nature of its "objective" reporting. (Only nine blacklegs were recruited to replace the 60 women on strike, and some of these left after the first day.)

Not only is there bad pay, however, but the factory is in such a bad state of repair that one would be forgiven for assuming, from its appearance, that it was a disused farmhouse (as we did). The roof in one of the rooms leaks and, come rain, the room is flooded out—and this with electrically-run machinery about. In fact, there is a general lack of safety standards, with accidents going unreported and where, until the women started organising, the first-aid facilities amounted to a wooden first-aid box.

Given all this, it is rather surprising that any of the women stay there. Most other factories in the area do have better conditions and rates of pay. And so apart from the factor of misguided loyalty which some of the women feel and the close ties which the women have forged with each other over the years, the main reason for their staying appears to be the extremely (by capitalist standards) lax discipline. As any working woman with young children knows, it is very important to be able to arrive an hour or two late or have the odd day off when the children's welfare demands it—not that other people wouldn't appreciate such a regime.

Even so, the women have every reason to want a trade union—and the management to fear one, even in this case, when such a backward union as the GMWU is involved. What the profit of the firm is difficult to ascertain, not

being quoted in any accessible place. If one takes into account that this is a subsidiary of an American firm which has a world-wide monopoly on this type of (feathered) shuttlecock, that it is thus able to raise its prices at will, as it did recently, and that it avoids SET by being an exporting firm, one can imagine what these profits must be. It is not difficult to understand their bitter opposition to the very notion of a trade union. So when the union approached the management after 50% of the women had joined it, it received no uncertain rebuff and the management remained adamant even after a recommendation from the DEP. Eventually, with 83 members out of a workforce of 120 (which included 15 men and boys), the management sacked the organiser, a supervisor, for recruiting during working hours. The morning after, 60 women came out for the two demands of reinstatement and union recognition and stuck it out for eight weeks, no doubt helped by the strike pay, which at £6 plus £1 from collections was for many of them little less than their wages.

The present situation is, however, not too good. The women have agreed to go back after a management offer to open negotiations with the union and to come to a decision within one month; the question of the sacked supervisor is also left in abeyance. We can expect that the management will attempt an ideological offensive over the next month on the question of trade unions, but it is unlikely that after eight weeks of struggle the management will be successful in this.

J. R. Clynes

LETTERS ON IRELAND

Dear Comrades,

As a member of one of the 2 republican organisations Rayner Lysaght alleges to be "least affected by Stalinism" (Clann na h-Eireanna). I am writing to reply to his letter in the Mole (No. 8, Vol. 2).

Comrade Lysaght's argues that the split in the Republican movement (which had been maturing since the mid-sixties), received a violent jolt in Aug. '69, with the "failure to defend the ghettos" controversy, leading to the Provisional secession of Dec. 1969/70 Jan. Thus the split came before the "outstanding defects of the Stalinist method: the peaceful road to socialism in N. Ireland and the 2 stage theory had been exposed. As a result polarisation of members of the IRA and Sinn Fein to "officials" or "Provisionals" was on the basis of allegiance to either purist physical force nationalists or Stalinist social reformist.

Lysaght then poses the question can the official evolution to the right be averted?

Answer: "It is possible that it could turn leftwards again, but this is doubtful."

If this is correct then the future for the "left" in Ireland in the 1970s is very bleak. However I believe that the evidence, produced to support this theory, is both cursory and selective and the argument is marred by statements which are either inaccurate or overstated.

Two examples:-

1) He states, "today Gardiner Place's influence in N. Ireland is limited to two areas of Belfast." On the contrary, within Belfast the officials possess approximately equal organisational strength to the Provisionals (though they lack the latter's steady flow of Free State based money), while in the rest of the 6 Co.s the officials are much stronger than the Provisionals.

Statements such as the above can only weaken Lysaght's credibility with Left Republicans.

2) In his anxiety to attribute the injection of the Stalinist virus into the officials to King St. Lysaght declares: "Greaves was not successful in achieving his aims; but was successful in imposing the policies that he thought should achieve these aims. The socialists were forced out—and were not asked to return by Greaves. In a few lines Greaves is transformed by implication from a partially successful policy advisor to "hatchet man-in-chief" of the "Stalinist" leadership.

These, admittedly, are minor points. They do however add false support to Lysaght's theory and are very much in line with the interpretation of the present situation of the Officials provided by the "news" as reported by the Flanná Fail Coogan "Irish Press".

He quotes the Ground Rents and Fisheries Campaigns, as evidence of the process of Stalinisation within the Official leadership's development of strategy. The following passage is the nearest he comes to actually defining what this process is, "the conscious limiting of socialist perspectives being imposed by the leadership." This is inadequate, both in its application to the policies of the Official leadership, and as a means of identifying the individual Stalinists within the leadership. Nor, I believe, is it adequate for the naming of these activities as "petit bourgeois". (see below).

The "official" leadership is not homogenous and the motivation of its members for adopting the same lines of action is not identical. This is not to deny that some of the members of the Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle and Army Council may be "Stalinists". It is to deny that their presence automatically turns the Republican movement or its leadership into their vehicle. To judge from Comrade Lysaght's letter anyone would think that the leadership of the movement consisted of 5 Dublin based Republicans 4 of whom are "Stalinists".

He suggests that the left-wing speeches of people like Goulding are primarily verbal genuflections before the "Workers Republic" altar. Doubtless he would regard Sean Garland's article "Building Revolution" in the "United Irishman" (May 1971) as being in the same vein. Sean Garland writes of "a rise in the working class consciousness. Only through struggles can the workers build the actual organs through which they can tomorrow take over the administration of the economy and the State, freely elected workers committees at factory or street level which will federate themselves afterwards locally, regionally, and nationally. That is what the conquest of political power really means.

He concludes, "Above all, it must be borne in mind that whatever actions are engaged in, housing agitations, land and fishery agitations, civil rights or cultural agitations, all are bound up with and must be linked with the fight for freedom and socialism, and that in all these fights to establish the rights of the ordinary people there is a class fight. We must demonstrate to all Irish people that our movement expresses the interests of that most exploited class, the working class, and that we have the programme and the policy, the aim to make that class victorious at last, in the long struggle for freedom and socialism."

The sins here are, as usual, sins of omission; Garland makes no specific reference to the actual means by which the workers themselves are to be mobilised—only their relationship to other aspects of the anti-Imperialist struggle than their own. To Lysaght this, no doubt is the "conscious limiting of socialist perspectives"—Stalinism, in operation again. I believe that this is evidence, quite

simply, of the lack of knowledge and experience of working class struggle many of those in the leadership of the movement possess. Yet Garland's lack of experience could hardly be attributed to his "petit-bourgeois" background!

Lysaght's disparaging remarks about the "Fish-ins" and Ground Rent strikes are significant, more for what they reveal about his attitude towards Republicans and certain aspects of the anti-Imperialist struggle, than for what they implicitly state. He sees the drift into both these agitations as a sign "that the Stalinist myth of the 'two stage theory' encouraged such people as Costello, Gill, Goulding and O'Toole to accept the limitations of their petit-bourgeois outlook." This is followed by sneering remarks about the Republican educational policy being an example of the "blind leading the blind etc".

Maybe I too am a bit thick and "petit bourgeois" but both these campaigns appear to me important, one of them vital, to the struggle against British Imperialism. No one in the Republican movement would claim that the Ground Rents issue is going to provide the "lift-off" to revolution. But this does not render it irrelevant. The "petit-bourgeoisie" are not the only group who pay ground rents.

Through rates and taxes in fact the whole population subscribes to this feudal levy. It is worth remembering that the Republican policy on Ground Rents is not one of simple abolition. It is for their replacement by a state levy. The state to replace the landlords as sole proprietor of all land. Thus Republicans have raised the demand for public ownership of all land and exposed the government's role as aides and abettors of the oldest surviving clique of Ireland's exploiters.

But his dismissal of the N.W.R.L. as "petit-bourgeois" is much more serious. The reconquest of fishing rights by rural Ireland is vital to its continued existence. It would be interesting to know his attitude to the Land Leaguers, Gaeltacht Civil Rights, and other "petit-bourgeois" rural movements. Rural politics remain of vital importance for the republican movement because the survival of the Irish nation very much depends on the survival of rural Ireland.

Certainly the survival of the Gaeltacht is essential for the survival of the Irish language, and any revival of the language would almost certainly be doomed without a Gaeltacht base. Without the language the survival of the Irish nation, as such, would be very doubtful. At the same time agitation on behalf of the Gaeltacht involves the raising of social and economic issues that underlie in a very basic way the claims of the constitutional parties, to be either "national" or "republican".

There is nothing wrong with the implementation of these policies by republicans. What is wrong is their failure to evolve a similarly coherent policy for the urban working-class.

No effective nationally based Republican T.U. organisation exists. When faced with major industrial issues such as Colley's "Wage Freeze" or the future of Harland & Wolff's the reaction has usually been indecisive, or non-existent. Again it is necessary here to remember the movement's lack of experience in industrial struggle. Interventions have been carried on however at a local level and in a sporadic way. A Republican Trade Union Group does exist. And the Ard Comhairle of Sinn Fein has just called for massive support for the unemployed campaign from the organisation. In other words tentative first steps are being taken.

While Lysaght mentions Ground Rents and Fisheries the "Free Transport" campaign in Belfast is ignored, as is the support the movement gave the cement strikes. Again from Lysaght's letter it could well be inferred that this form of action ceased with the defection of the E.I. bus burners, he refers to.

To speak therefore in terms of a retreat in this area since the E.I. bus burnings is very misleading. The E.I. incident was like the IRA intervention in the Dublin transport strike of 1935. It was a case of action with, but not of the workers. The spectacular aspect of an intervention in a dispute does not transform its nature.

The evidence on the industrial front can point as clearly to a movement still learning and formulating its industrial policies as one retreating into enclaves of agitation of a "petit-bourgeois" nature.

The case for King Streets dominant influence in formulating this Stalinist retreat is even slenderer. Irish "Kremlinologists" have to work on the bases that old campaigners like Cathal Goulding are either a) "Plants" of the CPGB or b) Gullible stooges of the real "plants". This is too large an assumption to be readily swallowed. Secondly there is serious disagreement between the CPGB and the CPI on the "National Question" with regard to Ireland, and also disagreement between the "Stalinists" and those in the Republican movement. This argues strongly against a coherent and concerted "Stalinist" strategy, based on King Street.

Much more serious is Comrade Lysaght's basic attitude towards the Official Republican movement. For all his dismissal of Goulding left verbalism at the last Ard Fheis, it was Goulding more than anyone else who was responsible for the turn to the left. How did socialists like Lysaght react to the opportunity this created?

Lysaght says "Many of us believed that, after all, the bulk of the movement was made up of genuine revolution-

aries, who would be alienated, eventually, by the outstanding defects of the Stalinist method." A belief, apparently, that did not inspire them to actually join an organisation of "genuine revolutionaries" in order to further the process of alienation. There is a certain wishful element involved here. Constantly socialists of Lysaght's ilk have looked to a succession of "Crest Red Hopes" to pre-empt the role of the Official Republican movement. Latest in the list is the Socialist Party of Ireland which, according to Lysaght, "has a probably more objectively revolutionary potential" than the Official Republicans. This despite their size (5-6 members)! The loss of individuals of the calibre of Seamus Rattigan should not be lightly dismissed. But their success in setting up an alternative to the "Officials" must surely be a bit more apparent before it can be given serious consideration? Lysaght also places faith in the Socialist Labour Alliance and another unnamed group. (Soar Eire?)

This search for "Republicans" outside the Republican movement to carry out the tasks Lysaght claims the Officials should implement but *can't* is one aspect of a practice many "left" Irish intellectuals adopt towards Republicans.

If there are "Stalinists" and "Stalinist" policies and ideas, proliferating in the Republican movement, unchecked and uncheckable. If these "Stalinists" are leading the "Officials" up the constitutional garden path the responsibility rests primarily with those socialist revolutionaries who were prepared to talk *at* Republicans but not *to* them. Who were prepared to interpret events but not participate in them. The arrogance Comrade Lysaght displayed in his letter, is part and parcel of this attitude.

The history of trying to build alternatives to the IRA and Sinn Fein from breakaway groups is one of futile endeavour. Previous strategies adopted and advocated by comrade Lysaght do not inspire confidence in his belief that this trend now be reversed e.g., his advocacy of entry into the labour party and revival of the Irish Citizen Army.

The S.L.A. may become a serious base for building a new revolutionary movement, providing it adopts a more positive attitude towards Republican traditions, susceptibilities and policies. I believe its future success depends very much on, a) How closely it can ally itself to the Republican movement and, b) How effectively it can use that alliance to draw the best elements within the Republican movement to a position that the whole "Official" structure will come to adopt.

All the above does not preclude criticism. The Housing Action campaign is a case in point. Lysaght rightly says, when a chance came to extend the basis and level of activity it was clear the Republican leadership had planned nothing beyond the agitational and guerrilla-action phase.

The same strengths and weaknesses of the "Officials" were displayed in a more flattering light in the cement strike, where organisation was crucial while overall strategy was limited by severely restricted and short-term aims. The Republican movement still needs to formulate fully its strategic policies to achieve its ultimate goal, a 32-county Socialist Republic.

This, I believe, is possible, with the participation in the movement of revolutionary socialists. There is a threat of social reformism, it is a threat most successfully expanding revolutionary movements force. That is *why* I believe it is essential for revolutionaries to participate in the Republican movement. Winning the most progressive elements (and I believe they are in a strong majority), requires a willingness to share in learning the lessons of the past rather than—having won the Republican movement to the objective of a Socialist Republic, then vilifying it for confusion over use of tactics.

Yours fraternally,
Padraig Yeats,
67 Birchwood Crescent,
Birmingham - 12.

GLOSSARY

Clann na h-Eireann—the Official Republican organisation for Irish exiles in Britain.
Gardiner Place—the H.Q. of the "Officials"
Greaves—C. Desmond Greaves; British C.P.'s chief ideologue on Irish questions.
Ard Comhairle—Executive Council
Goulding—Cathal Goulding; Current Chief of Staff of the Official IRA.
Sean Garland—National Organiser of the Official Republican Movement.
N.W.R.L.—National Waters Restoration League; United Front body campaigning against private control of Irish Fishing rights.
Gaeltacht—Irish speaking areas.
Ard Fheis—Conference.
Socialist Party of Ireland—small group which broke away from the Official Sinn Fein in January this year. Mainly composed of activists in the Dublin Housing Action (squatters) campaign.
Socialist Labour Alliance—United Front of left-wingers who are dissidents within or who have left the Irish Labour Party, and other Left groups and individuals.

BOOKS

AID AS IMPERIALISM

Aid as Imperialism: Teresa Hayter, Penguin Books, 1971. 30p. Pp. 222, index.

Between 1963 and 1968 Teresa Hayter was employed by the Overseas Development Institute Ltd., which describes itself as "an independent non-government body aiming to ensure wise action in the field of overseas development" (such is the motto which appears on all its publications). In fact, ODI is financed by the Ford Foundation, by British firms with stakes in underdeveloped countries, and, on occasions, by the World Bank and Foundations like Nuffield and Rockefeller. ODI's "independence" obviously has limits, defined by the aims and interests of those who finance it. A slightly pink tinge here and there, a few tame liberals, do not matter—add, indeed, to the fiction of "independence". But any substantial betrayal of those aims and interests is altogether different. Sensible recruiting minimises the possibility of such betrayal. Teresa Hayter's book shows, happily, that recruiting can never be perfect and that "false consciousness" can give way to a truer perception of reality. But can one really expect betrayal to be tolerated when it takes place? Certainly not. Teresa Hayter's experience revealed the hard, angry face of the paymaster behind the liberal facade.

During her employment at ODI Teresa Hayter wrote a book on French Aid, which displayed a suitable adherence to ODI principles. ODI duly published it. She subsequently embarked upon a study of the World Bank's role in Latin America, financed by the World Bank. The stage seemed set for a repeat performance. One does not, after all, finance a biography which will make one seem nasty. Imagine the horror at ODI and in Washington, when the expected public relations exercise turned out to be something very different. The king, it was unequivocally stated, wears no clothes. "Wise action in the field of overseas development" is not to be ensured, apparently, by the revelation of unsavoury truths, even if the central truth is that present action is stunting rather than promoting development. After pressure from the World Bank and unsuccessful attempts by the Director of ODI, Mr. Anthony Tasker, by ODI's Director of Studies, Dr. Tom Soper, and by various other ODI officers to persuade Teresa Hayter to play the game and reclothe the king, ODI refused to publish. The present book consists of a brief but effective Foreword by R. B. Sutcliffe, in which the book is placed in its general context; a Preface by Teresa Hayter, in which one can see that her demystification has proceeded rapidly since she wrote her study for ODI; the text, which was rejected by ODI; and an Appendix entitled "The Birth and Death of an ODI Study", in which is documented, from communications and memos written by the people involved, the sordid business of the book's rejection by ODI.

The whole matter has now become something of a *cause celebre*. The exchanges over the book continue. In the most recent letter published in *The Times* (28 April 1971), Donald Tyerman, "a member of the Executive Committee of the Overseas Development Institute since it was founded" (his own words), denies the charge of prejudice and dishonesty. As a "former editor of an independent newspaper" (*The Economist*, as it happens) he would, he tells us, have responded to World Bank pressure by publishing, whatever the cost—"provided the copy was worth publishing". One trembles at the fierce, not to say reckless, integrity of Donald Tyer-

man and his fellow members of the Executive Committee. Alas, it could not be seen in full, seismic operation. For Teresa Hayter's manuscript did not measure up to rigorous ODI standards:

"But we could not [publish it], for simple reasons which have nothing to do with politics or pressure. Its judgements, we had reluctantly to decide, were not derived from the evidence adduced; its findings were not findings for the most part, but assertions."

And the final sting:

"That may very well do for a readable and successful Penguin book; it would not do for an ODI study."

How humble must be the shade of Sir Allen Lane before such Olympian fastidiousness.

Certainly, few of the many ODI studies published so far have been readable, and none, to my knowledge, has been successful. To that extent Teresa Hayter has broken with a well-established ODI tradition. However, to give as a reason for not publishing that the book's "findings were not findings... but assertions", is surprising, since this, I would have thought, is the *differentia specifica* of ODI publications. If it were a valid representation the book would be very much in the ODI tradition, with the difference that it said extremely embarrassing things about the World Bank. But it is not valid. The book is well-argued and convincing. To say that there was no yielding to World Bank pressure is, on the hard evidence adduced in Teresa Hayter's Appendix, plain nonsense. Of course, its non-publication by ODI had everything to do with "politics and pressure" and with ideology. The Appendix is the more effective for the calm, almost clinical way in which the episode is chronicled. The World Bank emerges as a ruthless and determined organisation, and ODI with its liberal posturings and conscience-salving double-talk as a pathetic satellite.

But what must be our objective assessment of Teresa Hayter's book? It would be foolish to react to statements such as Donald Tyerman's by claiming that the book is definitive and beyond criticism. Teresa Hayter herself does not do so. That it is worthy of publication, in an ODI series or anywhere else, is beyond doubt. For it to have languished under the ODI imprint, indeed, would have been most unfortunate. Its honesty shines out. Teresa Hayter does not, however, tell us anything that is substantially new. She is the first to set out *in extenso* and systematically truths about the nature of foreign aid which have become gradually more clear in the last decade or so. Aid is one of the mechanisms of neo-colonialism; it is used, pervasively, to influence the economic policies of recipients; it is a means of supporting particular kinds of political regimes. "Leverage" has attempted to secure financial stability at the cost of development; has subordinated recipients' interests to those of donors (mainly those of the USA); has tried to prevent far-reaching changes in the economics, politics and social structures of a wide range of societies. All of this Teresa Hayter shows through her account of the activities in Latin America of three organisations involved in the aid-giving process: IMF, the World Bank and AID. It is invaluable to have her orderly study and her fascinating Appendix. The story is, however, well-known. Like Oliver Twist, one wants more: more information, more analysis, more political economy.

Teresa Hayter tells us, in her Preface:

"The study is basically a liberal critique of

aid policies. It developed into an attempt to expose the inconsistencies and conflicting motivations of these policies. But, at the time when I wrote it, I was far from demystified." (p.11)

The Preface, indeed, could have been written by an altogether different Teresa Hayter from the one who wrote the text. What, then, are the weaknesses of the liberal critique? Teresa Hayter herself identifies one: "the assumption that the well-being of the peoples of the Third World was, or at least could become, the primary consideration in aid policies." (p.11) This is, surely, valid self-criticism. Such an assumption, as Teresa Hayter is well aware, must lend a particular bias to any analysis. In one sense she transcended this, in choosing to focus upon "leverage". But the stigmata are there for us to see. The book's title is something of a misnomer, since nowhere in the text is explicit account taken of the nature, the roots, and the *modus operandi* of contemporary imperialism (or neo-colonialism, as it is alternatively called). Indeed, imperialism is not, I think, mentioned in the text itself. Equally, the study would have gained breadth and power from some awareness of the contradictions of modern advanced capitalism, from thoroughgoing use of the concepts of exploitation and economic surplus, from some consideration of incipient capitalism in the countries of Latin America, and from a more rigorous account of the relationship between aid and the other mechanisms of neo-colonialism (i.e. trade and private foreign investment). It is not that the admitted assumption leads to the exclusion

of such concepts, but rather that innocence of the concepts, in the first place, permits the assumption to be made.

In his admirably lucid, succinct and forceful Introduction R. B. Sutcliffe stresses the need for

"searching and sensitive inquiry, supported by a sophisticated analysis of the political mechanisms at work" (p.6) in any analysis of the nature, impact and operation of foreign aid. Absolutely so. He then argues that Teresa Hayter has supplied this. I do not think that she has, and her own self-criticism admits as much. To be sure, she comes far nearer than do most writers on aid. There are throughout the book numerous hints. Hence the annoyance of the World Bank and IMF, the pressure on ODI, and the suppression of the study. One misses, however, a searching analysis of the motives of and conflicts among the aid-givers, of the classes which are supported by and benefit from aid, of the relationship between such classes and their governments, of the pressures within and the internal working of the three organisations studied.

This is not the place to go into detail on these issues. What one would welcome, however, is a text from the new, demystified Teresa Hayter: as self-confident, as hard and as much to the point as she is in her very short Preface. Let us hope that it will not be long in coming. Let Teresa Hayter's present book be the beginning.

T. J. Byres



COUNCILS THE MANCHESTER

Why Councils of Action?

Councils of Action are now more necessary than ever if we are going to fight the Tory Anti-Union laws. With the sell-out of the TUC leadership at Croydon and the more recent Liaison Committee debacle there are no broad-based bodies left to carry on the struggle *except* the local Councils of Action. Indeed, once the IRB goes through—as now seems likely—Councils of Action will be even more necessary than before, not only to fight the law but also to link up and give help to individual smaller struggles which otherwise will be isolated through the collapse of the mass movement built up over the last few months. Of course the fact that this movement has now collapsed is clearly the consequence of the TUC giving in and the inability of the “left” leadership to do anything about it. Thus, Feather is now talking about exchanging the IRB for an Incomes Policy. This, though, has not come out of the blue, indeed it is implicit in paragraph 31 of the TUC’s report to the Croydon Congress, which called on the TUC and the Labour Party to work out a “constructive alternative” to the IRB—which can mean nothing else except an Incomes Policy. The real alternative of course to the IRB is not some other capitalist technique for exploitation but is Socialism. Given this it can be seen that the role of Councils of Action is not only to centralise the rank and file fight but is also to *politicise* it, so that workers do not, for instance, fall into the trap of believing that the Labour Party is capable of carrying out socialist policies. Moreover it should be said that such Councils are not independent of or opposed to the present trade unions—they are not an alternative, just the reverse—they are a way of *uniting* the rank-and-file against the leadership of the unions so as to be better able to carry out the fight against the government.

How the Council of Action was Formed in Manchester

The Red Mole has constantly urged the need to construct local Councils of Action. However there has been little coverage of specific examples. As members of the Manchester Council of Action we have written this article so that trade unionists in other areas who are contemplating (we hope) building their own Council can learn from our successes and avoid our mistakes.

The first meeting was advertised by leaflets on the demonstration during the one-day strike last December 8th. Though this was the largest of all the anti-union laws demonstrations in Manchester it only attracted 2,500 workers—which shows the general political backwardness of Manchester compared with, say, Liverpool. Nevertheless the very occurrence of such demonstrations over the last few months provided an opportunity for publicity for the Councils of Action which has now been removed.

At the first meeting over 80 trade unionists turned up, about half of them white collar workers. In a resolution passed at the end of the meeting the aims of the Council were declared to be:

1) to group together all rank and file trade unionists in the area committed to active opposition to the Industrial Relations Bill, regardless of their trade-union or political affiliations.

2) to develop links with similar bodies in other localities, and to seek affiliation to the national Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

3) to openly oppose any retreats or compromises by any trade-union leadership or the TUC in the fight against the Bill.

4) to work for a General Strike to force the Tories to withdraw their legislation or resign.

5) to call on all unions to adopt a policy of total non-cooperation with any aspect of the Industrial Relations Bill.

6) to link the struggle against the Bill

with the fight against productivity deals, “Incomes Policies”, attacks on social services, etc.

7) to organise local activity of all kinds, aimed at expanding working-class opposition to the Bill and at further developing practical working-class solidarity.

Looking back on this resolution point 6 was particularly important in that it at least began to make some political link between the IRB and the government’s attack on the Social Services—thus showing the struggle to be wider than a purely Trade Union one.

Positive Achievements

The positive achievements of the Council have been many, and it will perhaps be easiest just to list them.

1) Our general agitation has not stopped at leafletting the anti-union Marches. Instead on each successive retreat of the TUC we have produced specific leaflets related to individual industries showing how they are particularly affected by the IRB. In this way we have been a help to workers in, so far, the brewery, engineering, building, printing, transport industries and we have also produced a leaflet for the dockers.

2) Our most successful propaganda so far has perhaps been a meeting addressed by Bernadette Devlin specifically on the topic of “Defend the Trade Unions”. This attracted over 500 people—which was 200 more than a Confed meeting on March 1st. Bernadette’s speech and the discussion afterwards probably illustrated for the first time in a meaningful way for many trade unionists present, the need to go beyond the defensive struggle against the IRB into an offensive struggle against capitalism as such. At the end of the meeting over 200 people signed forms expressing interest in the Council of Action.

3) We have had meetings with stewards and other militants in the brewing industry about the IRB—and as a result of this we are hoping to organise a local brewery workers combine.

4) The Council has also seen the importance of the struggle of black people and the need to hammer home the connection between the IRB (which aims to shackle the unions) and the Immigration Bill (which will terrorise black workers into becoming scabs). The Council is to participate as an act of solidarity in a demonstration against the Immigration Bill organised by the Black Unity and Freedom Party in Manchester on June 5th. Moreover such actions are seen as necessary not only to show solidarity with the black community but also because we need to demonstrate to white workers the anti-working class nature of racism.

5) Perhaps the most noteworthy success of the Council to date has been the help it has given to the workers on strike at Fine Tubes in Plymouth. This is important because it shows precisely the sort of rank and file help workers need to give each other in the absence of real assistance from the TU leadership. Moreover it is the sort of help which will be more and more needed once the IRB has gone through, the unions are shackled and struggles become more isolated. Again though this is a case of the Manchester Council helping workers in Plymouth it shows what such Councils should also be doing in their own locality—indeed, it shows the need for Councils of Action in every district.

The Fine Tubes dispute has all the hallmarks of Roberts-Arundel: It is still going on after ten months, and the basic dispute is over TU rights. It began as a strike for a straight pay increase which the AEF and T&G later declared official after the management refused to negotiate. The strikers—175 of them—were then sacked, and scab labour was taken on. The scabs were given an immediate pay increase, and then later the management took back three of the strikers, at a reduced rate and on a written promise they would not rejoin their union. The unions involved—AEF and T&G—have, predictably, given the strikers little help.



DEMONSTRATIONS ON THEIR OWN AIR

Although they are supposed to be the two most militant unions, they have not even declared a national levy to help the Fine Tube strikers (though they “generously” pay for the hire of cars to take the strikers’ representatives round the country on fundraising tours!)

In Manchester, we contacted the strikers and arranged for some of them to come up for a few days, and then took them round various factories and sites. In this way £750 was raised. Also, the strikers brought up an official blacklist which was widely publicised in the Manchester area (see below). All this could be repeated by other Councils of Action. Moreover, our experience here is that by inviting the strikers up we were even able to pressurise the local AEF officials into helping—which in a small way shows that it is possible, through militant rank-and-file activity, to get concessions from trade union officialdom. (Though we must admit that the T&G officials here were more obstinate and refused to help at all).

Mistakes to Avoid

Though we have had quite a lot of successes so far we have also made some mistakes. We hope that others can learn from these as much as from our successes. Again it is perhaps easiest just to list them.

1) Militants should not be frightened of emphasising right at the beginning that the fight against the Bill is a *political* fight and that Councils of Action are *political* bodies. It should be explained that the attack on the trade unions is not a “mistake” or a “wicked plot” by this particular Tory government but

is the result of the present *mess capitalism* is in—and this is precisely why the Labour government tried to bring in a similar measure (and will do so again if re-elected, though perhaps in the guise of another Incomes Policy). Indeed, it is precisely this political approach of the Councils of Action which distinguished them from the official Trade Union leadership—and it is only through such an approach that most militants who come in contact with Councils of Action can be politically educated (the existing socialist groups are too small to do this on their own).

Now the Council in Manchester has always *formally* acknowledged that the struggle is a political one. Experience has shown, however, that this purely formal acknowledgement is not enough because what has not emerged has been any real political discussion about what we are doing and what we should be doing. For instance, a suggestion that at occasional, though regular, intervals political speakers should be invited to talk on some topic related to the TU struggle, has never been implemented. The general failure to act on the on the acknowledgement that the anti-Bill struggle was political has played an important part in some of the other mistakes that have occurred. And it has also resulted in occasional friction within the Council because conflicts of ideas which have inevitably cropped up have never been able to be clearly articulated at what are at the moment essentially business meetings. It is only natural that members of the Council will have different political views—most, if not all, of which will have some merit and be worth listening to. However,

OF ACTION R EXPERIENCE



NOT ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE BILL

unless there is the opportunity for such views to be clearly expressed there will be unnecessary and frequently counter-productive wrangling. The Councils of Action will only be able to go forward if they are, in part, a forum for open political discussion.

2) The Council has recently developed a tendency towards creating its own bureaucracy. Thus at the meeting immediately following Bernadette Devlin an Executive Committee for the Council was elected. However it was created without a clear mandate for neither its powers nor its responsibilities were ever really defined. The big danger of this vagueness is that an EC so created might lose contact with the rest of the members. In our particular case this has been made worse, the Committee has the responsibility of calling the next full meeting of the Council, which at the time of writing has not met for four weeks, after previously meeting weekly. This long time-gap has meant that, with events still moving quite quickly, the Committee inevitably finds itself in a position where it has to take decisions without consulting or involving the rest of the members. One important instance of this is the case of the Irlam steel works, which is to be closed under the current British Steel rationalisation. A meeting was hurriedly arranged in Irlam, by the EC, to coincide with a march which took place there. Not, of course, that it is wrong for the Council of Action to involve itself in Irlam, but it is wrong that it was done without the membership discussing the involvement, without them being involved in the working out of a strategy to fight the closures and unemployment, without them having even

meeting—of a sub-committee on Irlam.

Whatever the result of the Irlam meeting, it is obvious that, to avoid the danger of it degenerating into something resembling most Trade Councils, every effort must be made to involve the members actively in the discussions and work of the Council of Action. Of course, cases will always arise in which the EC has to take an initiative as a matter of urgency, but the meetings must be held more frequently than once a month if the exclusion of members from participation in the Council's regular work is to be avoided.

3) Although we involved ourselves in Irlam we have not yet been concerned with the shut-down of British Steel at Openshaw—in Manchester proper—which means 600 redundancies. What is more, two Council members work there, and it would seem that a basic task of Councils of Action is to try to defend their own members.

4) We have also made the mistake of coming to decisions and either half carrying them out or not doing so at all. For example, a shop-steward was victimised at Salford Electrical Industries, a decision to help with her defence was taken, but it was never properly followed through.

5) The list of people who have shown interest in the Council is very large, but no proper effort has been made to visit them and discuss what the Council should be doing so far as they were concerned. This failure to keep in touch with potential activists was particularly marked after the Bernadette Devlin meeting—at the next meeting there were only about fifteen new faces. While we

draw new activists into its ranks only through fruitfulness, it seems that adequate attention to following up interested people would bring to light new fields of activity, ensure that the Council was better-informed of developments within the labour movement, and also possibly bring in new forces.

Role of the Communist Party

One big handicap not of our own making is the virtual non-involvement of Communist Party militants as a result of the official policy of the Manchester CP. This is a result of the bankrupt approach of the national leadership of the CP—a leadership which, after making militant noises through the Liaison Committee, gives up the fight a few weeks after Croydon. For them, given their complete reliance on 'left' leaders such as Scanlon and Jones, such a capitulation was inevitable: once Jones and Scanlon accepted the dictates of the right-wing leaders, the CP was unable to carry on.

So one of the things any Council of Action has to do is to involve in its activities the great body of shop-floor militants in the Communist Party. In Manchester we have had one or two such cases—in fact, the Council's treasurer is a Party member. In the long run, however, what is vital is to have a strategy for winning significant numbers of CP activists to the Councils of Actions; while such a strategy can't be elaborated in detail here, it is clear that it will be necessary to demonstrate to them in practice that the Councils are doing serious, useful work.

Where Now?

Taken as a whole, the work of the Council of Action in Manchester has been as successful as we could have hoped. What is necessary now—and what we have tried to do—is to learn from our mistakes and then to build on our success.

We have still to fight the IRB—for no one else will; we are working in a fateful vacuum. Moreover, Councils of Action will be needed even more once the Bill has gone through, in order to carry on the fight and to back the various separate struggles which will occur. No one else will do that either; the CP won't, and the groups to the left of the CP are too small to do it on their own. In a certain sense, though, the fact that Councils of Action are operating in a vacuum is a strength; having the field to themselves, they have the potential of developing very wide influence, out of proportion to their numerical strength.

It seems that there are three key fields of activity which, anyhow, the Councils of Action must undertake, and which offer the possibility of realising this potential.

1) The preparation of mass support for action to win the forthcoming Engineering pay claim—a breakthrough here would encourage millions of other workers to fight the Tories with renewed vigour.

2) Campaigning within the trade unions for organisation of the unemployed—at the moment, this is left to the Claimants' Unions (see the Red Mole Vol 2 No 8), which are heterogeneous on a national scale, numerically weak, and—necessarily—short of money. It is in the interests of trade unionists to see that they organise and defend the unemployed, for only the trade unions have the resources and the fighting power to do it—and if they funk the job, there will be no shortage of rightist demagogues who will seek to organise the unemployed against the unions.

3) The housing problem (see The Red Mole Vol 2 No 9), which capitalism can never solve even at the best of times, will become much more acute in the coming months and years. Working women and working class mothers, particularly on council estates, will face the problems not only of rising rents but also of the shortage of nurseries and other facilities, rising fares coupled with deteriorating transport services etc etc. Yet only through involving the trade unions—as if shown by the defeat of innumerable rent strikes, and the relatively few victories—can tenants' organisations hope to win. Forseeing the problem, Councils of Action should prepare now. And, since all of these

in one area can be useful in another, since strength in one area can be used to reinforce weakness elsewhere, since the national Liaison Committee has chosen to bury itself until AEF conference, there is a vital need for Councils of Action, Liaison Committees, Action Committees—or whatever else we choose to call our organisations—to begin, as yet only modestly, to establish links, exchange information, and prepare for concerted action in the battles ahead.

Stan Higginson—*TGWU (Engineering)*
Jim Shepherd—*United Road Transport*
Bill Bishop—*ASW*
Steve Cohen—*NUT*

19th. February 1971.

THIS SUPERSEDES ALL PREVIOUS LISTS

Transport and Distributors still dealing with Fine Tubes
These firms have been told about our official Dispute Fine Tubes Ltd., Transport: Ford D800 DDH 699H Oil tanker WHO396D, Ford Transit No. JCO 78 8F, Ford Escort KCO2146, Land Rover RPG 545 NJ Y 117J

Transport Companies dealing with Fine Tubes:
E. Fears, Plymouth. J. Miners, Ashburton, Devon (blue lorry LJJ 488H MJK 450J)
Ansons Transport, Liversedge, Nr. Bradford
Masons Bros. Rotherham
Air Products
Drake Carriers, Plymouth
Timik Twyford, Winchester
F. Taylors Transport, Ailworth, Peterborough.
Youngs Transport, Southampton.
Abbott & Trowers, Newton Abbot.
United Carriers, Bristol.
Woodbury Chilcott, Bristol.
'Chapmans', Ledbury, Herefordshire
Premier Transport, Sussex St., Bristol 2
Parkins, Exeter.
Romeo Vickers, Plymouth.
Wragg & Sons, Chesterfield.
Cyprian Fox, Newport, Mon.
Pike & Sons, Stowmarket, Rotherham.

Distributors & Customers.

Low Moor Steels, Bradford.	Tube Sales Ltd. Southampton.
Osbornes Steels, Bradford.	Tube Sales Ltd. Holland.
Rank Xerox, Bristol	Fine Tubes Ltd., Plymouth.
Superior Tube Co., Norristown, Pen. USA (Fine Tubes Groups)	John Cashmore, Walsall.
R. G. Brown, Smethwick, Birmingham.	Sabre Sportswear, Plymouth
Richard Wallington, British Crane Hire Corp	Symons Cornell, Plymouth.
Mullards Blackburn, (All groups)	P.M. Steels Ltd., PBA Ltd
Rapp Metals Ltd. Lon.	Aluminium Supply Co.
Whitelands Eng. Plymouth.	British Aluminium Stockholders. These four Cos. all at P.B.A. House, Allum Way, Totteridge, N. 2
E. A. Knight & Sons, Station Close, Potters Bar.	Stainless Equipment Ltd. Pophers End.
Smiths Industries, (all groups)	Stotesbury Tube & Fitting, Bristol Cardiff.
Initial Towel Supply	Walsall Conduits, B'ham.
J. Sankey, Hereford	Johnston & Baxter, Plymouth.
Part of GKN Gp.	Gardener & Merchant, Canteen Suppliers.
Browerles	Parker Pen, Newhaven
Dorset Metals, Lilleshall, Bournemouth.	Marshall Boxes, Plymouth.
British Syphon Co., Eastbourne.	Coventry Tube Co. Ltd. Coventry.
	Carlton Sports Co. Ltd., Saffron Waldon.

EXTRACT FROM WESTERN MORNING NEWS & EVENING HERALD—PLYMOUTH 18.2.71

"Any workers who continue to take sympathetic industrial action in support of the strikers in dispute with Fine Tubes, Plymouth, will not be liable to action for civil damages when the Government's controversial Industrial Relations Bill becomes law later this year.

Assurances to this effect given by Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Solicitor-General, in the Commons last night, were hailed as a "chink in the armour" by Dr. David Owen, Labour M.P. for the Sutton Division of Plymouth.

The Minister admitted that the Fine Tubes strike, over terms and conditions of employment, would be regarded under the terms of the Bill as a "fair strike", and he added: "Secondary strikes in support, or in sympathy with that, remain fair."

Dr. Owen stressed the importance of the Minister's statement as a matter of principle for the Fine Tubes strikers, 90 of whom had been maintaining the strike since June of last year, and they had been helped by sympathetic action taken by other workers who had "blacked" Fine Tubes products made by what trade unionists regarded as "blackleg" labour.

Sympathetic action in support of the Fine Tubes strikers had been taken by workers employed by the Atomic Energy Authority and by aircraft engineers at Bristol.

Dr. Owen underlined the difficulties in maintaining a strike such as that at Fine Tubes in an area of comparatively high unemployment, and complained that the strikers were not receiving fair treatment from the Department of Employment.

In some respect, he said, it seemed that the Department was actively helping the employers. At the very least, the existing law was being applied illogically.

Mr. Dudley Smith, Under-Secretary for Employment, intervened to say: "The Department must interpret the law as it is at the moment."

Despite these fine words from the Solicitor General, the Fine Tubes dispute is still continuing, and all Trade Unionists are asked to support our effort

LATIN AMERICA

CUBA

A NECESSARY BALANCE SHEET

[The following article was written as the introduction to a collection of documents and other materials relating to the Cuban revolution projected for publication in France as a book. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

The stage when Cuba was the object of unconditional admiration in wide circles of the vanguard is now passed. Unfortunately, those persons who previously indulged in apologetics, now most often prefer to make summary condemnations, to say nothing of those who have simply turned the page, Cuba no longer being considered in style. Thus, it is up to the Trotskyist movement once again to do the work of analyzing and evaluating a revolutionary experiment, which, whatever vicissitudes the future may hold, will go down in history as one of the crucial experiences of our age.

I.

The genesis of the Cuban revolution, its victory, and the events of the first decade in the life of the Cuban workers state have constituted a crucial test of the revolutionary movement's conceptions and orientations. Like all great historical turning points, the Cuban revolution has swept away a number of old nostrums, false or ambiguous views, and outmoded schemas, and has made it possible to gain a better understanding of the fundamental tendencies in this stage in their complexity and richness.

At the same time, the experience of the Cuban revolution has exposed more clearly the limitations and contradictions that cannot be escaped by a workers state in the present international context, in the context of a relationship of forces prevailing not only between imperialism and the revolution but also within the noncapitalist front.

The writings we are publishing give a precise analysis of the meaning and fundamental lessons of the Cuban revolution. Thus I need only recapitulate them briefly here.

1. The Cuban revolution marked a critical turn for an entire continent, and in this sense, despite the smallness of the country, its importance is comparable to the Russian and Chinese revolutions. The very existence of a workers state in Cuba has represented, and—in spite of the present difficulties—has not ceased to represent, a powerful factor in promoting the crisis and weakening of imperialism, and objectively assisting the revolutionary struggle in an exceptional way.

If it had not been for Fidel Castro's victory, ten years of Latin American history would have been radically different. The profound crisis of the ruling classes and leading groups, the irreversible decline of the petty-bourgeois reformist nationalist movements, the rise and maturing of new van-

guards—all this would not yet have occurred, or would not have developed so rapidly or extensively.

Even in Africa and Asia, the lessons of the Cuban revolution have left a considerable imprint and helped to produce and develop revolutionary movements and cadres. This is still more true for the advanced capitalist countries, especially Western Europe. In Europe, as is well known, mobilizations to defend the Cuban revolution marked a stage in the rise of the young vanguards which later stormed onto the political arena in May 1968 in France and in 1968-70 in Italy. For its part, the Fourth International has no reason to minimize the importance Cuba has had for it. In France in particular, if it had not been for Cuba and for Che Guevara, the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire — Revolutionary Communist Youth] would not have experienced its rapid rise, nor would the Ligue Communiste [Communist League, the French section of the Fourth International] be what it is today.

2. Thanks to the Cuban revolution, not only relatively limited vanguard strata but, above all, broad masses of workers, peasants, radicalized petty-bourgeois, and plebeian elements on the fringes of the productive process have become conscious of the fundamental political and social antagonisms that exist and of the possibility of defeating their No. 1 enemy, the all-powerful imperialism of the U.S. Such a statement might seem a commonplace today. But no revolutionist who knew what Latin America was like before Cuba will minimize the importance of the change that has occurred.

At the same time, the Cuban revolution subjected to a practical test all the arguments about the nature of the Latin American revolution, arguments which no small number of philistines had considered sterile and scholastic. Refuting the conceptions supported by the Stalinists, reformists, and centrists of every stripe, living experience has shown the arbitrariness and fallaciousness of the postulate that there is a bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution as distinct from the socialist one and that revolutionists can and must ally themselves with the so-called national bourgeoisie.

The Cuban revolution very quickly revealed its permanent character, breaking not only with imperialism but also with the indigenous "national" bourgeois ruling classes and "growing over" uninterruptedly into a socialist revolution. Paradoxically (although the paradox is only apparent), this "growing over" occurred even before those who gave impetus to it seemed to realize what was happening.

3. The victory of the Ejército Rebelde [Rebel Army] was an additional proof of the absurdity of all the theorizing about "democratic" or "peaceful roads to socialism" (which is still more ridiculous in countries lacking the parliamentary institutions whose presence in Western Europe might offer arguments to the advocates of these oppor-

tunist views). This victory also implied more specific lessons about the possible forms of a revolutionary breakthrough in the given Latin American context. In this area, discussions have been lively from the beginning, and they are continuing now, although the polemic has entered a new phase.

Correctly, the Cuban leaders, and Che Guevara especially, rejected the thesis that the Cuban revolution was exceptional. This postulate in practice was a smokescreen not only for Stalinists, reformists, and centrists whose formulas had collapsed miserably but also for those who, on paper, declared their support for armed struggle in very generous terms, without, however, drawing the required conclusions about the specific military tasks of the movement and the concrete choice of methods. In other words, the Cubans checkmated all these routinist and conservative attitudes based, in the last analysis, on a mechanistic use of historical analogies and on a spontaneist conception of the mass revolutionary upsurge and the insurrection leading to the conquest of power.

Despite all superficial and one-sided interpretations, the victorious outcome of the revolutionary struggle confirmed the need for a revolutionary party. It showed that the existence of a vanguard, even weak at first, but capable in a revolutionary or prerevolutionary context of clearly expressing the interests and aspirations of the masses and establishing real links at least with some layers of the population, is the decisive condition for success. In its own entirely special forms, which may prove to a large extent unique, the Cuban revolution argues, despite appearances, against any denial of the Leninist concept of the party.

4. On the international level, the imperialist attack very quickly gave impetus to the dynamic of permanent revolution in the Cuban process. It was above all after this attack that the leading group understood that Cuba could escape the danger of strangulation and military aggression only by integrating itself into the worldwide revolutionary process. As a result the Cuban government began to establish indispensable alliances with the other workers states. In this, it sought to form a bloc above all with countries like Vietnam and North Korea, which were also in the front line of the confrontation with imperialism. And for the most part it retained its political independence in the face of the most powerful bureaucratic leaderships.

At the same time, and this is still more important, Cuba vigorously assumed the role of standard-bearer of the entire Latin American revolution. Che Guevara's enterprise in Bolivia, regardless of how you assess his specific choices and methods, has been the most spectacular expression of the internationalist orientation of the Cuban revolutionists, who are clearly aware that their fate is indissolubly linked with that of the revolution on

a continental scale.

II.

The historic importance of the Cuban revolution and the unquestionable qualities of Fidel Castro and the leading group around him cannot lead revolutionists to soft-pedal the limitations, contradictions, and possible negative tendencies that appear, whether they flow from objective conditions or from deficiencies of a subjective order. Again, I will limit myself to a few brief recapitulations.

1. In general, the new productive relations have brought considerable economic development, permitting a very substantial improvement in the overall standard of living of the masses (among other things, by eliminating the scourge of unemployment and underemployment and by eliminating illiteracy and introducing universal education).

However, the initial underdevelopment, all the vestiges of the typical conditions of a backward society (an inadequate technical and cultural level, a limited number of technicians and specialists, the survival of habits belonging to a preindustrial society, etc.), and the imperialist blockade could not help but cause very grave difficulties and tensions, at the same time producing an inevitable economic dependence on the Soviet Union.

The deficiencies in systematic development of projects and economic plans; exaggerated voluntarist notions, especially in certain periods; the adoption of some excessive expropriation measures in the distribution sector, whose consequences for the economy are undeniable and whose political and social justification seems dubious; some concessions to utopian-

ism in the conception of the phase of transition from capitalism to socialism and to communism, underestimating material stimuli—all these factors aggravated the objective difficulties and contradictions by helping to produce the failure of the attempt to harvest 10,000,000 tons of sugar and the tensions that have arisen more generally over the course of the last year.

2. Cuba has not suffered a process of bureaucratic degeneration like that suffered in various forms by the East European and Asian workers states, and the regime has been able to base itself on powerful mass mobilizations. But the tendency that has manifested itself from the beginning to prolong and even give a general theoretical value to fluid political and institutional relationships, crowned by a direct rapport between the leader and the masses, could not fail to have very negative implications in the long run.

In other words, Cuba lacks a structured revolutionary government of the soviet type, that is based on organs subject to election and recall at any time, coordinated from top to bottom and from the periphery to the center, capable of assuring administration of

continued over

the state by the worker and peasant masses.

Furthermore, for long years the leading group has allowed the unions — an essential instrument for defending the interests of the workers even in the transitional phase — to remain under the control of the old Stalinist bureaucrats of the PSP [Partido Socialista Popular — People's Socialist Party, the name of the Communist party under Batista], even relegating them, in hasty generalizations, to an essentially propagandistic role of exhorting the workers to greater productivity.

Finally, the Cuban leaders' statement of the need to build a Marxist-Leninist party, accompanied at the beginning by original attempts at countering the dangers of bureaucratization, has not been translated into action except to an absolutely insufficient degree. It is symbolic that ten years after the conquest of power, the first congress of the party has yet to be held.

In these conditions it has been difficult for the vanguard of the proletariat to accomplish its tasks in reality. And more generally, the working class has been able to exercise its hegemony in the social only very partially and through multiple intermediaries.

3. The absence of revolutionary democratic structures at the top levels, the inadequacy of the unions, and grave limitations in the functioning of the party have left voids which, in one way or another, had to be filled. Thus a stratum of leaders and functionaries has progressively been created, which in practice has interpreted the decisions made by the leading group at the top to suit its own narrow interests.

In a situation that — despite the historic advance indicated above — remained marked by scarcity, to entrust the leading functions to a narrow stratum inevitably meant the development of conditions of privilege and the mentality associated with them.

There is no doubt that social differentiation and privileges are still very limited and, in any case, qualitatively different from those in the Soviet Union, the people's democracies, and even China. Differentiation, however, does exist and a dangerous political and social dynamic is operating. This is all the more dangerous because the embryonic Cuban bureaucratic strata can take advantage of the relationship of forces on the international level, and, more precisely, the convergence between their interests and their aspirations and the interests and aspirations of the bureaucratic caste in the USSR, which for well-known reasons is now able to subject Cuba to all sorts of pressures, if not actual blackmail.

4. The revolutionary and antibureaucratic orientations of the Cuban leading group, its initiatives in Latin America, its polemics with the Communist parties and the Soviet leadership itself have made a powerful contribution to the crisis of Stalinism and the bureaucratic organizations of the international workers' movement.

However, because of their education and the conditioning they have undergone, the Cuban leaders have not acquired — have not shown — a rounded understanding of the phenomenon of the bureaucratization of the Communist parties and the degeneration of transitional societies. This theoretical deficiency has had serious practical implications and will have more in the future if it is not overcome in time. This is why the revolutionary Marxists of the Fourth International pose this problem clearly.

Their lack of clarity about the nature of the Communist parties has led the Cuban leaders several times to harbor illusions about the possibility of these parties contributing to advancing the revolutionary struggle in Latin America. The most dramatic

reach an agreement with the Bolivian Communists during the guerrilla struggle led by Che Guevara. In this way, the Cubans' analytical and methodological deficiencies in approaching the problem of the nature of the bureaucratized workers states played a large role in their stand on the invasion of Czechoslovakia. And this position in practice led them to line up with Moscow and the most conservative (and most anti-Castroist) Communist parties.¹

There is no need for me to recall here how much such an attitude damaged the prestige and influence of the Cubans, both among the masses in the workers states oppressed by bureaucratic domination and the young vanguards that are the driving force of the new upsurge in the most industrialized capitalist countries. In the case of these new vanguards more specifically, the Castroist leading group's reticent attitude toward the May 1968 events in France also played a negative role.

5. The historic impetus that the Cuban revolution gave to the Latin American revolution and the aid the Cuban workers state has assured the revolutionists of the continent cannot overshadow the negative facts at the root of the crisis in relations between the Castroist leadership and a series of movements that were inspired by Castroism at the time of their formation.

On the level of generalizations and strategic guidelines, the Cubans gave a boost to erroneous or at least one-sided interpretations of the Cuban revolutionary experience itself (for example, interpretations soft-pedaling the mass influence Fidel Castro already had before the landing, the effect the existence of the anti-Batista movement in the cities had on the development of the armed struggle, etc.). At the same time, in the attempt to refute — which was the right thing to do — opportunist theorizing about the exceptionalism of the Cuban road, the Havana leadership went to the point of ignoring or seriously underestimating the actual peculiar conditions involved, which very probably will not be assembled in a revolutionary struggle in any other countries. (I need only note, once again, the attitude of a part of the Latin American bourgeoisie that believed the Batista regime had no future and expected Fidel Castro, once in power, to follow the trajectory of other leaders of petty-bourgeois movements in the area.)

Similarly, while starting off from a correct assessment of the revolutionary tensions on a continental level and the unquestionable necessity of refuting the tendentious analyses of the reformists and centrists, the Cubans formulated an ambiguous and schematic theory of the *foco* (guerrilla nucleus). In this way, they promoted illusions in many revolutionists, who had courage but no political training or links with the masses, that they could repeat the experience of the Sierra Maestra as soon as a minimum of "technical" conditions were assembled. It is true that this theory has been most systematically and explicitly stated in Régis Debray's little book. It is also true that Cuban documents of approximately the same date (notably the report of the Cuban delegation to the OLAS conference) are markedly different from Debray's book. Moreover, Guevara also had many remarks to make about this work.

This does not take away from the fact, however, that the success of *Revolución en la revolución?* was due to Cuban publicity and support, which it would be legitimate to interpret as approval. Here we touch again on the negative consequences of the Cuban leaders' theoretical weakness, their empiricism both in the way they criticized the Communist parties and in the way they have approached the

vital question of the revolutionary party.

Régis Debray's book, which no one defends today but which was greeted with veritable rave enthusiasm when it appeared, was well suited to give the maximum encouragement to the adventurist and spontanéist tendencies already widespread in Latin America in the aftermath of Fidel Castro's victory. The price the revolutionary movement has paid for these errors has not yet been fully assessed, but it is a high one.

III.

As one of the articles included in this volume² points out, the Cuban revolution has entered into a crucial phase, where opposing conceptions and forces are locked in conflict. This struggle has an international dimension because the relationship of forces between the masses and the embryonic bureaucratic strata in Cuba is also influenced by the relationship of forces on the world scale (and at this level the most powerful bureaucratic force, the ruling caste in Moscow, still has very great resources and considerable margin for maneuver).

Only windbags or ignoramuses can underestimate the terrible difficulties of building socialism in the situation that exists (it must not be forgotten for one instant that, over and above any possible tactical pretenses, Yankee imperialism remains on a war footing). But those who refuse to accept the outlook of resigning themselves to bureaucratic degeneration and an opportunistic softening of policy (which in the last analysis would isolate the regime from the masses and make the island more vulnerable to possible imperialist attacks) are virtually duty bound to try to offer solutions.

It is necessary to maintain an exceptional productive effort for a prolonged period (this is the only way to guarantee that the needs of the people will be progressively met). This involves rationalizing the economy. And to accomplish this, raising the productivity of labor is a *sine qua non*. The leadership must rely on constantly mobilizing and activating the masses. And it can do this only by profoundly reorganizing the workers state on a revolutionary democratic pattern that can enable the working class and the masses in general to participate in fact in administering the political and economic affairs of the country.

The positions Fidel Castro has taken, especially since he was forced to recognize the failure of the campaign to harvest 10,000,000 tons of sugar, indicate that at least a part of the leading group is conscious of the tendencies at work and of the necessity to wage a determined battle for workers' democracy. The reorganization of the unions by holding elections at the various levels represents a first step. A shake-up has occurred here in precisely the sector where the old and new bureaucrats were entrenched.

On the level of statements, what Castro said in a recent speech (December 7, 1970) evoking the historic experiences of the Paris Commune and the soviets in the Russian revolution is significant. He affirmed the need notably for "manifold forms of representation through which citizens can be represented in different ways" and for a perspective of developing institutional structures that can enable the people to "participate through their direct representatives in framing laws and measures of the revolutionary government."

If the leading group resolutely pursues this course, does not put off implementing it, and draws much more than in the past on the already long historical experience of the world workers' movement, it can make a contribution to blocking dangerous

tendencies and creating the preconditions for exemplary socialist construction.

It goes without saying that a positive evolution would be conditional at the same time on adopting an orientation corresponding to the needs of the Latin American revolutionary movement in this stage. The attitude of the Cuban leaders in this regard seems to confirm that they are holding to a prudent course, prolonging their pause for reflection.

At any event, it seems, on the one hand, that certain "Debrayist" conceptions have been abandoned or set aside; on the other, that a very definite effort is being made to exploit the situation created by the turn in Peru, Allende's victory in Chile, and — to a lesser extent — Torres's coming to power in Bolivia.

No revolutionist can find fault with the Cuban government for its attempts to exploit differences and crises arising in the enemy front and to break the economic, military, and diplomatic blockade. What would be very negative would be any inclination toward giving theoretical justifications for opportunist concessions and, still worse, any subordination of the needs of long-term revolutionary strategy to the conjunctural needs of Cuban state policy.

In the case of Peru, for example, it is proper for the Cubans to exploit the openings offered them by the orientation of the present military regime. But what is unacceptable is characterizing the Peruvian army as "revolutionary" and forgetting in fact everything that the OLAS documents and Che Guevara explained about the nature of the revolution in Latin America and the impossibility of relying on alliances with the so-called national bourgeoisies.

As regards the struggles of revolutionists in Latin America more directly, after a period of partial reticence, the Cuban press is again devoting considerable space to the activity of organizations conducting armed struggle (first of all in Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil). And in his speech last July 26, Fidel Castro also devoted considerable attention to this subject.

But what the Latin American revolutionists are waiting for is a redefinition of the Cuban position regarding orientations and methods of struggle. A wait-and-see attitude, which would ultimately, if it became too prolonged, mean opting for empiricism and spontanéism, is no solution whatever for a leadership whose responsibilities are directly proportional to its prestige and which itself has a vital interest in seeing revolutionary victories in Latin America in the near future.

I am convinced that the Cuban revolution has not yet shown its potentialities. This is why I have drawn attention to the tasks which, in my opinion, the Cuban leaders must accomplish. This is why today more than in the past, in determining their perspectives and orientations, the Latin American revolutionary Marxists will be inspired by an awareness of their duty through their anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggle to defend the Cuban workers state. After ten years, this regime has not ceased to represent the boldest and cheekiest challenge to the most powerful imperialism in the history of the capitalist system.

1. As the Fourth International did not fail to stress at the time, Fidel Castro's August 1968 speech also contained a rather sharp criticism of the bureaucracy's misdeeds, which explains why it has not been published in Moscow despite its support for the invasion.

2. See "Une étape cruciale pour la révolution cubaine" ["A Crucial Stage for the Cuban Revolution"] by Livio Maitan. Available in an English translation in *Intercontinental Press*, November 30, 1970, pages 1041-46.]

LATIN AMERICA

the guerrilla legacy

The recent period in Latin America witnessed a string of setbacks for revolutionary guerrilla warfare in Latin America, of which the defeat of Che Guevara's Bolivian campaign was only the best known. Besides Che many other guerrilla commanders were killed: Luis de la Puente in Peru, Camilo Torres in Colombia, Fabricio Ojeda in Venezuela, Turcios Lima in Guatemala, Carlos Marighella in Brazil. Although guerrilla movements still operated in Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, Brazil and Uruguay, it seemed that the strategy of which they were the focal point was doomed to failure. Most of the Latin American Communist Parties had adopted the strategy of armed struggle very reluctantly and were eager to abandon it at first opportunity. Undoubtedly in purely military terms this phase of armed struggle had met defeat in its crucial engagements and undoubtedly this defeat expressed a weakness in the political strategies accompanying the guerrilla actions. Yet already it seems that the overall results of the guerrilla campaigns have been much more mixed than any purely military assessment would indicate: the military defeats contained elements of future political victories. Those who so rapidly reverted to revisionism and reformism find this impossible to understand or explain. Because there is no doubt that the strategy of armed struggle has helped to hasten the crisis of imperialist domination which is now undermining the ruling order in Latin America. The masses have become more aware of the social and economic contradictions which plague them, they have become more aware that something must be done about them and, most important of all, they are aware that a revolutionary challenge to the ruling order can be made. The political and moral stature of the revolutionary left has been immeasurably enhanced by the heroic sacrifices of Che Guevara and the other guerrilla fighters. Only a complete philistine can ignore this element in the present critical conjuncture in Latin America. The appearance of demagogic military nationalism and reformism in Bolivia and Peru was in part a response to the political challenge represented by the guerrillas even after they had been defeated militarily. Already in Bolivia this shift and crisis in the ruling order has permitted the working class to pose again the fundamental questions of class power. The mineworkers are again securing control of the areas where they work and re-establishing armed groups, and their radio station while in La Paz a National Assembly, representing peasants and students as well as workers, has begun to dispute the legitimacy of the Torres regime. In Chile the election of Allende's Popular Unity Government while in no sense a revolutionary act, certainly inaugurates a perilous experiment for imperialist domination in Chile. Under pressure from the revolutionary left, the Popular Unity coalition was forced to adopt a more radical programme than any Popular Front has ever advanced in the past. Yet at the same time direct

participation of the masses in the Popular Unity Government and its implementation of the programme, is no greater, and in some ways even less, than it was in the French Popular Front of the Thirties. The Popular Unity coalition has so far completely failed to give the Popular Unity Committees a mass character. It has used its victory in the recent municipal elections only as an occasion for self-congratulation and not as the signal for a far-reaching mobilisation of the masses and the setting up of institutions of armed popular power. Debray's searching questions to the President in his *Conversations with Allende* reveal this profound gulf between, on the one hand, a radically anti-imperialist and socialist rhetoric and a staggering blindness to the realities of class power leading to a complete failure to prepare the masses for the conquest of power. In this situation the responsibilities of those who understand the necessity of armed class struggle, notably the MIR in Chile, are very great. So far the MIR has encouraged peasants to seize land and not to wait for permission from the Ministry of Agriculture, it has supported the agitation of Mass Fronts which relate to the immediate material problems facing the masses (Housing, unemployment etc) and it has recently denounced the PU Government's use of the bourgeois state machinery to repress revolt from below. (A MIR basic orientation document is appended to Debray's *Conversations*). The outcome of these struggles will be decisive in determining the fate of the worker's movement in Chile. The tradition and example of the guerrilla movements thus has a new and vital relevance in the mortal class conflict now underway in Chile.

In Uruguay the bold fashion in which the Tupamaros have isolated the Pacheco regime and exposed its impotence has provided a striking vindication of the tactics of urban guerrilla warfare. The coming elections could well produce a situation similar to that which prevails in Chile at the moment. Meanwhile in Argentina guerrilla actions such as the brilliantly successful kidnapping of the British consul lend a new cutting edge to the popular opposition to the military regime. This and other experience are reported on elsewhere in these pages. Founded on massive exploitation and oppression, imperialism cannot be saved by reforms handed down to the masses from above. If anything such reforms stimulate the appetite of the masses and create uncontrollable political problems for imperialist hegemony of the continent. Not the least of these problems is the new significance which the tradition of guerrilla warfare acquires where it occurs in the context of a crisis affecting the whole social order and accompanied by increasingly intense popular struggle from Rosario to Punta Arenas, from Potosi to Montevideo.

R B

argentina

Argentina is the most highly urbanised and industrialised country in Latin America. Over 20% of its labour force workers in manufacturing industry: but this sector, which provides more and more profits to foreign capital and its local associates, is creating few new jobs. Throughout the continent new industry is increasingly capital intensive, with the move to high productivity plants accelerated in the face of demands from organised labour. With production in the agricultural sectors generally stagnant—not only in subsistence crops but also, in view of low or falling prices in the world market, in production for export—unemployment is therefore increased. Even on official figures, which don't take disguised unemployment into account, the figures for the Cordoba and Rosario areas have fluctuated between 6 and 11% in the past decade.

With the changing nature of the interests of imperialism, the meat-packing firms, which form the oldest processing industry in Argentina and were an early foothold for American capital, have lost their importance for foreign investment. DELTEC, the combine which owns the Rosario Swift factory, is the chief remaining foreign-owned concern, and has closed down a lot of its other plants. But it's no part of the work of socialists to help solve the problems of capital by accepting this situation. The problem of the Argentinian revolutionaries has been to find ways of fighting on the question of unemployment in a

situation where physical repression is the certain result of any mass movement of workers against both employers and government. In this instance the comrades have not hesitated to identify the enemy, international capital, and to use revolutionary violence to obtain some redress for the Rosario workers.

Inter-imperialist rivalries notwithstanding, British and American capital will feed each other where they can. The dual role of the Rosario consul is merely a symptom of this, and is no innovation—in the Caribbean area there have been instances since 1900 of the appointment to consular posts of British employees and associates of the United Fruit Company. But the reminder of the part played by British imperialism is very important in the case of Argentina, even though it's now U.S. capital which makes the running—over half the direct industrial investment is U.S. owned, a large proportion of the rest coming from the countries of the EEC.

From the late 1880s to the early 1940s Argentina was ruled by British capital and its allies, the big landowners. Throughout the period some 10% of British foreign investment was going to Argentina, extracting up to 12% of the profits on British capital exports. The rate of profit reached between 5 and 6% in the 1920s, making Argentina the most lucrative of British colonies, without any need for direct political rule. British capital went overwhelmingly into the organisation of the export sector, the transport and other facilities for

the carriage to Europe of the produce of Argentina's frontier; the meat, wool and grain of an expanding capitalist agriculture unhampered by the presence of a large subjugated Indian peasant population after the resistant tribes of the plains had been wiped out in the nineteenth century wars. But by the end of the Second World War the strength of British capital had diminished dramatically, class struggle had sharpened, the landowners had been kicked out and Peron had come into power. His policies for domestic, industrial capitalist expansion foundered on the rock of Argentina's weakness in the world capitalist system. The terms of trade were turning heavily against her, she was still reliant on agricultural exports for the foreign exchange needed for imports of capital goods and the consumption needs of her bourgeoisie.

From 1955 the representatives of the landowners were again in power, but with the persisting colonial role in world trade which British imperialism had originally created for the country. Argentina continued to run into balance of payment crises, suffering from a very high rate of inflation which further sharpened class struggle on the wages front. From 1959 to 1963 the International Monetary Fund imposed a vicious "stabilisation" programme which hit at the working class and also at domestic capital accumulation and industry. In these years foreign capital increased enormously its dominance over industry, as the protective machinery built

up under Peronism was dismantled while the foreign indebtedness of governments also grew rapidly. Politically the power of foreign capital was established by the 1966 military, by Onganía and the governments which have followed him in the past year.

So the formation of the Argentinian export sector at the hands of British imperialism determined the conditions under which, in the late '50s and '60s, American capital came to dominate the country, through its control of industry and government finance. And Britain's role has not completely disappeared; cattle products still form the bulk of Argentinian exports, and the great part of trade remains with Britain and Western Europe—a new agreement has just been signed for the importation of Argentinian meat into Britain.

With the final collapse in the past fifteen years of all hope in a native capitalist solution to Argentina's colonial position—and it is one of the wealthiest and most confident of Latin American bourgeoisies which has failed with the increasing resort to force by governments against any upsurge of the masses. Opposition to imperialism in Argentina has clearly taken the revolutionary road, the road of armed struggle. British socialists must express their solidarity with the ERP and all the groups which form the vanguard of the Argentinian struggle today.

LATIN AMERICA

VENEZUELA

Less than 1% of the active population in Venezuela is employed in the oil industry, in spite of the fact that this industry provides over 90% of Venezuela's exports. The labour force employed by the oil companies has been reduced from about 50,000 in 1958 to about 20,000 now, and it is still being reduced. These massive sackings have turned the area around Lake Maracaibo, which is one of the richest producing areas in the world, into a place of abject poverty for its people. The oil companies, which are supposed to under Venezuelan law to hand over their concessions and all their installations to the Venezuelan state in 1983, have been running down their investments, illegally selling off their assets, and reducing their operations as far as they can. In order to evade the not very onerous obligations of their contract, they have also been hiring off many of their operations to private contractors.

The resulting high unemployment is abominably exploited by these and other contractors, who practise what is called the *comercio de la hambre* (the hunger trade). They get workers to work for them on Saturdays and Sundays without pay merely by offering them the prospect of a possible day of paid work during the week. If workers get three days work in a week they are entitled under Venezuelan law to a paid day of rest; so the contractors give them two days' work. If they work for three months, they are entitled to social security payment; so they are sacked before the end of the three months. If by chance they are employed for longer, the contractors wait outside the bank where they have collected their payments and demand that they should give the payments back to him. Sometimes the contractors rob the workers' pay packets; the packet may say 250 *Bolivars* on the outside, and actually contain 150 *Bolivars* (equivalent to £15 at the official exchange rate, but in real terms equivalent to very much less). In no case can the workers complain, because he knows

that if he does he will get no more work. Venezuela is one of the richest countries in Latin America, and one of the most expensive to live in, but in the area around Maracaibo some families subsist on £50 a year.

This situation, and the threat of further sackings, and of further handing over to the mercies of the contractors, has led to the first strike in the oil industry, apart from token stoppages, since 1936. The previous lack of militancy can be explained by two factors: by the policies of the oil companies, and by the state of the union leaderships. Since Venezuelan oil is of exceptional strategic importance to imperialism, the policy of the oil companies has been to create a privileged and docile labour force and to foster a sense of superiority and difference from the rest of the population. "Militant oil-workers acknowledge that they have been all too successful in this. In addition, the union leadership is corrupt and has pursued a policy of class collaboration. In Venezuela the unions are not usually organised by industry, but are political unions in the sense that they are dominated by the political parties. In the oil industry, the workers began to create their own unions in the '30s, at first clandestinely. They were eventually recognised by the government, and later by the oil companies. But political control of the major union in the oil industry, the SOEP (*Sindicato de obreros empleados petroleros*) was gained by *Accion Democratica*, which from 1958 to 1969 was the ruling party; the union leadership therefore conformed with the government's anti-working class policies and legislation, using police repression when necessary to maintain its control of the union. The fact that the union leaders are now members of the M.E.P. (*Movimiento electoral del pueblo*), a leftward split from *Accion democratica*, had done little to change their propensity to class collaboration.

There is nevertheless considerable militancy among rank and file oil-workers, who now

constitute one of the most advanced sectors of the Venezuelan working class, together with the steel workers in the East of Venezuela. At the beginning of 1971, pressure from the base finally forced the union leaders to call a strike in protest against the oil-companies' policy of evading their legal obligations by contracting out work.† Within the oil industry there exists an organisation called the *Bloque independiente petrolero* (B.I.P. Independent oil block), whose main immediate objective is to win control of the SOEP for the workers. This group participated in a Congress with political and organisational objectives, called the Cultural Congress of Cabimas, held in the heart of the oil-producing area together with representatives of the armed organisations, revolutionary intellectuals, Trotskyists and other groups and individuals. A fundamental criterion for participation in this Congress was support for the armed struggle; in its political declaration, accepted by the participants, the Congress declared that the only way for Latin America to achieve its liberation was through the socialist revolution, without going through any "stage" of national bourgeois revolution, through the armed struggle, and through the creation of the party of the revolution. The B.I.P. sent a message of support to the Congress, participated in its debates, and is represented on the Committee against Dependence and Neo-colonialism (*Comite contra la dependencia y el neocolonialismo*) which was set up by the Congress.

In Lagunillas, in one of the oil-companies' camp near Lake Maracaibo, just South of Cabimas, we talked to three members of the B.I.P.: Gil Alinio Sanchez, Antonio Gomez, and Jesus Ramos Chavez. We asked them to explain what the B.I.P. is.—We are a group of workers who are not compromised in any way with the political parties. We think the parties should serve the union, not the other way round, as things are here. The unions in Venezuela are totally corrupt, their leaders are sometimes even members of the government. They are not interested in dealing with our problems.

EVENTS

"Irish Citizen" Forums, Thurs. June 17th. 8.0pm.
"Why the Provisionals?", Mike Calanan (London Sinn Fein). Thursday July 1st. 8.0pm
"Why the Officials?", Seamus Collins (President of Clann na hEireann)

Both at the "Earl Russell" Pancras Rd. between King's X & St. Pancras St.
These forums, which will take place every two weeks aim to provide a centre for discussion of Irish political problems, and will cover a very wide range. The Forums are open and all are welcome.

MANCHESTER: Every Friday, Red Circle meets 8.0pm in the "Wheatheaf" pub, High Street, Manchester 4.

NORTH LONDON Red Circle meets every Tuesday at 8.0pm at The Earl Russell pub. (see directions above).

BLACK DEFENCE C'TEE. Every Friday 8.0pm in the George IV pub Pentonville Rd. opp. Mackready's Friday 25th June. 7.45pm. Michael Duane on "The Tory attack on Education", Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Meeting organised by Rank & File Teachers.

June 15th. Friends Meeting House, June 15th. Tuesday 7.30pm "Bangla Desh, the spark for South Asia" Speaker: Tariq Ali—just returned from Bengal.

June 15th. Friend's Meeting House, Tuesday 7.30pm.

In THE MARXIST No. 17, June 1971; MIKE COOLEY examines ASPECTS OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE in the light of Marx's philosophical and economic manuscripts; MIKE FAULKNER writes a centenary appreciation of ROSA LUXEMBURG; VIRGINIA PENN writes on the PARIS COMMUNE.

Also articles on WAGES, PROFITS AND INFLATION; the Industrial Relations; Bill. Single copies: 12½p post paid, 6 issues 70p post paid, from Tom Hill, 11 Barratt Avenue, Wood Green, London N.22

MOLEHILLS



OF JUGGLERS AND JUGGLERY

On May 26th the *Workers' Press* correctly pointed out how the *Morning Star* had "juggled" the figures for the numbers taking part in the French CP's demonstration in Paris commemorating the Commune.

Two days later the *Workers' Press* spoke of a "13,000 strong AJS demonstration" (the AJS is the French Healeyite youth organisation)—described earlier as being "composed almost entirely of members and supporters of the AJS."

In fact, as their own picture of May 28th clearly shows, this so-called AJS demonstration was actually a loose amalgam of various organisations, including Force Ouvriere and the Anarchist Federation (supporters of the AJS?). The *Times* report of May 24th makes it all even clearer. It describes how "The Socialist Party joined the Force Ouvriere, the third largest trade union organisation, the left wing teachers' federation, the Trotskyists (i.e. the Healeyites!) and about 20 other organisations for this demonstration.

Now who's juggling with figures. (Incidentally, the *Workers' Press* completely failed to report the 35,000 strong Fourth International demo of May 16th, despite the fact that one of their leading reporters, John Spencer was in Paris at the time.)

The free-masons in France (on left) review the French Healeyite contingent on their joint demo. Now we know how Healey wants to "reconstruct the Fourth International!"

FOR A RED BENGAL

FOR A RED BENGAL' FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE STRUGGLE!

Over the last year *The Red Mole* has carried a whole series of articles analysing the changing political situation in Pakistan and Eastern Bengal. In these articles we very clearly (cf *The Red Mole*, Jan. 1st, 1971, in particular!) delineated the future course of development and events have fully borne out our analyses.

IN EASTERN BENGAL A NLF IS BORN. . . .
The situation in Eastern Bengal at the moment sees the beginnings of a protracted guerrilla struggle based on the countryside and led by the forces of the left. The Awami League, which we have criticised in the past quite relentlessly for its total failure to provide a real leadership, is today divided. Many of its student supporters are bitterly disillusioned with the policies of the leadership and are beginning to appreciate the validity of socialist critiques of the League. The bulk of the constitutionalist elements in the Awami League, who not so long ago mocked the extreme left for talking in terms of "guerrilla warfare", now sit in Calcutta in the Bangla Desh High Commission. Having failed so miserably and imbued thoroughly with petty bourgeois ideology of the most pernicious sort, they depend on the Indian ruling class to help them win back power. They believe in the politics of pressure: envoys scurry hither and thither, sometimes to Washington and sometimes to London. Appeals are made to the American Senate to cut off all economic aid to Yahya Khan. Arif United States imperialism was interested in the plight of the Bengali people. What it probably desires is some sort of a rapprochement between the Awami League and the Yahya dictatorship in order to try and stave off the impending social revolution. But the time for that is gone and the State Department probably realises that it is hardly worth antagonising a military dictator whom it arms to the teeth in favour of a party which has been bypassed by historical events. Envoys are also sent to a meeting of the World Peace Council in Budapest (which defunct organisation dutifully passes a banal resolution) and to the "Socialist International" meeting in Helsinki, attended by such well-known "socialists" as Harold Wilson (whose racist policies when Prime Minister, kept out thousands of Bengalis from Britain), and Golda Meir (the Zionist oppressor of the Palestinian masses). Appeals are made to these decrepit and dilapidated organisations as if they were in the least bit interested in the problems confronting the Bengali masses.

The root to this peculiar approach lies in the fact that many of the Awami League intellectuals and leaders are still dominated by bourgeois ideology. They have failed to realise the reasons for their failure to defeat the W.Pakistani army in the first place. They continue to behave in the same old way and find themselves incapable of acting differently. One of the reasons for this is, undoubtedly, the fact that the Indian bourgeoisie has given them asylum, propaganda support internationally and limited military support, the latter controlled firmly by the Indian Army. It is possible that if these leaders had been really forced to stay and fight in Eastern Bengal as all the left groups are doing today, there evolution would have been different. Many of the Awami Leaguers still seem to believe that once the field has been cleared it will be a return to the ways of the past. That is why the question of how the field is cleared becomes somewhat relevant. There are certain elements in the Awami League leadership in Calcutta who realise that they have no option but to try and pressurise the Indian Army to "liberate" Eastern Bengal. In that way the forces of the Left could also be cleared out of the way and the Awami League placed in power. But even if the Indian bourgeoisie were stupid enough to agree to this or if the Pakistani Army decided on a wider war, it is futile for the Awami Leaguers to imagine that they will remain in power for too long. They have been tested once by the masses and found wanting and it is the revolutionary tendencies which are today in the ascendant and prepared for a long struggle. It is these forces who will clear the field and lead the struggle for socialist revolution.

A National Liberation Front (NLF) has already been set up with the participation of all the left groups except the CP (M-L) group of Mohammed Toaha and Abdul Haq, which had always been luke-warm on the idea of combatting the Pakistan Army. The NLF has created a pole of attraction inside East Bengal already and is beginning to attract many rank-and-file elements inside the Awami League and also is beginning to draw



The leading group in the Front is the East Bengal Communist Party (EBCP), which is aligned neither to Peking nor to Moscow and has refused to allow Chinese policy of supporting Yahya, stand in its way of vigorously conducting the armed struggle against the armies of West Pakistani capital. This organisation is led by Comrades Matin and Allaudin and its guerrilla units are commanded by Comrade Tipu Biswas, who has already become something of a legend in the Bengali countryside. In Chittagong district the leading EBCP cadre is the trade-union leader, Abul Basar, who has been largely responsible for the fact that the Chittagong proletariat has decided on a prolonged armed strike. The fact that even the blacklegs working in Chittagong docks are made to work under Army surveillance gives one an indication of the strength of the workers organisations in this region. In the student milieu the ablest Marxist was always Comrade Mahbubullah. When last heard of he was imprisoned in Dacca-jail and it is feared that he might have been killed by the Army. In many ways Mahbubullah foresaw the turn events would take before many of his comrades realised the seriousness of the situation. When I was in Dacca in 1969 I met and discussed with him many times and wrote about his assessment of the situation at that time:

"If there had been a revolutionary party (in 1968-69—Ed.) we would have made a revolution in East Pakistan. Even now the objective conditions are very ripe . . . Our task is to denounce all collaboration with the regime. Even if the Chinese government tells us that there is not a revolutionary situation we will disagree with them. We know there is a revolutionary situation and we will exploit it. We will not let our generation rot." (cf. Ali, Pakistan: *Military Rule or People's Power?*, Cape, P.22)

What a different battle-cry this was when compared not only to the Awami League, but to many other left-wing currents as well. Today Mahbubullah's comrades are indeed exploiting and deepening the revolutionary situation. They are determined to continue the struggle till the final victory has been achieved.

IN WESTERN BENGAL THE CONDITION MATURES. . . .

We have always argued that it would be impossible to contain the struggle within the "frontiers" of Eastern Bengal. The situation in West Bengal has been pre-revolutionary for the last few years and the explosion in the East has given it an added impetus. The problem has always been a subjective one. The most powerful and dominant force on the left is still the C.P.I. (M). Its recent past has been steeped in electoralism; it has entered into United Fronts with reactionary communal groupings. It has taken part in the bourgeois electoral farce and has behaved not much differently from a bourgeois government. Its leader, Jyoti Basu, when Home Minister, ordered the killing by his police of a revolutionary, Guevarist leader, Henna Ganguly, on the excuse that he was a "dacoit".

It has acquiesced in the brutal persecution and murder of many Naxalite militants. The fact that it is out of power at the moment does not imply that it has given up the electoral road. Certainly no statements to this effect have been issued recently.

revolutionary situation when it did not exist (in 1948) now seems to be unable to perceive the extent of the existing revolutionary situation. Undoubtedly there are revolutionary elements in this party, who are extremely dissatisfied and would favour armed action against the bourgeois state. The CPI (M) leadership has given the slogan: *Yahya Khan-Indira Gandhi Ek Hai* (Yahya Khan and Indira Gandhi are the same). The logic of this slogan is obvious: to extend the struggle by mobilising the Calcutta working class and preparing the peasantry for an armed struggle, to achieve a United Socialist Bengal, but Jyoti Basu shrinks back from this step. It is obvious, however, that the revolutionary movement in W.Bengal will not sit still for long. Even today there is a total crisis as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned. Calcutta is guarded by Indian troops, who seem completely unable to restore bourgeois order. It is a city seething with resentment and ready to explode at any moment. Very reminiscent of descriptions of Shanghai and Canton in the Thirties. It is very likely that there will be spontaneous outbreaks in the very near future. A revolutionary mobilisation in Western Bengal would show us the real nature of the Indira Gandhi clique. It would move in to try and crush the revolt with the same brutality that Yahya's Army used. The possibility even exists of a combined Indo-Pak action against the Bengali masses! But that will happen if the situation really gets out of hand and bourgeois state power is threatened throughout the peninsula. The task confronting any revolutionary group in West Bengal today is to prepare the masses for the armed class struggle. There are numerous indications that this process is taking place in many parts of the province. It does not need to be stressed that an extension of the struggle to Western Bengal would radically alter the situation throughout the sub-continent.

IN WEST PAKISTAN TOO THE MASSES ARE UNEASY. . . .

While the strength of the Bengali resistance is the key factor in the struggle today, a serious crisis of confidence in West Pakistan would be of immense importance as it would weaken the grip of the Army immeasurably. While there has been no serious sign of an impending revolt in the West, the symptoms have certainly appeared. Over 800 students have been jailed in West Pakistan; in Peshawar, Afzal Bangash (a leader of the small, but militant, Kissan-Mazdoor Party) has been arrested along with some of his party workers; in Lahore a leading journalist, Malik Abdullah has been imprisoned for declaring at a public meeting his solidarity with Bangla Desh. Illegal leaflets are being distributed informing the workers of what has been happening in the East. All this coupled with an deteriorating economic situation could produce a social upheaval in West Pakistan sooner than many would think. A railway strike, for instance, could seriously hamper army operations in Bengal. It should be borne in mind that the West Pakistani working class has matured amazingly since 1968-69 and the only lack is the non-existence of an effective leadership. Bhutto's People's Party is split from top to bottom and while the leader and his cohorts comfort the military regime, many militant like Mukhtar Rana in Lyallpur are in prison for opposing the dictatorship. The overall situation is extremely unstable and some elements in the Army are said to favour a limited war with India in order to blanket the country with chauvinism. In today's situation I doubt whether even that well-tried solution would work.

THE FUTURE. . . .

However long the struggle in East Bengal lasts, of one thing we can be sure: a new road has been opened and the sub-continent will never be the same again. It was united by British imperialism, it was partitioned by internal reaction aided by this Imperialism. Today we predict that it will first be torn asunder by revolutionary socialism and then brought together again under the hegemony of the red flag. That will be the dialectical process of the Indian Revolution. . . .

Tariq Ali

Postscript: We have noticed that the gentlemen who publish the Workers Press have, in the best Stalinist tradition resorted to slander and vilifications of a completely apolitical nature in their reports of my recent visit to Western Bengal. This shows their total inability to challenge any of our theses politically. When they attempt to do so we will be more than prepared to debate with them either in our press or at a public forum and we will do so as revolutionary marxists, without resorting to personal abuse, distortions or downright lies.