

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
Volume 9 No. 10 March 6th 1968

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make
MARCH 17th
a day to
remember

UNIONS

A STRATEGY NEEDED

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THE UNIONS NEED A STRATEGY

The massive vote against the T.U.C.'s voluntary incomes policy last week at the meeting of union executives is very good. It helps to clear up some of the confusion created by the T.U.C. chiefs acting as the custodians of Wilson's policies in the unions. Despite the majority, everyone knows that the T.U.C.'s voluntary scheme is finished. Now the main confrontation will be directly between the Government and the unions. The Government is expected to bring in compulsory legislation and several of the most important unions have made it clear that they do not intend to climb down.

It is a good job that the T.G.W.U. did not accept the advice of Tribune and John Horner to back the T.U.C. scheme. Had they done this we would have almost certainly got the worst of both worlds: Government legislation plus a half-hearted attempt to operate a T.U.C. scheme.

However, there is very little sign yet that the need for a fighting offensive strategy has been grasped. Most of the opposition to the Government and the T.U.C. remained at the level of mere wages-militancy and the line of high wages/ high productivity. In other words, the opposition to the Government is, in essence, merely calling for a return to the good old days before attempts to impose incomes policies came on the scene. But this is by no means enough; the clock cannot be turned back.

Socialists within the trade union movement must explain and explain again the need for a strategy which links opposition to the wage-freeze with a struggle along anti-capitalist lines. The struggle for the concepts of workers' control, for opening the books, for trade union control over hiring and firing and so on, must come to the front. But these demands must be linked with struggle and socialists also have the duty of supporting all struggles and posing the need for every attack to be resisted to the full. It is to be hoped that forthcoming workers' control conference in Nottingham (over March 30/31, write Mrs. Margeret Price, 54, Park Rd., Lenton, Nottingham for details) will help to popularise these concepts.

MAKE MARCH THE 17TH A DAY TO REMEMBER

As we get nearer to March 17 evidence accumulates that it is very likely to be bigger and more militant than that of October 22nd. Support is coming from many circles which may not have even been aware of the October 22nd event. The huge publicity obtained by that demonstration awakened interest and enthusiasm and reached new circles. On the other hand the slogans of the March 17 demonstration are more clear than those of October 22nd; this is an indication of the maturity of the movement rather than the wishes of the organisers. We urge all readers of the Week to spend the next few days preparing for March 17 in order to make it a day to remember.

ARTS STUDENTS PROTEST

by a London student

There has been a great deal of publicity about "student misbehaviour" recently. This, of course, is an attempt to divert attention away from the real grievances of the students and from the political protests that they are making. One little known injustice is the position of Arts students. On February 28th more than 100 London art college students marched from the Royal College of Art, Kensington, to the Department of Education and Science, Curzon St., in a protest against the Government's policies on grants.

The students handed in a letter to Patrick Gordon Walker, Minister of Education, protesting against the decision by the Government to cut back by half increases, which are supposed to take into account the increase in the cost of living, etc. The recommended "increase" due to be announced in May by a three-man "independent" tribunal aims only to bring the grants back to the real value of 1965. The art students feel that they have special cause for complaint over and above this cuts issue.

Out of an estimated 40,000 such students in the country, only about 7,000 are legally entitled to a grant! The rest - those who can't get on the Government recognised Diploma in Art and Design course - are at the mercy of their local authority. Because the Government is asking all local authorities to slash their spending there is greater and greater resistance to giving arts students grants.

YORK STUDENTS BOYCOTT MEALS

from a Yorkshire reader

Only about half the usual number of lunches were served in the dining hall of Langwith College, York University, on March 4th as students began boycotting meals in a demand for the pegging of prices. The students' representative council wants an assurance from the University's authorities that prices and portions in the university's dining halls remain steady for 12 months. Forty students with placards held a picket at the dining hall. A different canteen each day will be boycotted until the students feel that their demands are being met.

ESSEX UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO RESIST DISCIPLINE "BY ALL MEANS"

At a meeting on March 6, Essex University students decided by a big majority to resist attempts by the university authorities to impose disciplinary charges on six members. The previous day there had been a sit-down by more 100 of the students in protest against the attempt to impose sanctions on the six who had been accused of being unruly in a demonstration against Tory M.P. Enoch Powell when he visited the University on February 23.

The Vice-Chancellor of the university Dr. Albert Sloman, was blockaded in his room until he agreed to answer questions. The students question the right of the university to punish people for participation in political demonstrations and to expose the students to a dual standard of discipline: civil and institutional. This protest coming on top of that at Sussex and other universities shows that students in this country are quite prepared to fight for their rights.

An Essex reader

A national steel strike?

On March 4th, the British Steel Corporation was given just over two weeks to reply to a claim for substantial increases for 15,000 craftsmen in the industry. Union leaders predicted that an unacceptable answer could lead to a national strike. The claim was first made nearly two-and-a-half years ago with the Iron and Steel Trades Employers' Association. Last month the association finally rejected the claim because it fell outside the incomes policy.

The 12 unions involved then went to the B.S.C., which does not officially take over from I.S.T.A.A. until that organisation winds itself up, probably later this week. James Jarvie, a representative of the boilermakers union and chairman of the unions' national committee said after the meeting with the employers: "The reply from the B.S.C. will have to be within the next two weeks because on March 21 there will be a conference of craftsmen to decide what action can be taken if there is no satisfactory arrangements made by then."

The unions are seeking a substantial increase in the basic rate which is 6s 7½d an hour including a cost of living allowance. The rate was introduced in November, 1963. It is surprising that the men have been so patient in view of the huge increase in the cost of living since then.

Ford draughtsmen ban overtime at Dagenham.

About 150 draughtsmen in Ford's engine and foundry departments at Dagenham have banned overtime in protest against the dismissal of nine of their colleagues. The nine are among 500 of the company's 15,000 white-collar workers who are being dismissed in March as part of a campaign to cut costs in non-productive departments. Mr. John Tuckfield, divisional organiser of the Draughtsmen and Allied Technicians, said in a statement on March 5 that it was clear that the company expected DATA members to take over the work of the men sacked or to transfer the work out of Fords to contract offices. The union was totally opposed to this.

Mr. Tuckfield added that the union would be meeting the management on Monday, March 11, to see if it was possible for the nine men to be redeployed and to find out what the company's future policy would be on having tool design work undertaken by outside companies rather than its own staff. He pointed out that in future the design of engines, gearboxes and axles would be the responsibility of Ford of Germany "and our members want to know how this decision will affect their own employment."

A company spokesman commented: "We are an international company and the best resources of both organisations have been and will be used to meet our future requirements. But there is no question of transferring the whole of our design activities to Germany. The major part of this work will, as always, remain in Britain."

Trade unionists at Fords, Dagenham, are not impressed by this assurance; recent experience has shown that in the mad rush to cut costs workers are the last people to be taken into consideration.

Praise for Stalin in the Soviet Union

The Morning Star of March 6th reported:

"If Stalin's plan for a network of forest shelters had been completed, wind and water erosion of topsoil might never have reached its present catastrophic extent, a Soviet journal said on March 5th. The plan to 'transform nature' was adopted in 1948 and called for the afforestation of nearly 15 million acres, more than half of collective farm land, over a 15-year period. But by 1965 only one-fifth of the plan had been fulfilled, writes Vladimir Chivilikhin in the current issue of the literary monthly Moskva. "Many people think today, not without justification, that if all had gone normally it would probably never have been necessary to unload foreign grain at the ports of Odessa, Nikolayev, Kherson and Novorossisk," he says. "Nor would the pure gold, in which our people's toil for ages has been concentrated, now be lying in American vaults."

"Stalin was not a specialist in farming or forestry, says Chivilikhin. "He was a great revolutionary and statesman" (sic) "who, to judge by the numerous oral and printed memoirs knew how to husband the State Treasury and to heed specialists."

The latter point was made in comparison with Khrushchov but, perhaps more to the point, Stalin knew how to deal with dissident writers. It could very well be that it is the latter talent that sections of the Soviet leadership feel in need of.

More closures and sackings

One can hardly ever pick the newspapers up without reading of some factory being closed or some major redundancy. Although the general trend has been for unemployment to fall this has been modified by the tendency for factories where the workers are highly organised to be closed. Unless this is taken note of by the trade union movement we could see a fall in the number of organised workers even if unemployment goes down.

Among the closures announced in the last few days are:

(1) The former shipyard of Alexander Stephen and Sons, oldest on the Clyde and now the Linthouse section of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' Group. This will be shut down within the next few months. The future looks grim for the big majority of the 2,000 workers. Estimates vary, but it seems that all but between 200 and 500 will have to go.

(2) As part of company reorganisation BSA is to close its Sterling Metal Components factory at Crewkerne, Somerset. 100 workers will be declared redundant and the work will be transferred to Birmingham.

(3) Union leaders at Loewy Robertson steelworks, Bedford, have been told that dismissals will start in the first week of April. All 500 production workers and office staff are to leave by May 31. The works are being closed as part of a £3m. take-over deal by the Davy-Ashmore group.

(4) A.E.I.'s research laboratory at Harlow is definitely ^{to} close on April 30. On March 4 100 of the 120 research staff were given official redundancy notices. The closure follows the take-over of A.E.I. by G.E.C. (see previous reports).

All property is theft, but the Bristol Siddeley Engines owners have been doing an extraordinary amount of thieving recently. Not content with the huge subsidies (amount to millions of pounds) which they have been receiving recently from public money, BSE higher management have been fiddling the books, making massive excess profits and lying about it all the time.

A year ago, after an enquiry by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, it was thought that the BSE management had simply made a mere £4 million excess profit - which they were instructed to repay. Even so, BSE were left with 20% as the normal, legal profit margin - made out of RAF contracts and government subsidies during the period 1959-63. At last year's public enquiry, Sir Reginald Verdun-Smith, who was then the chairman of the BSE board of directors (and now vice-chairman of Rolls Royce) and also on the board of Lloyds Bank, was very vague and evasive about the excess profits, to say the least.

And last week came the latest bombshell in the BSE scandal. According to the latest House of Commons report, the BSE management 'budgeted for and achieved exorbitant profits' on Government contracts. The Report adds that concerning the 1959-63 RAF contract, the BSE management spokesmen had committed what 'amounted to intentional misrepresentation, by which the (Govt) department were deceived'. The BSE bosses did not make the excess profit "by accident". As the latest Report says: 'The approximate extent of the profitability of these contracts was, at the time, known to the company at all levels of management. We do not accept that the overcharging has been justified by any of the arguments put forward by the company.'

How did BSE management do their profiteering? It is pretty clear from the latest Report that the main technique used at the BSE management used to make their excess profits was that of keeping their account books closed to Government inspection, in particular, the Report says 'the main reason why the (Govt) department failed to prevent excessive profits from being made on the overhaul contracts was that the estimates of man hours made and accepted were too high (As in the recent Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer case). In other words, the Government which put up the money, was not allowed to see shop floor accounts and BSE were saying that wage costs were much higher than they were. And, of course, the same sort of deceitful and unacceptable management arguments were used against the workers in that period too as a way of opposing wage claims. The Government now claims that it has tightened up on aircraft employers.

Socialist aim: Workers' Control and Nationalisation of Aircraft As you will know, the National Shop Stewards Combine of BSE has a workers control study group which is working on a plan for the future of the industry. It is becoming increasingly clear that the following immediate demand must be made: all the account books of BSE must be fully open to shop steward inspection - and not just government inspection. But the latest BSE scandal strengthens the trade union arguments for the complete nationalisation of the airframes and the aero-engines sections of the industry. After all the BSE directors, including Sir Reggie, are now Rolls Royce. There are several BSE directors who should be prosecuted, as Eric Heffer suggested in Parliament last week. If an unemployed worker pinches a few bob from a gas meter, he gets jail. If a millionaire whips £4 million, he can get a job with Rolls Royce.

NOTTINGHAM VIETNAM COMMITTEE MOBILIZES MARCH 17 SUPPORT by Antonia Gorton

The Nottingham Vietnam Ad hoc Committee formed a few weeks ago, has been gathering support for the March 17 demonstration in advance of its original expectations. Initiated by Vietnam Solidarity Campaign members, it has brought in people from CND, The Young Liberals of the University, and has gained the endorsement and support of the Nottingham Young Communist League for March 17th.

Lively meetings have been held in the Market Square (centre of the main shopping area in Nottingham) backed up by a large banner. These meetings have attracted many of the Saturday shoppers and initiated furious debates between the audience and the speakers. The first meeting had members of the committee explaining the issues of the Vietnam war joined by members of the Keep Left Young Socialists who put forward their position on how to end the war in Vietnam. All the participants agreed that these meetings were very valuable and plans are in the works to continue them after the 'big day!' A number of new members were gained from passersby attracted by the banner and the leaflets that were distributed.

VIETNAM SOLIDARITY ACTIVITIES IN BRISTOL by Tom Nicholls

About 30 people attended a meeting in Bristol on Thursday 22nd February to listen to Dr. Malcolm Caldwell speak on "Vietnam and U.S. Imperialism".

At the end of the meeting it was resolved to set up a local branch of the V.S.C. and an encouraging number of those present agreed to give active support.

A March 17 Coordinating Committee had been set up at a well attended meeting the previous week and is now engaged in organizing a Bristol Contingent to the London Demonstration.

The following letter has been sent to all progressive and labour movement organisations in the Bristol area:

"A co-ordinating committee has been set up in Bristol to mobilise support for the Vietnam Demonstration in London on Sunday 17th March. The main themes of this demonstration will be 'Solidarity with the Vietnamese People Against U.S. Aggression' and 'Vietnam - End British Complicity'. It is hoped to organise at least one coach load of Bristol supporters to take part in the march which will end at the American Embassy.

At the meeting on Monday 19th February at which the committee was set up were representatives of the following groups as well as a number of individuals: Bristol New Left, Bristol Workers Association, University Left Club, Bristol Young Socialist, Workers Fight, Swedish United N.L.F. Group.

It was also agreed at the meeting to support the Vietnam Demonstration in Bristol this Saturday starting at 12. o'clock from the University Union.

T.Nicholls - 33 Burghley Road, St.Andrews, Bristol 6.

The Rhodesian problem has probably inspired more column inches of arrant nonsense in the British press than any other single issue, and the visit there of that nice conservative - Sir Alec Douglas Home - on his way home from South Africa, has provoked some classic additions to the range, writes Robert Springer. Most British correspondents in Salisbury appear to have been affected by what passes in Rhodesia for subtle diplomacy - the continual insistence that a settlement with Britain is just around the corner.

The twin motives for this conception are fairly clear, so far as the Rhodesians are concerned. It is a way of bolstering morale at home and pinning the blame for the failure of negotiations on the British. It is less clear why British correspondents are taken in by Rhodesian optimism, particularly since it is by now the fifth or sixth time around for the "new hope for a last minute settlement" routine.

Both the Express and the Telegraph have reported - wrongly - that Sir Alec's visit was the culminating stage in a series of negotiations between Britain and Rhodesia, which had been carried on at official level. The visit was certainly made with the blessing of the Commonwealth office. Sir Alec saw Mr Thompson, the Commonwealth Secretary, both before he went and when he came back. His purpose was to see whether Mr Smith was prepared to make sufficient modifications to his terms for a settlement to enable Mr Thompson to restart negotiations without too much loss of face.

But the most reliable evidence is that there has been no Government to Government contact since Mr Thompson's visit in November. Sir Alec's "suggestions" seem certain to include the recommendation that negotiations should be resumed, however meagre the concessions offered by Mr Smith. If nothing else, it would delay by a few months a decision by the Conservatives to dissociate themselves from the Government's Rhodesia policy.

If the leaks from Salisbury are to be believed, then Mr Smith's main "concession" is to drop the insistence that, under the constitution, all African members of the Upper House should be tribal Chiefs. This is of only marginal importance. There is no sign that he will change his demand that a "blocking third" of seats in the lower house shall be elected on the mainly European "A" roll. This would give the Europeans the chance to reduce the number of "B" roll seats to prevent the Africans gaining a majority. The level of unreality which the whole discussion has reached was illustrated in a report in The Times. "The impression gained" it said, "is that Sir Alec is exploring the possibility of devising a constitutional formula which would both give Mr Smith a braking mechanism and meet the British resistance on guaranteed progress towards majority rule." The fact that these two concepts are directly incompatible does not bother The Times any more than it bothers the Rhodesians. For Mr Smith and his henchmen are still convinced that the only requirement is for a tricky formula which while showing clearly that the Rhodesians have won their point, can still be accepted without too much hypocrisy by the British Government. They believe that their long spun out threat to declare Rhodesia a republic is the ultimate deterrent which will enable them to gain such a settlement.

The battle for Jenkins' ear is on - and there can be few who doubt who will win it. The victors made a brief pre-victory appearance in London last week, and readers of the Times were treated to a splendid picture of Messrs Rose, Duisenberg, Goode and Finch, the members of the International Monetary Fund mission to London on their way to consultations at the Treasury. In the same week, the other victors, the CBI, made strong demands concerning the Budget. The IMF mission was here for consultations; Peter Jay of the Times saw more to it than that. 'Mr. Jenkins', he wrote, 'has to consider not merely the wishes of the IMF team and the feelings of his fellow finance ministers at the OECD meeting..... in Paris, but also the need for some minimal political and class consensus behind whatever measures he decides upon.' And to think that we had almost forgotten the consensus! Not surprisingly, there was soon some restiveness in Parliament about the amount of information given to the IMF team in contrast to the Chancellor's reluctance to give MPs any advance warning of his budget plans.

The problem Jenkins has confronted himself with is that of creating a deflationary situation at home in order to 'make devaluation work' (I never noticed being told just for whom this devaluation is meant to work). Yet never since the war has the personal standard of living, crudely measured by overall consumer expenditure, not risen, still less when output was rising at the fast rate of $4\frac{1}{2}\%$. As Peter Jay observed, given that profits and dividends are bound to rise very sharply indeed at 15-20%, compared with last year, the prospect for a 'voluntary incomes policy' becomes all the more daunting.

Within the narrow confines of his assumptions, Jenkins is left with two alternatives. He will probably play safe and use parts of both. He can increase personal and consumer taxation, or he can hold down wages. In any case, an increase of around £500m in budget taxation is in traditional Treasury balancing arrangements, necessary. If this fell on consumer expenditure it would mean a 2% fall in personal consumption. And, in spite of the rapid expected rise in profits, the Government has virtually pledged itself against an increase in corporation tax higher than the $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ already announced that would discourage the recovery of private investment; which of course it would. This does not mean, however, that corporation tax cannot be raised, it means that investment should not be in private hands.

The alternative is incomes policy. This is not an alternative to depressing working class living standards, it is another way of doing it. That, it seems, is what is meant by 'keeping the options open'. This, politically, is not 'a good thing', but Maurice Corina argued that Jenkins will be able to face opposition with demonstrations of the willingness of the CBI to accept a statutory prices freeze and even dividend limitations. (The jargon comes out again - the CBI is asked if it is willing, the TUC is told what is going to happen). But revelations were uncovered by Peter Jay last week. In an authoritative sounding story he reported that no price

freeze is contemplated, no statutory limitation of dividends is planned, and a 3½% ceiling will be put on all increases in income arising from new bargains. The TJC vote last week gave the Government just the green light that it needed to strengthen its legal control over wages. Prices, it seems, are assumed by the Treasury to be going to rise by at least 6% in 1968. The result must be, if we are using the crude Treasury methods of total consumption figures as a way of measuring rise in living standards, that those standards, when personal income through wages is to rise by no more than 3½%, will fall.

As was commented by Maurice Corina, 'at present the tide seems to be running more and more strongly the Chancellor's way'. That is, in the direction of wage restraint. But let us not take credit away from the IMF and the CBI.

And I bet that Messrs Rose, Duisenberg, Goode and Finch took the ashtrays from their hotel when they left.

POLITICAL NOTES

from Alan Rooney

CARDIFF - UNEMPLOYMENT PROTEST

The Cardiff Trades Council convened a special public meeting on Thursday, 7th March, at Transport House, Cardiff. Unemployment in Cardiff is 4 595 compared with a total of 2 000 in January 1966. Mr. Tyrrell, secretary of the trades council said that the trades council was 'anxious to hear the views of the rank and file on unemployment and what they think should be done to halt it. Speakers include: Tal Lloyd, AEU district secretary and Dave Francis, NUM general secretary in South Wales. Further redundancy threatens the local coal and steel industries.

HULL UNIVERSITY - STUDENTS PREPARE FOR MARCH 17

The students are organising a week of protest on Vietnam during the week March 11-17. In co-operation with the Stop It Committee they are making Wednesday, March 13 a main day of activity with a public meeting at the University at lunch-time where speakers will include a US draft resister, a Stop It Committee speaker and Russell Stetler of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. This will be followed by an afternoon march through Hull city centre from the University, when the March 17 demonstration will be prominently advertised. Collections are being organised throughout the week for medical supplies for the people of Haiphong. The Hull Trades Council is sending a message of support to the March 17 demonstration.

HIGH DEGREE OF MONOPOLY IN SWEDISH INDUSTRY based on Financial Times report

Fifteen families and two investment companies control more than 200 industrial concerns in Sweden with a total of over 450 000 employees, it is stated in a report made by a Government appointed commission investigating the ownership of industry. It also stated that the main commercial banks dominate some 260 companies whose output represents ¼ of the country's total production. There is a high degree of monopoly in the capital goods industry, the report adds, and there are cartels in cement, concrete, wallboard and special steel sectors. The report also complains about the vertical integration of industry which is being taken to mean such sectors as the forest product industry where companies own the land, timber, plant and mills.

FINAL DECLARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL VIETNAM CONFERENCE
February 17-18th 1968, West Berlin

While the Vietnamese people struggle for independence and socialist democracy against the barbarism of US imperialism, and in West Berlin, the Senate tries, as an accomplice of US imperialism, to punish as criminal every act of solidarity with the Vietnamese people's struggle for freedom and to repress it with police terrorism, Representatives of the West European socialist youth; representatives of the American resistance movement and representatives of the revolutionary youth of the Three Continents gathered in West Berlin to express their solidarity with the Vietnamese people's struggle for freedom and to discuss common action in the struggle against US imperialism.

The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam has raised the revolutionary people's struggle to a new level in a major offensive. Its military successes are based on the intensification of the struggle by the whole Vietnamese people. These successes prove the capability of revolutionary freedom movements to defeat counter-revolutionary aggression carried out by the gigantic destructive apparatus of a great industrial power. Before world public opinion and the population of the USA, all the reports and prognoses of success given out by the counter-revolutionary leadership are exposed as lies. With the successful offensive of the revolutionary freedom forces, the danger of further geographical and military escalation of American aggression grows. It is to be feared that US imperialism, forced into the defensive, will seek to escape through the use of atomic weapons.

In this situation, the opposition movement in the capitalist countries must raise its struggle to a new level; it must increase and intensify its actions and make them more concrete. The opposition movement is in the process of transition from protest to political resistance.

Today, US imperialism is trying, through NATO, to integrate the metropolitan countries of Western Europe into its policy of colonial counter-revolution. But the independence struggle of the peoples of the Third World sharpens the contradictions between and within the imperialist countries. These contradictions must be analysed and exploited. The military co-operation between the leader of the colonial counter-revolution, the USA, and the West European countries must be broken; its agency, NATO, must be destroyed. The struggle against US aggression in Vietnam must, at the same time, be a struggle against the imperialist policy of the capitalist countries of Western Europe. A second revolutionary front can only be opened in the metropolitan countries, if the anti-imperialist protest movement learns to understand and exploit politically the contradictions of modern capitalism, and to take up the struggle for revolutionary solutions in factories, offices, universities and schools.

The representatives of West European socialist youth, of the American resistance movement and of the revolutionary youth of the Three Continents who gathered in West Berlin, agreed to carry out the following actions in order to make concrete their combined anti-imperialist struggle and to develop it into active resistance:

- 1) In all West European countries, the campaign to give material support to the armed freedom forces of the NLF of South Vietnam will be continued and strengthened on a broad basis.

- 2) In all West European countries with American military bases, as well as in the USA itself, educational actions amongst the GI's will be carried out, with the aim of undermining the fighting power of the US army, and of convincing the soldiers of the need for resistance, sabotage and desertion.
- 3) A 'Destroy NATO' campaign will be carried out in West European countries, by means of actions and demonstrations against NATO bases. In all countries, the demand will be raised to leave NATO when the Treaty expires in 1968.
- 4) Dockers' strikes will be organised in West European countries whose harbours are used to ship war material for US aggression in Vietnam.
- 5) A Documentation Centre against the misuse of science for the purposes of imperialist war will be set up in West Berlin. The anti-imperialist war will be set up in West Berlin. The anti-imperialist resistance movement is requested to support and make use of this Centre.
- 6) A campaign will be launched in all West European countries to inform the population about firms who make profits through the production of weapons of destruction for this dirty war. This campaign will lead to demonstrations and blockades (for instance against napalm producers such as Dow Chemicals).

We call on anti-imperialist movements, in addition to this, to continually work against US imperialism and all its collaborators in Western Europe, through combined mass demonstrations. In the course of this common struggle, the political and organisational co-operation between the revolutionary freedom movements in the Third World and the resistance movements in the USA and the West European countries must be intensified and made into a United Front.

WILL THE CPGB affiliate to VSC?

by Dave Windsor

The February 29th Morning Star carried a report from Alan Winnington about the consultative conference of Communist and Workers' Parties which is taking place in Budapest. The British Communist Party is represented at this conference by, among others, Jack Woddis, who many comrades will know is a leading figure in the British Council for Peace in Vietnam. It may come as a surprise to readers of the Week to learn that Mr. Woddis and his colleagues voted for the resolution supporting the Solidarity line on Vietnam. If the Communist Party of Great Britain takes this resolution really seriously, it surely ought to affiliate to the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. The following is the text to the resolution:

'Vietnam is a symbol of indomitable courage, persistence and determination in the struggle against the main enemy of the people, American imperialism'. In defending its country, the Vietnamese people is fulfilling its international duty toward the whole of mankind. We Communists regard the cause of solidarity with fighting Vietnam as our solemn internationalist duty. On behalf of our Parties and in the name of the millions we represent, we affirm our firm decision to grant all necessary assistance to the people of Vietnam fighting in the vanguard of the struggle against imperialism."

It appears very unlikely that the C.P.G.B. will be consistent and adopt the solidarity line. Apart from the action of Comment attacking the VSC, on the recent Morning Star demonstration the organisers opposed VSC members shouting "Victory to the N.L.F." saying that this would not appeal to the British people.

A principle of the American war of independence - "No taxation without Representation" - is still a utopia for British youth today. At 18 they pay tax, earn a living, can get married and raise a family, be conscripted if the Government so wishes and be full members of most political parties and yet for young people between 18 and 21 the right to vote is still denied. The latest piece of double-dealing by Wilson and co. can only be seen in light of this.

Even though the Laly Report - not exactly a committee of socialists - favoured lowering the voting age to 18 the Government negotiated with their pals in the Tory Party and made the massive concession of lowering the voting age to 20! This should, again, be seen in perspective, as general elections occur only once every five years and thus many people are 25 before they can vote in a general election. This measly concession means that they can now vote at 24 instead!

Despite continuous evidence from everybody, from psychiatrists to archbishops, that youth are becoming mature adults younger all the time, the Government still feels that a man or woman of twenty is only just capable of voting. This obviously poses questions which we, as socialists, cannot avoid answering. The youth today are probably the most radical youth that there has ever been in Britain. Despite bureaucratic interference in the youth movements (e.g., L.P.Y.S., Y.C.L.) the youth have played a leading role in the Vietnam movement and other campaigns. They supply the rank and file for most solidarity and anti-imperialist organisations. This is coupled with a growing radicalisation among students and a greater degree of youth participation in the trade unions than ever before. Obviously these youth between 18 and 21 could provide a solid plank of Labour support in any election, yet Wilson chose to exclude most of them from the franchise. When it is obvious that the Government has alienated whole sections of the workers by its anti-union, pro-big business policies it appears that Wilson's action is totally suicidal. This was the only slim chance that Labour had of regaining a leading position at the ballot box and yet even this very minor reform has been decapitated. What can youth do about this? Firstly, they must not make the mistake of turning their back on the Labour movement as a result of Wilson's double-dealing. They should be prepared to fight their case every time an opportunity arises. Clearly votes at 18 is not a panacea for youth; it gives them only, as Marx said, "The right to choose once every five years who will misrepresent them in Parliament."

What it will achieve is closer unity between older workers and youth; and give youth a fundamental right to elect who they wish. Young Socialists and Labour students should push for this in their C.L.P.s, union branches, wards, etc., and a campaign could be launched, perhaps, to aid this. Wilson should not be allowed to spit in the face of Britain's youth and destroy the Labour Party's chance of a return to power, just to kow-tow to the Tories.

Votes at eighteen are allowed in many countries, both capitalist and workers states, and it is the duty of the labour movement to demand this in Britain.

**SOLIDARITY
WITH THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE
AGAINST U.S. AGGRESSION**

**International Solidarity
Demonstration**

**SUNDAY MARCH 17th 2.30p.m.
TRAFALGAR SQUARE
MARCH ON U.S. EMBASSY**

for 25 years the Vietnamese people have been fighting for independence

half a million U.S. troops, napalm, germ warfare, crop destruction, these are not defeating a popular struggle, and never will

the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese have called for mass demonstrations of solidarity

**VIETNAM: END BRITISH COMPLICITY
in America's dirty war**

devaluation wages frozen prices and rents up
cuts in education and health expenditure

BUT defence expenditure is still £2,000 million a year.

Wherever independence struggles take place, U.S. forces oppose them—in Cuba, Vietnam, Dominican Republic, Thailand etc. and the British Labour Government supports the Americans in opposition to Labour party and T.U.C. policy.

American aggression requires the support of this massive British military expenditure.

For this reason—

**THE VIETNAMESE STRUGGLE IS YOUR
STRUGGLE**

JOIN THE MARCH 17th PROTEST!

Leaflets, posters, stickers and details of local groups from—

March 17th Vietnam Ad Hoc Committee, c/o., 22 Sarre Road, N.W.2.

VIETNAM

Solidarity with the
Vietnamese people against
American aggression

Sunday, March 17, Trafalgar Square
2.30 pm

22 SARRE ROAD, LONDON NW2