

CLASS STRUGGLE

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN

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TWOMILLION SUPPORT STRIKE CALL

There was virtually 100% support for the 2nd of the 3 one-day strikes called by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions after talks on the national pay-claim broke down. The strike united workers from many different industries, skilled and unskilled, low-paid and higher-paid in a common fight around common demands. This is an excellent thing, and is a tribute to the strength and solidarity of the working class.

This is even more the case when you consider that the odds were stacked against such unity through bad leadership by the Unions, and through the capitalist press working overtime to try to make their prophecies of blacklegging come true.

The 3 one-day strikes were called for the Mondays of 6, 13 and 20 August. It was a dead cert that

most workers would be on holiday for at least one of those days. Many Shop Stewards were only notified of the strike call a couple of days before their factories closed down. The effect of this organisational cock-up at first was widespread confusion. In many places no shopfloor meetings were called to discuss the strike call, let alone discuss the whole development of the national talks.

The most significant part of the national claim is for a national minimum wage of £80 for skilled workers and £60 for unskilled. The only other things left from the original 13 point claim are a 39 hour week and 2 days extra holiday. Through local agreements, many workers already earn more

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11TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA SOVIET TANKS RULE CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On the morning of August 21st, 1968, Soviet tanks rolled into Prague. Half a million Warsaw Pact troops marched in to Czechoslovakia. As Czechoslovaks got up to go to work, they found their country occupied. The people did not lie down. The unarmed people fought back anyway they could. In a village near Upa, the local people barricaded themselves onto a bridge, blocking a tank advance for several hours. "Not a drop of water to the invaders" became a popular slogan. An American eyewitness reported that in Bratislava soldiers were obliged to drink from the heavily polluted Danube river. Near the University there, people hurled bricks at the tanks, the soldiers opened fire killing a 15-year old girl and four others. Many industries went on strike. On August 23rd, Prague workers held a one-day strike. On the 25th "Resistance Shock Brigades" were formed which built barricades, hurled petrol bombs and used anything else they could lay their hands on.

SOVIET DOMINATION

How had the invasion come about? For years, Czechoslovakia had been dominated by the Soviet Union. Its top leader Antonin Novotny was a bootlicker who followed every movement of the Soviet baton. A new ruling class had risen to power in the late 1950s in the Soviet Union. Capitalism had been restored, and restored in other Eastern European countries too. The Soviet social imperialists not only dominated Czechoslovakia and the bulk of the other Warsaw Pact countries politically, but it exploited them economically too. One example in Czechoslovakia was that despite the Soviet Union being the richest of the two, Czechoslovakia was forced to lend the USSR 2,000 million roubles. This money was used by the USSR to exploit Czech natural resources, such as iron ore, petroleum and natural gas. The money was "repaid" by Czechoslovakia being given back some of its own oil. The Soviet Union sells the gas to the West at an enormous profit.

The Czech economy is tied to the Soviet economy. Through the "international division of labour" proclaimed by the USSR; the economies of most Eastern European countries specialise in certain goods. The Soviet Union alone has an all-round balanced economy, and the others dependent on it. As a Soviet statement said: "Czechoslovak concerns should, whilst planning their production, make a special study of the Soviet market and its needs, so as to make Czechoslovak production coordinate with the need of the Soviet economy."

THE SAME TODAY

The imperialist relationship continued after the invasion. In 1975 alone, Czechoslovakia was forced to divert 16% of its capital construction funds and sent 6000 skilled workers to build a Soviet gas Cont'd on p6



Prague 1968: Demonstrators stone Soviet tanks.

SECURITY GUARDS AND POLICE IN RACIST

In February five young blacks were attacked by security guards in Liverpool's St John's shopping precinct. Now they themselves have been charged. As usual none of the real aggressors have been.

At a magistrates' court hearing Eugene Sylvester, 20 was committed for trial on charges of "affray and causing actual bodily harm". Karl John, 17, was committed on charges of "Affray". Linda Lee, 19, Hayley Sutherland, 17, and Debbie Sutherland, 18, were remanded on charges of "disorderly conduct".

DEFENCE COMMITTEE ORGANISES FIGHT BACK

A Defence Committee has been formed by relatives and friends of the defendants and concerned individuals and organisations within the black community. The "Liverpool Precinct Five Defence Committee" is demanding:

1. Immediate dropping of all charges.
2. Dismissal of the security guards involved.
3. That security guards in the Precinct stop the harassment and framing of young blacks.
4. The dismissal of police officers involved
5. That officers of the Merseyside police force stop harassing and framing young blacks.

"Karl, Eugene, Linda, Hayley and Debbie are innocent of all charges. Their case represents the latest in a long line of injustices meted out to Liverpool's black community by the Merseyside police force and its allies.

The Merseyside police force is renowned for its hostile attitude towards the black community in Liverpool, the vast majority of whom live in the Liverpool 8 district. Its policy towards Liverpool 8 blacks has been one of constant harassment and frequent arrest; and, in carrying out this policy, its officers have consistently resorted to the most corrupt and brutal practices.

As part of this ongoing campaign against Liverpool 8 blacks, the police force have established a close relationship with the security force in the St. Johns Shopping Centre. Members of this security force are employed by the Liverpool City Council. In recent years they have become a constant source of harassment to young blacks who frequent the shopping centre. Together with officers of the police force they have been responsible for a number of unprovoked attacks on young blacks in

In a press statement by the Committee this unprovoked racist assault has been clearly described. (Extracts are printed in this issue of *Class Struggle*.)

The cases are expected to come up in October. In such struggles mass support is vital. The courts cannot be relied on for "justice" and "impartiality". They will not willingly admit to the racist oppression of the system. They will not willingly admit to racist aggression by the police or by "security guards". They will not willingly say that they don't believe the police evidence. They are themselves part of a state based on oppression. We have only to look at their record - such as the imprisonment of the Asian Virk brothers for defending themselves against a racist attack by fascist thugs who of course were never even charged!

Where there has been some active support or mass protest the courts have been forced to back down. One example is the way George Lindo had to be freed in the end, after widespread exposure of the way he was framed for a crime he could not have committed. These struggles are vitally important. It is essential that workers fight the racist oppression of

and around the shopping centre.

On Thursday, February 22nd the security guards in the market area of the shopping centre attacked without warning. Young blacks in the vicinity of the market suddenly found themselves on the receiving end of racial abuse and physical assault.

The security guards waded in with their fists and their feet and their truncheons, knocking the youths to the ground and striking them repeatedly, despite protests from women shoppers. Having launched the offensive, the security guards then called for police assistance.

When the police arrived they wasted no time in making their presence felt. Not content with simply arresting those youths detained by the security guards, they proceeded to assault and arrest any and every young black they could lay their hands on. This violent onslaught was accompanied by a constant barrage of racial abuse: 'niggers', 'wogs' 'coons', 'black bastards' etc.

And now these same police officers and security guards are attempting to cover up their malpractice by framing innocent blacks on trumped up charges."

POLICE ATTACK LONDON SQUATTERS

Two people have been sentenced to imprisonment following the mass eviction of squatters from London's Huntley Street. This is the first time that the "Criminal Trespass Law" passed in 1977 by the Labour Government, has been used to convict someone for "resisting eviction" (Section 10(i) Criminal Law Act 1977) and the first time that prison sentences have been imposed under the Act.

160 people were evicted from the block in London WC1 in August 1978. There was an attack by 650 police, backed by Special Patrol Groups in riot gear and using 5 bulldozers. The day before, the squatters had been promised rehousing.

Piers Corbyn was sentenced to 28 days imprisonment. His Probation Officer had refused to write a report on him, following the National Association of Probation Officers' policy on not cooperating with the courts in dealing with political offenders. Even the Probation Service Management's report recommended strongly against imprisonment.

Jim Paton got a 28 days suspended sentence, even though he was not present at the eviction.

Because of the life-style of many squatters, they have been mistrusted by working class tenants. To isolate squatters, local councils, through the local press in areas of London, have played on this contradiction among the people. In areas where struggling tenants have united with squatters against high rents and homelessness, they have worked overtime to split and divide tenants on the issue of squatting. However, for ordinary working class tenants, the question of the life-style of many squatters must be regarded as secondary. Throughout London, council flats are boarded up and homelessness is a major problem for the working class, students, black people and the unemployed.

The squatters were struggling for the rights of homeless people. And the Criminal Trespass Law is being tested and extended against squatters,

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ATTACK

the state, and in that struggle work to build a real unity to weaken the power of the state. The state oppresses all working people. Unity is the basis of our power, and that unity can only be built by vigorously opposing the particular racist oppression of minorities.

SUPPORT DEFENCE COMMITTEE CAMPAIGN

The Defence Committee is organising petitions and hopes to hold a public meeting. There must also be a big picket outside the court when the case comes up. The Defence Committee has also requested supporters to send letters and protests based on their demands to the Chief Constable of Merseyside, the Manager of St John's Shopping Precinct, the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor. The issue can be raised in various organisations, such as trade union branches.

Copies of any such letters sent, or other protests, resolutions etc together with messages of solidarity and donation to help finance the campaign should be sent to:

The "Liverpool Precinct Five Defence Committee"
c/o 19, Buckingham Avenue, Liverpool 17.

(Cheques and postal orders payable to "Liverpool Five Defence Committee".)

JOB CENTRE AIDS RACIST BOSSES

Steven Kirby, a 23 year old Jobcentre interviewer rightly thought he was doing his job properly when he reported three cases of racist discrimination by employers to the Commission for Racial Equality in Bristol. One of the cases, involving a black woman who applied for a barmaid's job, led to the city's first (and only) successful tribunal ruling under the 1976 Race Relations Act. It'll be the last if the Manpower Services Commission in Bristol have anything to do with it!

After two months work Mr Kirby was summoned by the Area Manager of Bristol's three Jobcentres, Roy Frost. Accusing Mr Kirby of being stupid and incompetent, Frost warned him "not to drop the Department in the shit again" and just in case things weren't perfectly clear, despatched him to filing duties. To emphasise again whose side he was on, Frost also said "employers have a right to know if job applicants are black." "It was all I could do to stop myself thumping him" said Mr Kirby.

If there's any justice at all, it's Frost who should have taken up filing duties. Jobcentres are demoralising places for the unemployed as things are, without the Frosts of this world worming their way in, carving soft niches for themselves where they can sit back, lord it over others and neglect their duties. But this is the way things are going now. Even that part of the State bureaucracy having a useful role to play is top heavy with such officials, who remain sanctified and immune so long as they look after capitalism's interests.

And that's the point, of course. Jobcentres, and their overlords, the Manpower Services Commission, aren't there to look after workers' interests. They're doing a job for the bosses. Racism helps to divide workers, so why should they oppose it? In the end, racism can only be beaten by destroying the system that invented it and survives to a great extent because of it - capitalism!

A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

MR AKBAR DAD KHAN, DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY of the Standing Conference of Pakistani organisations, on returning from a visit to Pakistan was kept overnight at Harmondsworth detention centre. Miss Marston, an immigration officer, decided that his passport was false. After keeping Mr Khan waiting for nearly three hours while she investigated, he was told, "we can't decide this tonight". At the detention centre were 30 other people, including a young woman who had been waiting about 25 days. This is what the reactionary immigration laws mean for black and Asian people entering Britain. While the Rhodesian fascist Ian Smith has been promised immunity from the law if he attends Thatcher's "settlement" conference.

THE DEATH OF TWO DIVERS ON THE NORTH SEA OIL rigs, who perished as their "bell" lay on the sea bed is only a very small tip of an iceberg. The same week that this happened, two men were lost after being knocked overboard by a cable on an anchor-laying tug. The death toll on North Sea oil rigs is now more than 80. This does not include the victims of the recent Shetland air disaster, where most of the 17 dead were oil rig workers. About 400 injuries have been classified as serious in the 10 years of North Sea oil drilling.

WHILE PETROL PRICES HAVE SHOT UP AND THE INCREASED cost of oil energy is passed on to the "consumer" by the capitalists through higher prices, the oil companies are announcing a profit bonanza. Profits of Royal Dutch Shell, the world's second largest oil monopoly, have soared by 237% in the first six months of this year. A "mere" £394 million for the same period last year has rocketed to £1,328 million. Shell's bosses still cry poverty however by telling the newspapers that they need these higher profits to "buy more expensive oil" and "search for fresh reserves". They must think that the people are stupid. Recent increases in petrol and fuel prices have already been justified on the grounds of increased oil prices. And of course they need to invest in new oil exploration, so that they can grab a bigger "share" of oil supplies and boost profits further.

WHEN NIGERIA JUSTIFIABLY TOOK OVER BP'S OIL-fields and nationalised them, the "Labour Paper" or *Daily Mirror* carried the wild headline "Nigeria snatches British oil". British oil? Has Nigeria taken over the North Sea oil rigs? What right has British imperialism, which is what the foreign investments of British monopoly capitalism represent to claim the resources of another country for itself? No right at all. The Nigerian Government is being generous by allowing BP to extract the oil in the first place. They are even more justified in taking over the oilfields of a company which is shipping oil to the white racist regime in South Africa.

POLICE ATTACKS ON THE RIGHT OF TRIAL BY JURY have been screwed up another notch in an Old Bailey trial of six anarchists. There is very little support among the working class for anarchism which stands for individualism and opposes workers' united and disciplined organisation. For this reason the police expect to get away with blatant interference in the composition of this jury. Before the pool of jury members assembles on September 10, the police Special Branch will have run their names through a computer and checked their "records". Anyone who has attended political meetings or has friends who are political activists will be vetoed and the state prosecution can veto their sitting on a jury without giving any reason.

10,000 MARCH FOR TROOPS OUT

After 10 years of British troops in Northern Ireland, more than 10,000 people marched through London to demand the withdrawal of British troops and in support of Irish self-determination. This was the largest London demonstration yet against British imperialism's unjust war.

Although, working class support for the Irish people's struggle against British imperialism's domination and oppression of Northern Ireland is a matter of principle, the demonstration was not called by a party claiming socialist principles. It was called by the Young Liberals who support a political party which, far from being socialist openly states its opposition to socialism. The Young Liberals call for the troops withdrawal from Ireland on humanitarian grounds. But in holding this weak and liberal position, they have still shown more initiative on this occasion than

the opportunist parties which claim unity with the oppressed.

'C'PGB GIVE QUALIFIED SUPPORT

The 'C'PGB ('Communist' Party of Great Britain) took part in the demonstration. But their banners did not call for the troops withdrawal. Their slogans were restricted to opposing torture in Northern Ireland. In their newspaper the *Morning Star*, the 'C'PGB praised itself as the "... only organisation participating to clearly raise the question of democratic rights for the people in Northern Ireland". On the demonstration they distributed a leaflet calling for a Bill of Rights. In making these demands, the revisionists are deliberately avoiding the fact that torture and arbitrary state powers are the result of British imperialism's occupation and rule in Northern Ireland. The 'C'PGB by making demands that the British imperialist state institute democratic reforms in Northern Ireland is supporting Westminster's "right" to send troops to Northern Ireland and legislate for Northern Ireland. These opportunists seek only to soften the image of British imperialism's operations in Ireland. They care nothing for the Irish people's right to self-determination.

EX-SOLDIERS SPEAK OUT!

A banner carried by ex-soldiers read "Ex-soldiers against the war in Ireland". It was warmly supported by demonstrators and given a prominent position near the rostrum. One ex-soldier, Captain Biggs, said over the speakers "the British troops are not a peace keeping force, but an



From our
postbag



The Editor - CS
c/o New Era Books,
203 Seven Sisters Rd
London N4.

Dear Editor,

I have been nursing for some years and during this time have been fully aware of the problems that face nurses in regards to their taking industrial action and know full well that it is not a step to be taken lightly.

But I was made very angry to read that the General Nursing Council say that nurses "could face proceedings for professional misconduct if they went on strike or took industrial action."

This in effect means that if nurses step out of line by trying to protect not only their own rights but those of their patients too, that they then face the prospect of not only losing their job but also their qualifications.

Yet at the same time the "cuts" in the NHS are causing far greater hardships and they are allowed to happen. They cause far greater hardship than nurses would ever wish to do. Why should nurses and the rest of the NHS staff be attacked for objecting to policies and conditions that benefit nobody.

J. Manchester

Dear Editor,

I've read a lot recently about the declining standards in the National Health and the rise of private medicine schemes, but it did not really hit me until last week when my wife took our five year old son to the doctors. He had been off colour

for some time. He had not put any weight on for over twelve months and he often has a sore throat. The doctor soon diagnosed the trouble and said there would be no improvement until his tonsils were removed - but it would be six months before the specialist could see him and anything up to two years after that before he could have the operation!

Worried by the thought of two more bad winters on his health and schooling his mother asked about having it done privately. "The specialist could see him within ten days for a fee of £18 and the operation could be shortly after for a fee of around £200" was the reply. Now I am not putting the blame on the doctor. When my wife told him that she thought it was disgusting he had to agree. "I see things of this sort every day" was his reply.

Doesn't the whole thing stink. It just shows how the system is run for the benefit of those with plenty of money. If you can pay, then whether your illness is trivial or serious, it can be dealt with straight away. If you can't pay then you will have to wait and suffer; and if you are a small child then your parents can worry and suffer too.

I know this sort of thing can't have only started since the Tories were elected in May. It's been going on for quite some time. A lot of the older people I spoke to about it started comparing things with what it was like in the Thirties when you even had to pay to see your doctor. Things are not as bad as they were before the war, but it seems to me that the authorities and the politicians are going to push it back that way unless ordinary people who use and need the National Health Service stop them.

G. Leeds



Harry McShane on the rostrum of Aug. 12th demonstration

army of occupation". Veteran leader of the Unemployed Workers' Movement in the 1930s and ex-Communist Party member, 86 year old Harry McShane, was given uproarious applause for his speech. As a contribution to educating new generations of workers on the importance of the struggle in Ireland for workers in Britain, he called on people to read John Mclean's "Ireland's Tragedy, Scotland's Disgrace". Showing how much the 'C'PGB has departed from communist principles, the *Morning Star* made no mention of this veteran fighter of the Communist Party in its report.

Many opportunists jumped on the bandwagon of this demonstration. But it was a demonstration of opposition to the British occupation of Ireland and the RCLB was proud to raise its banner on this march in full support of the Irish people's struggle for self-determination.

TROOPS OUT NOW!

er Dear Editor,

I am a member of the EETPU, and I want to say how disgusted I am that this Union has negotiated a private health care scheme on behalf of its electrical contracting members.

Given that the NHS has been under attack for years this kind of action is nothing but a barefaced betrayal of the working class struggle for decent health care. And it's just putting two fingers up at the tens of thousands of health service workers who are prepared for a long and bitter fight to protect their jobs, and build a decent service.

The health service is in a hell of a mess, and getting worse every day, just like the other "public services" we're supposed to have. So what do we do about it? The NHS came about largely because of the working class demands and struggles for full health care, regardless of how rich you are. Those demands were never fully met and the NHS has always had the lowest budget the capitalists could get away with. Now should we sit back and let them take even that away? No, the only solution is to fight against the cuts, to refuse to allow such basic rights to be eroded, while the capitalists get richer.

Or you can join Frank Chapple and bail the capitalists out by paying for something you've already paid for once through your taxes and National Insurance.

T. Liverpool

TWO MILLION SUPPORT STRIKE CALL Cont'd from p1

than the present national claim, and it is not surprising that such workers spontaneously feel that the national claim hasn't got much to do with them. But this is wrong for 3 reasons.

1. Overtime rates, shift premiums etc are worked out in relation to Minimum Time Rate (the national wage)
2. It is in the interests of all workers to get the minimum wage as high as possible. This better protects all workers in the industry against erosion of their earnings, and it will mean that workers are not so dependent on overtime and productivity bonuses to get a decent wage.
3. The struggle is much more effective when the workers fight in such a united way. This particularly helps workers in smaller or badly organised factories, and often these are the ones most directly affected by the minimum time rate. But do the trade union leaders take the time and trouble to explain these things to their members? No, they just issued directives instructing the members to strike. And the fact that these directives were issued around holiday time meant that there was no opportunity to thrash out all these questions on the shopfloor. This inevitably led to bad feelings in some quarters, and even to some scabbing on the first day of the strike.

All this mess, created because the trade union misleaders have contempt for their membership, meant that the capitalist press had a field-day sowing rumours, predicting splits, trying to demoralise. And because many workers were on holiday, they had no other source of information to counter all this, and many believed that the strike would fall apart. The fact that it didn't is no thanks to Duffy and Co.

On the 2nd day of the strike Duffy (the Engineering Chairman of the Confederation) was quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* on 14th August as saying, "There are more out on strike today than there were last week. It is apparent that the members have unified behind the claim."

This really exposes the pathetic leadership for what it is. It's a farce to talk about the membership unifying around the claim half-way through the strike! This is an admission from Duffy himself that the misleaders had not bothered to win that unity before the strike. If they'd acted in a democratic manner, keeping the membership regularly informed of developments, encouraging discussions at shopfloor level, seeking their members opinions - if they'd done this the ground would have been properly prepared for the strike action to take off on a good basis.

But why should they bother - they're living very comfortably, whether their membership gets a decent wage or not.

POLICE ATTACK LONDON SQUATTERS Cont'd from p2

so that the police can use it more widely against pickets and tenants fighting eviction, occupation, and demonstrations. For the working class, these are basic rights to be defended no matter who is being isolated and attacked by the police.

Huntley Street Defence Campaign,
c/o 55 Inns House, East St, London SE17 2JN

1968 AN IMPORTANT TURNING POINT

The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 marked an important change of world-wide significance of the strategy of the Soviet Union's ruling bureaucrat class. Over 10 years earlier, revisionists (fake Marxists) had seized power in the Soviet Union. From that time up to 1968 was a period of consolidation by the revisionists in power. Purges were carried through in the Communist Party and the State. Democracy in society and industry was trampled on. The socialist Soviet Union was transformed into a state monopoly capitalist system. The bureaucrats became a parasitic class growing fat on the backs of the re-enslaved masses.

Similar developments had occurred in most Eastern European countries. But in these countries the workers faced not only a new ruling class at home, but also the domination of the Soviet Union. The political power lay in Moscow. Zhikov, the top pro-Moscow crawler in Bulgaria, had publicly demonstrated this relationship by describing his country as the "loyal little brother of the Soviet Union." The Warsaw Pact, the military alliance, was transformed into a tool of the Soviet ruling clique. Only Romania out of the countries in the Warsaw Pact and Comecon - the economic community of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, etc - has refused to accept Soviet diktat. Comecon, itself, became a means by which the Soviet ruling class exploited the other countries. In "theory" Comecon should help less developed countries catch up with the more developed ones. In practice the Soviet Union increased its share of the total industrial production of the Comecon countries from 69.5% in 1960 to 76% in 1970.

SOVIET COOPERATION WITH USA

Before 1968, the Soviet Union already dominated Eastern Europe. But, looked at world-wide, what was most obvious about Soviet foreign policy was its

conciliation with US imperialism, and indeed, its cooperation with it. At that time US imperialism was the main enemy of the people of the world, the most dominant and aggressive imperialism. It sent troops wherever it could to shore up its Empire against the struggles of oppressed peoples. Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, attacked the armed struggle of the people for liberation. He also worked to spread the illusion of a "peaceful transition" to socialism. Many Communist Parties and National Liberation Movements opposed this revisionism. In those parties that went revisionist as in Britain, there were splits. Splits and new movements arose where national liberation movements followed the Soviet call and abandoned the armed struggle.

"LIMITED SOVEREIGNTY"

But 1968 marked a turning point. The invasion of Czechoslovakia showed that the new Tsars in the Kremlin considered themselves strong enough now to use open military force to maintain their rule. The revision of Marxism continued. The "equality of nations" was replaced with a new Soviet theory of "limited sovereignty". Simply, this means that countries in the Soviet camp can do what they like providing the Soviet ruling clique like it too! If they go their own way too much, Brezhnev and Co claim the "right" to intervene - if they can. The Moscow rulers showed that now it was no longer purely a question of maintaining their dominance through pro-Soviet traitors in other countries, but that they would use their military might to put these traitors in power in the first place. What a parody of socialism. Socialism is the rule of the masses led by the working class. Where is the need for foreign troops if the mass of the people have power? Clearly, they are only needed when it is an unpopular minority in power. That has nothing to do with socialism.

SOVIET TANKS RULE CZECHOSLOVAKIA

pipeline. This forced the Czechoslovaks to slash 24 domestic construction projects.

Even the arms industry in Czechoslovakia is used to make profits abroad. The Husak regime, placed in power by the Soviet leaders and kept there today by Soviet troops and tanks, has sold arms to the South African regime among others.

1968 - A JUST STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

In 1968, Czechoslovakia had tried to move away from Soviet domination. Moscow's mouthpiece in the leadership of the Czechoslovak revisionist Party was removed in early 1968, and replaced by Alexander Dubcek. Dubcek was no more socialist than Novotny, but he wanted to move out from Soviet domination. He stepped up trade links with the West and opposed Soviet instructions. The USSR had its own developing trade with the West but it opposed the Czech move because it meant greater Czech independence. At that time Czechoslovakia had to buy all of its oil, 90% of its wheat and 83% of its iron from Russia, who controlled the prices and could use Czechoslovak dependence on Soviet raw materials as a means to dictate to Czechoslovakia politically.

The mass of the people supported Dubcek's moves because they wanted to get out from under the Kremlin's reactionary thumb.

POPULAR RESISTANCE

On August 21st, the Soviet rulers put an end to

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Dubcek's moves. There were no people with open arms "rejoicing" that the Soviet Union had "saved socialism" as pro-Soviet mouthpieces in Britain, like the New 'Communist' Party would like us to believe. There was only bitter fighting. Dubcek was whisked off to the Soviet Union. On August 27th, when news arrived in Czechoslovakia that Dubcek and other leaders had capitulated, thousands filled Prague's Wenceslas Square shouting "Traitors! Traitors!" and "We don't want to live on our knees."

The resistance continued even after this betrayal. After 6 months, only half the objectives of the economic plan had been fulfilled because of strikes, slowdowns and sabotage of production in the factories. A year later in August 1969, Brezhnev's claims that the situation had been "normalised" were once again shown to be false. At noon on August 20th 50,000 people filled Wenceslas Square again demonstrating against the Soviet occupation. In Brno, troops fired on a public rally killing several people. In just a couple of days 1,900 people were arrested.

Last year, Brezhnev spoke on Czechoslovak television. Just as he spoke about the events of 1968 technicians blacked him out.

The struggle in Czechoslovakia will continue, as in other countries until the new Tsars in the Kremlin are forced out. And international solidarity with the people's struggle will continue also, until Soviet social imperialism is finally defeated. ■

SOCIAL IMPERIALISM CHALLENGES USA

In 1968, it became clear that the Soviet Union was not only revisionist, not only a state monopoly capitalist system, but as Mao Zedong stated it had become a social imperialist power - socialist in words, imperialist in deeds. The invasion of Czechoslovakia marked a change in Soviet policy. Where previously its most obvious aspect was its conciliation with US imperialism, it now started to challenge US imperialism. From 1968, having consolidated their position and transformed their armed forces into an aggressive military machine, the new Tsars started to openly go up against the US imperialists for a redivision of the world. This has become more and more clear. The Soviet challenge has become more far reaching, more aggressive and more violent every year over the last eleven years.

MOST AGGRESSIVE SUPERPOWER

Today, US imperialism is in decline. It remains one of the two main enemies of the people of the world, but it has suffered many defeats at the hands of the oppressed peoples and nations. But Soviet social imperialism is expanding. Through its agents it has subverted the struggle of the Vietnamese people. Using its own and Vietnamese troops - nearly 200,000 in total - it has invaded Kampuchea and is fighting an extensive war against the legitimate Government; Vietnamese troops occupy Laos, where Russian and Vietnamese bureaucrats have taken charge of every Government department. Meanwhile, it has attacked the genuine liberation movements who are fighting popular guerrilla wars in Thailand, Malaya, and the Phillipines etc as "terrorists". These movements while fighting US imperialism have made it clear that they will not let in Soviet social imperialism. The Soviet bureaucrats oppose the people winning their own full independence. It is only Soviet domination they are interested in. Thousands of Russian soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan to keep local Soviet agents in power. It played on differences between liberation movements in Angola to put one, the MPLA, in power, and then had its agents in the ruling MPLA carry out a purge from top to bottom of the fighters in

the MPLA who opposed Soviet domination and wanted complete independence. Angola is yet another supposedly "socialist" country which needs thousands of Soviet, Cuban and East German troops to keep the Government in power. Clearly, the social imperialists still claim that socialism does not mean the rule of the mass of the working people. To them it means Soviet rule.

In Ethiopia, a colonel's coup was called a "socialist revolution". The previous ruler, the Emperor Haile Selassie was an agent of Western imperialism. The new rulers, though, have to be kept in power by thousands more Russians, Cubans and East Germans. Large-scale massacres have been carried out, but the people led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party are fighting back. The Eritrean masses have been fighting for decades against Ethiopian rule. In reality this was the rule of US imperialism working through Selassie. At that time, the Soviet Union claimed to support the struggle for an independent Eritrea. Now social imperialism rules Ethiopia, so the Eritrean liberation fighters have now been labelled "agents of imperialism" and the USSR now opposes the struggle for Eritrean independence. Ethiopian and Cuban troops, supplied by and led by the Soviet Union, occupy Eritrea.

MILITARY THREAT TO EUROPE

These are just a few of the more dramatic examples of social imperialist expansion. Clearly it is interested in one thing only and that is Soviet hegemony (total domination). This is shown again by the massive military machine, far greater than is necessary for defensive purposes, that is poised on the borders of Western Europe. *Class Struggle* has carried articles on this in the past so we will not go into more detail here. One point of recent note is that the "Strategic" Arms Limitation Treaty, signed by the two superpowers recently, deliberately makes no mention of "tactical" nuclear missiles - that is nuclear missiles which can "only" reach Western Europe. The Soviet hegemonists are rapidly deploying "tactical" SS-20 missiles all along the borders. There can be no mistake. Soviet imperialism is a real threat to independence today.

As elsewhere, the Soviet social imperialists have their supporters in Britain. Such agents of social imperialism exist in the Labour "left", in the 'Communist' Party of Great Britain, and in the New 'Communist' Party. The New 'Communist' Party (NCP) deserves special mention this year, because, believe it or not, it is actually celebrating the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. They are the most open supporters in Britain of Soviet expansionism. They try to win support by posing as opponents of "revisionism". They attack the 'Communist' Party of Great Britain for adopting a "peaceful road to Socialism". So do Marxist-Leninists. But what the NCP revisionists hide is that the "peaceful road" programme was pushed at the international communist movement by the Soviet revisionists. "Well", perhaps they will reply, "that was because of Khrushchev's liberalism, but all that changed when the Soviet Union showed it was prepared to fight, when it went into Czechoslovakia in 1968!" What the NCP is covering up is that there is socialist solidarity with oppressed peoples fighting imperialism, and with the workers' struggle for socialism, which was how the Soviet Union behaved when it was a socialist country, and when the Communist Party was led by Stalin; and there is Soviet opposition to US imperialism and to western capi-

talism for its own ambitions which is how the Soviet Union acts today. The NCP claims that with the invasion of 1968 the Soviet Union went "back to Stalinism".

This lie is a deliberate attempt to win the support of older workers who quite rightly defend the great achievements of the socialist Soviet Union when it was led by Stalin. It is an attempt to turn such people into backers of Soviet imperialism today. That is why they make such a big thing out of backing the invasion of Czechoslovakia. But the reality of Soviet exploitation and oppression cuts through the slogans of the NCP. The Soviet Union did not "defend socialism in Czechoslovakia". It does not "support the liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations". It is not "a socialist country". The NCP is nothing but a mouthpiece for Soviet domination.

The Revolutionary Communist League and other Marxist-Leninist will continue to remember 1968 as the time when Soviet social imperialism started to go onto the offensive against US imperialism for world domination. We will continue to use the anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia as a time to remind the people of Britain of the very real threat that social imperialism poses today.

VIETNAMESE LEADER SPEAKS OUT AGAINST PRESENT POLICIES



Comrade Hoang Van Hoan, the 74 year old Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam, arrived recently in Beijing (Peking) after a period of convalescence. Hoang Van Hoan secretly left Vietnam for China because he opposed the oppression of the Vietnamese people, the persecution of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, and because of the way that the present ruling clique in Vietnam led by Le Duan has sold Vietnam's sovereignty to the Soviet Union, whilst itself embarking on a campaign to dominate Kampuchea and Laos. Comrade Hoang also strongly opposed the anti-China and anti-Chinese campaign waged by the Vietnamese authorities and their continued aggression and provocation against China's border territories. "My arrival in China is to protest against Le Duan's anti-China policy; and to proclaim to the people of Vietnam and the whole world that the friendship between Vietnam and China cannot be undermined by anybody", he stated on his arrival in Beijing.

A VETERAN COMMUNIST FIGHTER FOR LIBERATION

Comrade Hoang Van Hoan is a founder member of the Communist Party of Vietnam, who worked closely with the late President Ho Chi Minh. In 1945, when he was Secretary of the Party Committee in the Viet Bac liberated area, he was elected to the Central Committee of the Party. Eleven years later, in 1956, he was elected to the Political Bureau of the Party. He has been Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam since 1958.

In December 1976, comrade Hoang was ousted from the Political Bureau and the Central Committee by the Le Duan clique. This was the time when there were widespread purges of Marxist-Leninist in Vietnam, particularly in the south of the country.

MANY OTHER VIETNAMESE OPPOSE LE DUAN POLICIES

At a press conference in Beijing on August 9th Hoang Van Hoan stated that there is no democracy and freedom in Vietnam today. "No one in Vietnam dares to make public his own opinions", he said. But he added, "where there is oppression there is resistance".

"I don't know exactly how many people share my views in the National Assembly, but I do know there are many people both inside and outside the National Assembly who disagree with the erroneous policy of Le Duan and company".

When questioned about his future plans comrade Hoang pointed out that he was in poor health and undergoing medical treatment. "When I have fully recuperated I will undertake certain activities", he added.

In recent days, Le Duan and company directed some people to make a hullabaloo about my leaving our country. This led to much speculation around the world. You, my compatriots, must be wondering what it is all about, So I would like to say to you a few words:

After waging arduous struggles for more than thirty years, our people at last won victory in the fatherland liberation war in 1975. The ardent wish of the people was to lead a tranquil life, build up the country and pave the way to a better future. But the fruits of revolution and the most promising conditions have been destroyed by Le Duan and company, and the hope of the people has been dashed to pieces. Le Duan and company have thrown our people back into thralldom and reduced them to a life of unprecedented hardship and devoid of any democratic freedoms - a life of humiliation and repression. There is nothing socialist about Le Duan and company although they style themselves socialists.

Reversing black and white and treating friends as enemies, they created trouble on our southwestern border and invaded and occupied Kampuchea; they created trouble on our northern border and mobilized tens of millions of our people for a war against China; they have dispatched tens of thousands of troops into Laos to suppress the Lao people and brought all of Laos under their control. Everyone knows that Kampuchea, China and Laos are our neighbours who fought shoulder to shoulder and shed blood together with our people in our wars of resistance against the French and the Americans and for national salvation.

In fact, under the control of Le Duan and company, Vietnam today is no longer an independent and sovereign country but one subservient to a foreign power economically, politically, militarily and diplomatically. If this state of affairs should be allowed to continue, it would not be long before Vietnam turns into a source of raw materials, a processing plant and a military base serving the interests of a foreign power.

Under these circumstances, I, a revolutionary, can no longer remain silent. Committed to the revolution, I had to try by every means to get out from under their control and continue the cause. Ever since the 1920s, I have fought for national independence, following the lead of uncle Ho Chih Minh. I love my country and people. But owing to the persecution of revolutionaries by the dictatorial Le Duan and company, I can no longer serve the people in Vietnam and have had to leave my country with bitterness and sorrow. Old and infirm as I am, I will do my utmost for the common revolutionary cause of the people of Vietnam and of the world so long as I have a breath left.

I know that after my departure, Le Duan and company will impute to me various crimes and may even sentence me to death on a charge of high treason. But as a revolutionary I have no fear so long as my actions are in the interests of our country and our people.

There is much more I want to say to you, my compatriots, but I will stop for the moment owing to my poor health.

I take this opportunity to extend my best regards and cordial greetings to all my compatriots both at home and abroad.