

International

incorporating THE WEEK

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

1/6



RACIALISM - BERKELEY

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

PORTUGAL - WOMEN - FRANCE

BEHIND THE GROWTH OF SNP

The following statement was adopted by the Woodside, Glasgow, Constituency Labour Party at its last meeting.

Throughout the Tory years 1951-1964, Scotland traditionally returned a much higher proportion of Labour M.P.s than other parts of the U.K. The loyalty of the Scottish working class to the Labour Party was apparently much deeper than that of their English counterparts. The figures for the Glasgow municipal elections over the last four years demonstrates what has happened in the following period. Already the Labour Party is obliterated as a membership organisation. If the present trend continues we shall also be obliterated at the polls.

No one should underestimate the seriousness of this. The future of the Labour Party in the country is bound up with its future in Scotland. If a large number of constituencies return SNP members at the next election a Tory majority at Westminster will be assured. Then we shall suffer all the consequences in terms of harsh action against trade unions, further racist legislation and cutbacks in welfare too. Objectively, therefore, the increased in the nationalist vote brings with it a threat of renewed Tory rule.

Many reasons have been put forward to account for the rise of nationalism. There is an element of truth in most of them. We can accept for instance that Scotland possesses a degree of cultural distinctiveness, that people are searching for a cause to campaign for, that our society has produced a bureaucracy which appears to render the individual powerless against manifold injustices perpetrated by authority. All these and many other points can show why people are receptive to nationalist ideas. But they are all either permanent factors or long term trends. They do not explain why the SNP has grown at such a phenomenal rate at this specific point in time.

This can only be seen in relation to political events and therefore to the performance of the Labour Government since 1964. It cannot be denied that it is precisely in this period of office, that the SNP has grown at an unprecedented rate. In short, the wage freeze coupled with price escalation, rent increases, welfare cutbacks, etc, in general the failure to appear in any way different from the Tories, is what has shattered the loyalty of the Scottish working class to the Labour Party. The nationalists have capitalised on this. In England, incidentally, many voters have moved direct to the Tories.

There is no solution to be found in attacks on the calibre of SNP members, their organisational shortcomings, etc. Nor is there any point in tailoring their initiatives by producing compromise programmes for regional government and expecting this to head off their demands. Since the reason for their growth does not lie specifically in the issue of self-government but rather in a general disillusionment with this government such a "solution" would prove to be no solution at all.

The challenge of the SNP can only be met by eliminating the necessity for it. This means taking over its role by once again turning the labour movement into a crusading campaign. Concretely this involves discussing alternative policies to

those implemented by the Government - socialist alternatives - and campaigning for their acceptance by the movement and the population at large.

We do not attempt to lay down a blueprint for such a policy, although we have our own ideas on the lines it should follow. Rather, we are interested at this stage in establishing the necessity for its production and then involving all sections of the labour movement in its formulation. A number of prominent comrades around TRIBUNE have given a lead in this through the "Socialist Charter" (See TRIBUNE, 7/6/68). Many will want to modify this or to add points. Perhaps regional devolution will be included amongst them. Pursuing it in such a context would give it a validity and seriousness it does not possess as an isolated demand.

In summary:

1. The Labour Government's performance in office is the proximate cause of the rise of the SNP.
2. A critique of this performance and a campaign for alternatives within and without the labour movement is the only guarantee against the rise of nationalism in Scotland, Tory rule nationally and the extinction of the Labour Party.

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HANDS OFF

≡≡≡≡≡ CZECHOSLOVAKIA !

The present crisis in relations between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia should concern all socialists. Apart from the obvious questions of the right of the Czechoslovak people to self-determination and our desire to see a resurgence of workers' democracy a conflict between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia could play into the hands of American imperialism precisely at the time when it is in such difficulties in the Vietnam war.

It is an over-simplification to take the view that what is involved is "poor little Czechoslovakia" being bullied by giant Russia. The new ruling group in Prague came to power as a result of a conjuncture of three main forces in opposition to the Novotny regime: Slovaks, who felt they were getting a bad deal under the old set-up; sections of the Communist Party and managerial strata, who had been frustrated by the stagnation of the economy; and a vast popular movement, headed by students and intellectuals, which was completely dissatisfied by the lack of democracy prior to Dubcek coming to power.

As in all revolutionary situations there are many different strata represented in this coalition. The Russians are quite right when they say that there are right-wing forces at work but they are absolutely hypocritical when they claim that this is the reason for their concern in the events in Czechoslovakia.

There seem to be two main reasons why the Kremlin is so alarmed:

(1) for military reasons they fear the outcome of the present process may entail the danger of a breach in the Warsaw Pact. This theory is strengthened by the fact that it is the military in the Soviet Union who have been so aggressive; and (2) a successful liberalisation of Czechoslovakia would undoubtedly set in motion an irresistible movement to kick out the leaders of Poland, the German Democratic Republic and Hungary. Moreover, it would strengthen the forces in the Soviet Union itself struggling against bureaucracy.

If they cared about the future of socialism in Czechoslovakia the Russian leaders would realise that their actions are strengthening precisely those right-wing forces they claim to be worried about. But in our support for the right of the Czechoslovakian people to decide their own form of government we would slip into a mistake if we portrayed the present rulers in Prague as basically anti-bureaucratic.

Rather they represent an alternative bureaucratic sector to that of the Novotny centralists. Those who remember the heady days of the October, 1956 Revolution in Poland will recognise many similarities between Gomulka and Dubcek.

The task remains in Czechoslovakia of carrying out a thoroughly anti-bureaucratic political revolution. And that is the hub of the question. The now famous "2,000 words", which upset the Kremlin so much, suggested that the mass of people be brought into action to drive out the last of the Novotny hangers-on. The Russian leaders don't know much about marxism but they do know that if the masses are set into motion the process is no longer controllable. Hence their attempts to put the maximum pressure upon the Dubcek leadership - before it is too late - to stop the process of liberalisation. They are trying the most blatant and hypocritical pressure, just now; by the time this appears in print they may be using more military means. Either way the left must oppose this with all the means at its disposal.

It is difficult to think of a time when the leaders of the Kremlin have shown their priority so clearly: they are not so stupid and they know the damage that their actions are doing to their cause, yet despite this they go on using the language of force. This shows quite clearly that when their bureaucratic regime is threatened all else goes to the wall.

If the Soviet leaders decide to invade Czechoslovakia they will deal a death blow to their international standing among Communist Parties and relations with many other forces would be in jeopardy. Yet they have got themselves into a position where it is very difficult for them to withdraw without finding a scapegoat in the Russian leadership.

Russian action against Czechoslovakia would do immense damage to the world-wide struggle for solidarity with the Vietnamese people. The united front which is being built up to support the Vietnamese people would be greatly hindered. In fact those of us who have worked so hard to build this united front would have the task of building another united front: that of support for the Czechoslovakian people. This front would, in the first stages, be harder to build because it would have to be confined to those who wish to defend the socialised property relations in Czechoslovakia.

Despite the official opposition of the Communist Party to Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, this task would fall to the marxists. Apart from anything else we have no guarantee that the C.P. would not change its position: remember Hungary! Moreover, political clarity is needed in this fight: how can orthodox communist explain, in marxist terms, present events?

Our message must be: "Hands off Czechoslovakia!"; "Support the Czechoslovak people in their fight against bureaucracy and for self-determination"; and "Defend the socialised property relations in Czechoslovakia in the most effective way: by an anti-bureaucratic political revolution."

Fight the Landlord on the street

Tessa Van Gelderen

The Labour Party came to power on a wave of optimism from all sections of the working class. The hopes and promises given at the time have been sadly dashed to the ground one by one. The 1965 Rent Act is an example of a measure that is thought by many to be progressive, working in the interests of the tenants. Those who believe this are not those directly affected by the Act: the tenants themselves know better. On paper the powers of the landlord may have been curtailed - in practice the status quo remains as it was before the Act came into being.

THE TIMES (July 2nd) spotlighted some actual instances of landlords victimising and terrorising tenants, with the full knowledge of the local authorities and the police. It cites the case of a woman of 64, living in Islington, whose rent was cut by successive tribunals from £3. 5s a week to £1 15s. "As a result of these cuts she was harassed first by (the landlady) and then by her husband. The electricity supply to her room was cut off last August and the light fitting torn from the flex. Her gas was cut off at the end of February because the landlord omitted to pass on the sixpences she had paid into her meter. Her room is damp, the whole house needs repair." The tenant in question has also been threatened with physical violence, and she was forcibly evicted last November. "The local tenants association called the police....but a police inspector pointed out that he had no power to act. The woman has had no electricity for the past eight months and has had no gas for the past four months. The local authority says it can do nothing to help her."

Another tenant, a seaman aged 72, living in the same area, was so badly harassed that he was too scared to sleep in the house and slept on a sofa in another house.

A bus-conductor, again living in Islington, earns a basic wage of £15 a week. He has six children another on the way. "They live in two rooms. One is partitioned with a double bed and a cot in one half, and five children sleep in the other. The second room has to serve as a kitchen, living room and playroom..... The walls of the room are damp and stained. The plaster is rotten and has crumbled away in many places.

LOCKED LAVATORY

The rent was cut to £2. 8s 8d from £5 a week by a rent tribunal. A post office worker, paying £2 3s 3d a week (originally £4), lives in two rooms on the ground floor of the same house with his wife and two children. "The house has two lavatories, one is kept locked by the rent collector. The other is on the ground floor and is frequently blocked. It overflows into a basement inhabited by another tenant.

Both tenants have been offered a number of inducements to quit, including cash. The post office worker was offered £250 for a deposit on a house which turned out to be a dilapidated slum with tenants already living there. Only one room was vacant.

Complaints about the condition of the house have been made by both tenants on a number of occas-

ions to the town hall. The bus conductor's wife told them "that the house was walking alive with mice. They agreed that we were a desperate case. But they said they had far worse on their books."

Bad housing and evasion of the Rents Act affect all areas. Last year in Deptford, Hackney, Hammersmith, Islington, Kensington, Paddington, St. Marylebone and Wandsworth, more than one-third of all complaints made to the Citizens' Advice Bureau concerned housing or rent matters. In Battersea, Lewisham and Pimlico the figure was roughly one-quarter of all complaints.

"A landlord in North Kensington added a 10s a week charge for electricity to the rents in a 20-roomed flatlet house. This works out at an annual return of £520 a year. Non-payment of the charge was counted as arrears of rent. Although it is an offence to make false entries in rent books held by unfurnished tenants, this rule does not apply to furnished tenants."

POLICE THREATEN TENANTS

"A woman living in Brooke Road, Hackney was turned out on the street with her two children. The tenants association called the police, and invited them to reinstate the woman or to stand by to maintain the peace while she was reinstated by other tenants. The police officer reported that unless the tenants dispersed at once he would arrest them all for causing a disturbance. After the woman was eventually reinstated, he then forbade the tenants to restore her children on the grounds that this might lead to a breach of the peace."

And so it continues - victimisation of tenants by landlord. Under the terms of the Act, it is possible to prosecute the landlords but even in the few cases where this is done and the landlord is convicted, tenants do not want to stay on in the same house, for fear of retaliation. So the landlord has gained possession for the price of his conviction.

The solution lies with the tenants themselves - tenants associations must be more militant and more of an action group than they are at present. They must realise that they are not going to get any help from either the police or the local authorities. They must realise that an individual tenant's fight is every tenant's fight. They must expose the total inadequacy of the 1965 Rent Act by fighting the landlord on his terms and if the tenants are forcibly evicted, then the struggle must be on the street itself, with all sections of the labour movement uniting together in the fight.

Autumn Vietnam committee founded

At a crowded meeting on June 13th, an ad hoc committee was founded to organise support for the autumn mobilisation in support of the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression. The meeting had been convened by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and representatives of the YCL, Communist Party, International Socialism, CHURCH, the Underground Press, numerous branches of the VSO, the Overseas Students' Coordinating Committee, the International Marxist Group, MILITANT, etc., attended. We urge all our readers to assist in the formation of local ad hoc committees. Write to Ed Guiton, 120, Commercial Rd., London E.1., for details.

BRISTOL FREE UNIVERSITY FORMED

FROM A BRISTOL READER

Last month in Bristol we saw a tremendous upsurge of militant student action, characterised from the start by spontaneity, openness and a lengthy resistance to short-cutting decisions. This has to be said because it represents one of the best and most significant features of the movement.

The idea of the free university was first discussed at a meeting of the Bristol New Left in April. An open meeting in the University was held earlier this term, attended by about 80 people. From this meeting a voluntary committee was formed which went on to arrange a programme, invite speakers, to find a place to hold the Free University week, and publicise what was happening.

From Monday June 11th to the Saturday after, the events planned took place. It is hard to describe these as meetings - the discussions were very open and critical. It was a practical experiment in a way of thinking and learning liberated from the restrictions of the usual lecturer-lectured relationship. As these discussions got under way - beginning with a two-day critique of education - a kind of corporate dialogue began to develop which involved a large number of people (generally over 100) thinking coherently and critically together about a number of vital and complicated subjects. Initial difficulties in communicating were quite rapidly overcome, and a process of communal intellectual discovery evolved. It was very exciting, and provided a perspective of what genuinely socialist education would be like.

After discussions on the relationship of the arts and sciences to society, on the mass media, on contemporary psychology; on Friday the speakers were Jean-Francois Godchau, of the J.C.R., and Savanunda, who talked about Black Power. Their reception in a university rather politically lethargic was excellent.

On Saturday we talked about student (and staff) control. Permission had been asked on Friday for an extension of Student Union hours. This was refused, as there was no time to arrange for extra porters. They had been on until 2.00 a.m. for a ball on Friday. Although the BALL went on until 2.00, the Free University had to leave at 10.30 as usual. On Saturday the meeting decided to ask for the keys, so the porters could go home. This was refused on the grounds that it was impossible to convene the appropriate committee. This was not a very big thing, but it is one aspect of an important issue in Bristol - union members have little control over the Students' Union, which occupies a large and very luxurious building. For example, the permanent staff are employed by and responsible to the University, not the union. A number of crucial committee meetings are confidential, and a very strong protest is needed to find out what they have discussed. Also, once elected, the union executive is under no obligation to implement (or try to) proposals and demands from Union General Meetings. Nor need it explain why not.

The meeting decided to stay in the union building until it had finished its discussion, and other events planned for Saturday evening. Although the chairman of the appropriate committee could not give us the keys, he said in effect that we could sit in if we wanted to, which we did.

The sit-in had two objectives, the first to exercise direct control by students over union facilities, the second to invite into the building members of the public normally not admitted. It had emerged clearly from preceding discussions that one barrier to be broken down was that between students being trained as an elite and the less-privileged but potentially powerful mass of society around them.

The meeting that night was chaotic, but extremely valuable. The Free University was desperately trying to find its feet as a large and militant group. Plenty of people from outside did in fact come in. Thus two vital discussions were running simultaneously in the same hall, one on organising and orienting the sit-in, and one on what society thought of the students. The frustration this produced made the meeting very noisy and quite inconclusive.

However, it also presented us then and there with a major problem of action: how to establish coherent communication between groups with very different interests, all expressing them very loudly. We succeeded to the extent that the meetings did not break up in disorder, but concluded peacefully.

On Sunday the day was devoted to student affairs, and the discussion produced a set of specific proposals relating to the University, which the meeting decided to act upon in the coming academic year. It was agreed to take direct action only if these, or proposals like them, could not be implemented through normal university channels. This later meeting succeeded in establishing two different but related programmes by which this movement will be able to really effect changes in Bristol. One programme is coordination between students and workers based on, first, a regular bulletin containing accounts of the activities and struggles of both, and secondly, on meetings between students' and workers' organisations (formal and informal). The second programme is one of grass-roots action in the form of a social workshop campaigning on issues such as housing, poverty, race and education. One activity that is already planned is a Free School in Bristol this summer.

To conclude, it seems to me that the liberation of inquiry in higher education as shown by these events, is directly and intimately related to militant and constructive socialist action.

I would finish by pointing out that the views expressed in this article are my own, and do not necessarily represent the Free University body.

another comment on the Soviet Union and Vietnam

Ian Hall's letter in your issue No. 2 takes you to task for your editorial comment on the Soviet role in the Paris talks. I can't see his objection. Your editorial made the point that the continuation and escalation of the war jeopardises the present policies of the Soviet leadership, including the policy of peaceful coexistence. If, as I believe, this analysis is correct then it follows that the Soviet leadership, if they wish their policies to succeed, must welcome a compromise solution. Ian Hall does not seek to argue with your analysis but merely relates "what a difficult position Russia is in", i.e. she could help the Vietnamese to achieve victory but only at the expense of nuclear war.

As to his suggestion of an International Brigade as the only method of making the United States pull out of Vietnam, I imagine that if the Vietnamese thought that foreign volunteers would assist they would say so. The arguments against the use of foreign volunteers seem obvious. The method of warfare itself precludes them. Guerilla warfare in both urban and country districts assumes a detailed knowledge of the locality, population and its customs and language, as well as guerilla tactics. Certainly Europeans would be at a distinct disadvantage in Vietnam. The use of foreign volunteers would also be a most welcome medium of espionage and terrorist activity by the



enemy. It may also be that the Vietnamese feel that the use of foreign volunteers would be inconsistent with the essential aim of the national liberation struggle, i.e., to rid Vietnam of foreign troops.

Ian Hall must learn that the most valuable support that can be given to the Vietnamese can be given here at home. By constant struggle to weaken and eventually destroy capitalism his actions will complement those of the Vietnamese.

Henry Montague
(London S.W.6)

Portugal's Revolutionary Movement

C.Ruy

It took the armed uprising of the Angolan people, in 1961, to start the revolution among the Portuguese anti-fascist forces. Since then the militants have refused to take any further "democratic" action (written protests, running for "election", etc.) against the regime. Now sabotage, kidnappings, strikes and demonstrations are everyday actions in our underground struggle. This is not enough, but it is as far as the bureaucratic leadership of the F.P.L.N. (Frente Patriotica de Libertacao Nacional - Patriotic Front for National Liberation) will go. The F.P.L.N. is formed by all the Portuguese progressive and revolutionary forces, among these the Portuguese Communist Party, which does everything it can to oppose revolutionary tactics. This has driven some forces to form other organisations. The most important is L.U.A.R. (the word means "moonlight" in Portuguese!) formed by people interested in fighting without any political plan. This childish attitude, provoked by the endless monologue of the bureaucracy, is the cause of L.U.A.R.'s unpopularity among the masses in spite of its few military successes. Another breakaway organisation is the F.A.P., a "maoist" group, which is completely isolated because of its dogmatism.

There is no doubt: the F.P.L.N. is the only organisation rooted in the masses and it will be the one to lead the Portuguese revolution! The problem is, not to form a new front, but a new leadership. We have to uproot any form of bureaucracy from the F.P.L.N. and form a revolutionary leadership. This process has already started, but needs to be completed as soon as

possible.

HOW TO OVERTHROW THE REGIME?

Many marxists have already given a clear reply: we can destroy the fascists and imperialist apparatus only with GUERRILLA WARFARE. But where are the jungles and the sierras (mountains) in Portugal? Where can the guerillas hide themselves? The colonialist army is totally engaged in fighting our comrades in Africa, but the police could easily spot and destroy any guerilla in the Portuguese countryside.

Anyway, we can fight an URBAN and SUBURBAN type of guerilla warfare. This tactic is not new and has already been proved successful in Europe. Portugal is "protected" from the inside by the German Federal Republic army, and from the outside by Franco's and N.A.T.O.'s armies. These could easily be employed against the guerillas in the deserted countryside, but never in the densely populated areas. If this were to happen it would mean an attack on the masses which could bring about their large-scale revolt.

We have just learnt two important facts from the French events:

- 1) that the revolution can erupt in Europe - and if it can erupt it can succeed, once the vanguard is united and militant.
- 2) that the largest number of foreign students and workers to be expelled by the French regime were Portuguese!

This is a clear sign of internationalism and militancy. When the revolution will be fought in Portugal it will be fought all over Europe. All the revolutionaries of Europe will be called upon to fight their own battles in their own countries!

DON'T CALL US BIRDS!

Antonia Gorton

It would seem that the next step in the development of working class action will be on the part of women in industry. This development responded to sensitively, could have great significance for the working class movement as a whole. It is the duty of the left to elaborate programmatic demands, to assist in every way possible.

One of the basic tenets of marxism has been that women will only achieve equality under socialism, this has permitted many so-called marxists to leave that "problem" until the revolution, comrade. Most radicals prefer to ignore the question entirely, but others evolve theoretical positions such as: "housewives and women in general represent a conservative, petit-bourgeois strata.", and "I don't feel that the woman question should be separated from the general struggle." And of course there are comrades who refer to us as "birds" and deem us suitable for providing interest at socials, typing documents, distributing leaflets, being in charge of financial drives, but rarely encourage us to develop ourselves theoretically or to consider ourselves of leadership capacity. Then there are the more subtle forms of discrimination, the over-polite attention to our contributions, the automatic inference that any ideas a married woman expresses are those of her husband, etc., ad nauseum.

In as much as Black Power stands for the winning of self-confidence, confidence to be able to organise, and articulate their demands, then we also can draw lessons from this experience. In America one of the initial stages in the path to this concept was a campaign by the Black Muslims to put the Black man back in history. To educate the Negro in his culture, to replace the degradation of facelessness which the white man had brutally imposed. One of the features of contemporary feminine attitude is her lack of knowledge of the true role of women in history, shown most clearly by the slanderous image of the suffragettes portrayed to her.

SLAVE WAGES

There are almost nine million women workers in Britain, half of them earn less than five shillings an hour, and only one in thirty earns as much as 10s an hour. They are discriminated against in terms of wages, types of jobs and lack of union protection. They have little peace of mind over the welfare of their children, who are often looked after in overcrowded, unsatisfactory conditions. They are still expected to take full

care of the home. The lot of a woman in the lower economic groups is shocking to say the least, forced by economics to work at a menial task, leaving her children in the hands of someone untrained in child-care, burdened with guilt by a society which says her place is in the home while forcing her out of it. Why do women take it? Are they innately conservative? Are they passive, unwilling to be aggressive in demanding their rights?

It is beyond the scope of this article to go into the historical reasons for the refusal of women to take their rightful place in society during this period, but it is in order to make a few generalisations. One of the main drawbacks is that women do not feel any particular solidarity with one another, their links are broken up by class, race, job competition and by their individual loyalty to the family unit. The working class women lack confidence because of their lack of education and inability to articulate their demands; the middle class women lack confidence because of their isolation in the home and their lack of social purpose, and women students express themselves as students and submerge themselves in that struggle.

LACK OF LEADERSHIP

And the one overwhelming factor is the lack of leadership. One could safely say that Mrs. Castle no longer qualifies as the one to lead British womanhood out of the wilderness. Where is the one place where women are united, with a common goal? On the factory floor. I'm sure that the strike by the Ford women workers was not a casual skirmish in the great class war, the solidarity shown by other women workers was indicative of similar sentiments on their part. The revolting incident of the T.G.W.U. branch refusing to accept a woman driver adds fuel to the fire. What is to be done? Mass civil disobedience may not be on the cards quite yet, but the modern working class is strong and inventive and it is true that working women have not yet been tested and certainly not defeated. The forms of the struggle have yet to be seen, whether they remain on the shop floor or spill over into aspects of female life.

The requirements now for an extension and deepening of the struggle are: (1) an explanation of the system which keeps women in subjection; (2) the overthrow of faith in promises and gradualism (equal pay in '68 not '75); (3) unity in action and purpose, always remembering class solidarity before sex solidarity; (4) concrete demands such as: equal pay, free nurseries attached to the place of work, no loss of seniority due to maternity leave, minimum wage, more union organisation in the service industries.

The May Day Manifesto Group sponsored a meeting in Coventry in June which was attended by 80 women including women shop stewards to discuss an equal rights campaign. In Nottingham, a modest start has been made with a group of women, under the initiative of INTERNATIONAL, who have come together to work on this question. It is vitally necessary for politically conscious women to involve themselves in this movement to help to educate the new layers who will almost certainly be drawn in and give direction to them. Men must give support and encouragement in the knowledge that a dynamic movement on the part of this one-third of the working population can move mountains - even change society. To promote a slogan of "Woman Power" may be premature but certainly not inapplicable.

THE BATTLE OF BERKELEY

After six days of violent clashes with police in Berkeley, California, more than 5,000 student demonstrators peacefully assembled July 4 to take possession of Telegraph Avenue, the territory they had defended with barricades only a few days before.

The confrontation began June 29 when police moved in with clubs and tear gas against a demonstration of more than a thousand persons called by the Young Socialist Alliance to protest against de Gaulle's ban on revolutionary youth and working class organisations in France. In accordance with legal requirements, a permit had been secured for sound equipment to be used in a sidewalk rally. The cops declared the rally illegal, using the excuse that a few people had sat down in the street.

Peter Camejo, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate for California and a leader of the demonstration, was addressing the crowd when the police made their move. In an interview that appeared in the July 12 issue of the socialist weekly *THE MILITANT**, Camejo described what followed:

ELIZABETH BARNES: How did the struggle in Berkeley begin?

PETER CAMEJO: The six-day battle that just took place in Berkeley began with a police attack on a demonstration organised by the Young Socialist Alliance in solidarity with the French students and workers. The demonstration was called for Haste and Telegraph Avenue because this is the best location for a political rally in the campus community. When we called it, we took all the legal steps needed. We got a sound permit, the only permit you need for a sidewalk rally.

Various organisations were supporting this rally in addition to the YSA. Among them were the Peace and Freedom Party, Black Panther Party, the Movement, the Independent Socialist Club, the Tricontinental Student Association, the Iranian students and other groups.

Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton sent a letter from prison to the rally.

It had been decided at two open meetings held to plan the demonstration that we would try to keep the street clear. So the monitors moved quickly to get people out of the street.

At one point, though, there were a few people who ran out in the street and sat down.

It was a small incident, but the police used it as a pretext to claim that they had to disperse the crowd and 20 or so cops moved down the street toward the demonstration. The police then announced that the gathering was an "unlawful assembly"

* We have published extracts only from this interview. Readers interested in further information should get the July 12 and July 19 issues of *THE MILITANT*, the latter has an excellent picture supplement on the question. *THE MILITANT* can be got from Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1., costing 1/-, plus 3d postage.



photo by Ron Alexander

MASS MEETING. Peter Camejo addressing decision-making

and ordered everyone to leave. I then asked that Mayor Johnson and Police Chief Beale, who were in the crowd to step forward so that we could discuss and work out the situation without a police attack. The mayor refused to come forward but the chief of police did.

By that time the monitors were lined up, linked arm in arm, along the street and everyone was on the sidewalk, I pointed this out to the chief of police and asked him on what basis he could attack our demonstration, and to please reconsider. He agreed to that, and asked for two minutes to think it over. He and several other policemen walked off to discuss it, but when they came back they repeated their stand that the rally was "illegal".

"DO NOT DISPERSE"

Of course, nobody left. And a line of ministers lined up in front of the police and pleaded with them not to attack. When the police started to move against the crowd, the monitors told people to withdraw rather than engage the police directly, but not to disperse or leave the area.

The police then did something which was new for Berkeley - they opened up with tear gas. That's when the fighting began. As the crowd began to run, the police ran after them. The demonstrators in some cases began to build barricades to defend themselves, with wood from construction sites or whatever they could get their hands on.

Then the police used a new tactic we've never seen here before. They would enter an area where people were gathered, and from speeding cars, sometimes going as fast as 30 or 40 miles an hour they would launch grenades. It was dangerous at this time to be young and to be walking in the streets in any sizable group, because these carloads of police could attack at any time.

E.B.: How did you get organised to fight this attack by the police?



photo by Ron Alexander

VICTORY CELEBRATION. July 4 rally on Telegraph Ave.

P.C.: It was clear that the police had violated our constitutional right to free assembly. The very presence of the police, the fact that they were massing two blocks up from the rally, intimidated people from coming.

The next day a mass meeting was called to chart plans for protesting the police attack. Five hundred people came.

At this rally I took the position that we had to fight for our rights, that rights are never given and that you have to win them by fighting for them, and that in order to win we would have to take direct action.

We then decided to go into the Telegraph and Haste area to begin another rally. We had a sound permit that covered that area. We marched down Telegraph and filled the street around Haste and Telegraph. As a result, that whole section of Telegraph became blocked off, and pretty soon a rock band brought by the Resistance came and started playing.

Then it became evident that police were beginning to mass in the area. At the same time the crowd grew much larger. Hundreds and hundreds of people, primarily students, began to pour into the area to back up those already there. We estimate there were around 2,000 people.

BARRICADES

Barricades began to go up as people began to seek ways to slow up any police advance. They used sawhorses, trash cans, beams from construction sites, news stands, whatever was around.

The police came by surprise - they charged down the street at us with no advance warning, and this began the second night of fighting, which was shorter but much more intensive than the

night before. The students and young people fought much harder.

During the evening the banks and other large businesses had their windows broken. There was sporadic fighting throughout the town. People went down to the business district.

From the beginning of the police raid, the cops were indiscriminate in whom they attacked. They continued this policy when they fanned out through the town. In the south campus area, for example, police would suddenly pull up next to people who were standing outside their homes - many of them who were just curious and had come out to see what was going on. The cops would speed over jump out and start beating them up. They would even chase people inside their houses and start beating them up.

These endless attacks and police harassment of people began to turn the tide of public opinion in favour of the demonstrators.

CURFEW

The next day a curfew was declared. The curfew was based on a law which was originally conceived during the Second World War for the purpose of protecting the area during air raids. With the curfew beginning, we knew we were at a new stage of the fight.

We marched down the street to city hall and held a meeting there. Then we decided to try to enter the curfew area as a protest against the curfew.

It was this day that we started to suffer an increased number of arrests. The rally soon disintegrated when the mayor appeared, and many small groups who left ended up fighting the cops.

The fact that we did demonstrate on this day was crucial, because if we had decided not to come out that day, it would have given the impression that the curfew would break the movement. At the same time, we were in the difficult situation of knowing that the relationship of forces was very unfavourable to us. We only had about 500 people in the streets at the time we acted.

Saturday was crucial to show we could fight; Sunday was a stalemate, in my opinion, and then Monday we opened up a whole new strategy, which brought us to victory.

We called off all demonstrations for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and simply declared we would go through all the procedures needed to get Telegraph closed for Thursday, July 4. The mass meeting where all this was decided was held on campus - outside - because no one had given us a place



to meet. This meeting showed the movement's rapid growth, the sympathy that we were getting. The curfew had continued to turn the tide some what in our favour - more than we had realised.

Between 1,200 and 1,500 people turned up for this meeting. One thing that was clear was that the student community was now beginning to enter the struggle in greater numbers. There are only 9,000 students on campus during the summer, and we estimated that about 900 of the people at that meeting were students.

It was agreed at this meeting that the next action would be to gather at the city council meeting the next day to hear the debate on the demands we were making. The mayor, under pressure from the movement, had agreed to hold an open meeting of the council.

COUNCIL MEETING

So many people turned out for the council meeting that they had to change meeting places at the last minute. We presented three main proposals to the council. The first was that the curfew be lifted completely. The second was that the Peace and Freedom Party proposal to hold a referendum for a police control-board be placed on the ballot, and the third was, of course, the closing of Telegraph for the July 4 rally.

During the council meeting, which lasted eight hours, between 50 and 100 people got up and expressed their views on what was happening, with 95 per cent. of them being completely favourable to our proposals.

When the question finally came to a vote, the result was a five-to-four vote against us, denying us Telegraph Avenue for a rally on the 4th. (They offered us a different site for the rally.) Of course, there was an immediate outcry against this by everyone present. However, the council also had voted to lift the curfew. We called a mass meeting that evening in the same hall where the city council had held its meeting. Close to 2,000 people came, making it the largest decision-making movement meeting in the history of Berkeley. The meeting was almost unanimous in favour of our proposal, which was a simple one: that the city council's rejection of allowing us Telegraph Avenue had become a symbol - the block on Telegraph and the date of July 4 has become a symbol - for our right of assembly and our right to have a say over what happened to us, and for the right to organise to fight for the things we believe in.

In arguing for the proposal, I made the point strongly that if we stood tough and showed we were ready to fight for our rights, we would win to our side all the people who were wavering - and we would bring to bear such pressure on the city council that it couldn't be ruled out that members of the city council would capitulate before Thursday. This was especially true if we made it clear that we were ready to fight. But if we had begun to capitulate, they would have intensified their attack on us, instead of the other way around. The next morning, when the city council met and reconsidered the question, they did switch and voted five to three to give us the Avenue. Thus ended the six days of fighting in the street and with the city council.

E.B.: What was the role of the YSA in all of this?

P.C.: Much of the press and TV and the newspapers played up this whole thing as a purely YSA action.

This is inaccurate, and it reflects a tendency on the part of the press to try to rebait the whole thing. The YSA, in actual numbers, was but a small fraction of the people involved in the actions. But, throughout the six days, YSAers were extremely active and in many places played the key role in doing the work to build the movement.

After the original rally initiated by the YSA, we did everything possible to build the protest as big as possible, to broaden its base of support, to work to bring in every group and every individual that could be gotten to participate in every aspect of the work. By doing this, we wanted to keep any group from completely dominating the action. We saw everything as a movement thing, and tried to organise every action as a movement thing.

E.B.: What were the other groups involved?

P.C.: Actually, the majority of people who participated did not belong to any group. The main groups which took part were the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party, the Peace and Freedom Party, and the Independent Socialist Club, many of whose members are also members of the Peace and Freedom Party.

E.B.: What do you think were the main political issues in the struggle?

P.C.: Of course, the specific issue involved was the right of assembly, but behind this - and this is important - are other issues: the right to have an antiwar movement, the right for the Berkeley movement to have the right to struggle against the oppression of the black community.

So concentrating on this specific question - of that one block and opening it up - did not in any way cut across the other struggles, but on the contrary will strengthen those struggles and the number of people participating in them.

Also, crucial to the struggle was the fact that every tactic and turn was based on the question of how to win over mass support: mass support in the streets and mass support in terms of public opinion.

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**Nick Howard
& Sid Bidwell
plus editorial reply**

The term sectarian appears too frequently in your otherwise excellent journal. Is anyone who differs from you a sectarian? How else are we to arrive at correct policies and analyses except by exchange of different viewpoints? Your article on Black Power in the July issue provides little in the way of analysis and does little to explain the policy of Black Power. By lifting one word out of context from the June SOCIALIST WORKER article you distort the argument that ultimately the negro cannot win alone. "Black Power is correct description of the situation as the working negro sees it from the ghetto, where the only whites he encounters are cops and employers."

International Socialism would certainly encourage the formation of Black Power movements in Britain against cops and employers. But, we maintain, that in itself the slogan is dangerous, i.e., taken without a class analysis and a revolutionary policy. Do we follow the Floyd McKissick line in the States of all-black businesses, or the line once propounded by Trotsky of all black breakaway states in the U.S.? Ernie Tate's remarks that the white worker is not even capable of defending his own living conditions, together with the implication that white militants are all becoming militant racialsists is a slur that is entirely undeserved when the number of strikes is rising and particular sections like Ford workers are showing a re-awakened will to struggle.

By all means let us all, Black and White, organise with the maximum effectiveness around our particular struggles. But also let us keep in mind the urgent need to link up these struggles and create unity. If a slogan like Black Power creates disunity in some cases, then use it carefully, and not like Mr Tate, as the test for sectarians, with the unthinking demand: are you for or against it?

Yours fraternally Nick Howard
(Sheffield)

Have just read your July issue: I regard the concept of Black Power imported to the British situation as complete unmarxian bunk. In the sense that it is taken to mean negro unity in the areas of the world wherg there is a conscious state "Apartheid" direction, it is feasible - but even there, dangerous semantics.

What the hell are you postulating. Does skin colour determine how a poor black struggles against a rich black? If, in Britain, a negro worker was employed by a rich Indian - what then? The Black Power stuff does not stand up to the flimsiest of study let alone deep analytical scientific and dialectical method used by Marx and his outstanding followers, such as Trotsky.

Concretely in Britain it makes the work of convincing ill-educated white workers in Britain that skin pigment has nothing to do with human values, all that much harder. Of course, I am not saying that Black Power is the exact equation of White Power (supremism, etc.) Black Power is a muddled anti-marxian call and is alien to scientific socialist concepts.

Most coloureds in Britain belong to the working class. The future of that class and its role in socialist development, gradual or revolutionary, will be determined by the temper and ability of the trade union movement. The future of that movement rests in its ability to forge bonds of unity between all wage and salaried workers. Black Power is a separatist call unrelated to British economic forces, therefore unmarxian. In my memory the SWP, in the U.S. operating in a totally different climate with nothing like the socialist influences of the British trade union movement, has always been glad to enrol a few negroes struggling against Jim Crowism.

The chief crime of Black Power in Britain and talk of "white monkeys" is to get white workers thinking of "black monkeys". It is therefore inimical to the unifying interests of the British workers and, in turn, about as unmarxian as you can get a set of words.

Yours sincerely Sid Bidwell, M.P. (Southall)
House of Commons.

P.S. Where were the black workers when I and Stan Newens led the march against racism and fascism, Sunday last week? (July 7)

BLACK POWER DISCUSSION

Nick Howard complains about the description "sectarian" in relation to International Socialism group's position on Black Power. Actually the article made it clear that the IS position was better than that of the SLL or the British MILITANT, but the formulations he uses to oppose our line are typically sectarian.

For a start, the remarks about Floyd McKissick are a red herring, since not all Black Power militants believe in black businesses. Are we advocating this by supporting the general line of Black Power? It is for the black militants to decide the relevancy of such utopian proposals.

Then, he says: "International Socialism would certainly encourage the formation of Black Power

movements in Britain against the cops and employers. But we maintain that in itself the slogan is dangerous, i.e., taken without a class analysis and a revolutionary policy."

What he is saying is: unless the black militants accept our ideas and programme they will be dangerous.

This opposes formally correct ideas to the real life struggle, which whatever its weaknesses, is the thing we must start from to understand Black Power. It is possible to say the same about trade union militants who limit their struggle to economic demands - or tenants' movements - or any movement of partial struggle against the effects of capitalist society.

This is the point: Black Power is a partial struggle which mobilises black people on the basis of problems which affect only them, and therefore against which only they can mobilise effectively.

It is therefore quite permissible to support organisations whose membership, or leadership, is exclusively black, if they are concerned with tackling the problems of black people. This does not mean that a revolutionary movement could operate in such a way, since it is concerned with fighting for all the exploited, but support for a Black Power movement does not exclude the building of such an organisation - they just have different tasks. Since black people, for historical reasons, are doubly exploited, as workers and as black people, it is only natural that they should have special organs of struggle to combat racist exploitation.

Of course, the Black Power movement expresses many ideas which marxists would regard as mistaken - as do militant trade unionist and tenants' organisations. But if we are to help them to overcome these obstacles we must first take a clear firm stand on the struggle which they are carrying out now. Solidarity with Black Power is thus a pre-requisite if we are to intervene in the process of radicalisation which British imperialist racialism is fomenting among black workers.

We say that Black Power is a partial demand and for marxists this can have two edges.

In the catering trade the demand for a 40-hour week would be important to mobilise and organise the workers, but in the civil service this demand would be useless. In other words the relevance of partial demands is determined by the stage of the struggle at which they are advanced. Not only that, but they must be related to the ability of revolutionaries to participate in and lead struggles around them, and so change the consciousness of the workers involved. This is the essence of transitional demands. And this is why Trotsky suggested support for the setting up of black breakaway states in the United States. But, and he made this very very clear comrade Howard, only if the mass of the black people desired this; and as part of a campaign to mobilise black people in struggle against U.S. capitalism.

Can we ask Nick Howard two questions?

1) Do you support workers' control? Are you aware that the German bourgeoisie once constitutionalised workers' councils? In order to immobilise the mass movement which had spawned them, of course, but does that make the demand for workers control a "dangerous" slogan in Britain today?

Of course not, and yet this is a partial demand, since it does not in isolation pose the question of the workers taking power.

2) What was your attitude to the Black Power militants when they took over CARD? Did you support the ousted white liberals who have been incapable of stemming the tide of racialism in Britain? Or did you support the black militants, who with all their red book waving and dramatic statements really want to kick racism in the guts? Or did you support the people who were instrumental in getting the legislation passed which put Michael Abdul Malik in gaol and allows Colin Jordan to carry on his activities? Or were you neutral? Did you stand aloof from this melee? If you did, our charge of sectarianism would be confirmed because this happens to be where the struggle to build an anti-racist organisation is taking place. In fact, we have the impression that IS was happy when the black militants won that fight.

It was inevitable that the Black Power issue would cause a deep discussion among marxists, and comrade Howard's letter is a healthy and legitimate part of this.

Not so Mr. Bidwell's letter. With impatience not unmingled with intolerance, and with self-assurance not unmingled with arrogance, he berates "Black Power bunk".

He has the gall to presume to lecture us on marxism; a single example will show how far he is from the philosophy of marxism.

In a letter which Marx wrote in 1870, he refers to the antagonism between British workers and Irish immigrants, and analyses how this was the product of British imperialist domination of Ireland. In a lucid sentence he says: "This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the

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the two faces of Labour's right wing.....

How deep are the Roots?

George Cunvin

Ray Gunter, explaining on television his reasons for resigning from the Labour Government, spoke of the growing gap between the administration and the working class. He urged the need for the Party to get back to the grass roots. With all this no-one will disagree, least of all socialists. What they will question, however, is Gunter as the self-appointed champion of a return to working class politics.

In the course of the interview, Gunter claimed that he, as Minister of Labour, was able to talk to trade unionists because he was one of them. What he meant, of course, is that as an old-time

trade union bureaucrat, he was able to meet his fellow-bureaucrats on equal terms. Between them they could agree on compromises which took no note of the demands of the rank and file.

The reasons for the growing chasm between the workers and the Government are simple. Labour was returned to power because the great majority of the working class expected from a Labour Government, if not socialism, at least a substantial improvement in their living and working standards. Instead they got a curb on wage increases and unemployment, while prices soared and profits rose. They expected an expansion of social services; instead they got prescription charges.

While all these anti-working class policies were being rushed onto the statute book, Mr. Ray Gunter remained a member of the Cabinet. Not a peep out of him to indicate that he was in any way in disagreement. On the contrary! He constantly threatened draconic action to curb the workers' right to strike. He was particularly vitriolic about unofficial strikes. Few will forget his out-burst at the West London Air Terminal during the strike of airport porters. "Disgusting" was the word he used when he found he had to carry his own luggage.

As chairman of the Labour Party's disciplinary committee, Mr. Gunter took the lead in witch-hunting critics of the Government's policy out of

the Party or preventing them from becoming Parliamentary candidates. Few who were present at the Blackpool conference in 1965, will forget how Gunter, as chairman, stifled the expression of left-wing opinion.

If there is that gap between workers and government, it is Gunter and his former colleagues in the Cabinet who have created it. No-one will be deceived by his crocodile tears and his expressed desire to return to the "folk from whence I came." He long ago deserted his folk for the flesh-pots of capitalist society. Labour will return to its grass roots only when it is finally purged of its Gunters and all they stand for.

The Mind of Desmond Donnelly Charlie Van Gelderen

Anyone who wants to make a serious study of what is wrong with the Labour Party could usefully study the speeches and writings of Desmond Donnelly, M.P. for Pembrokeshire.

Mr. Donnelly, of course, is a notorious critic of the Wilson administration; but we must not deal with this at length. What we are concerned with at the moment is the question: How is it that a party which still considers itself "socialist" could contain a person with the views of Desmond Donnelly within its ranks for all these years? If we could find an answer to this, we would know what is wrong with the party. For years left-wing critics of the leadership, who wanted to see a more aggressive socialist policy pursued by the Labour Party, have been either witch-hunted or else bribed with office. Those, like Donnelly, who wanted a party which pursued a policy no different from that of the Tories, are left free to continue their acts of sabotage.

It is no accident that Mr. Donnelly should have chosen this particular moment in history to take leave of the labour movement. There are plenty of precedents for this. At every period when the working class shows signs of losing faith in the traditional parties, prominent leaders have broken away and formed rival parties - parties which whatever the original intentions of the traitors, eventually emerged as fascist parties. Mussolini in Italy, Doriot in France, and Mosley in Britain are the most famous of these. Of course, Donnelly only qualifies as a leader in his own estimation but he, no doubt, has these historic precedents in mind.

Fascism is not necessarily synonymous with racialism. Italian fascism flourished for nearly two decades, until it allied itself with Hitler, without recourse to racialism. The main task of fascism is to destroy the labour movement and to destroy parliamentary democracy which, with its "freedom" for political parties, provides the best soil for the growth of the labour movement. To achieve these objectives it must create a mass movement as a counter-attraction to the mass parties of the working class. This movement acts as magnet for all the discontented elements in society, the small shopkeepers, heavily pressed by the super-markets and giant chain stores, unemployed workers, etc. In particular, of course, it serves the interests of big business from whom it also gets its financial resources.

When Donnelly left the Labour Party he announced his intention to start a crusade, to wake up Britain. This is typical language of the fascist demagogue. He also manifested the traditional fascist conception of the "leader". At a dinner given for him by Pembrokeshire Labour Party some time ago, the cocktail sticks bore the legend "Donnelly for Pembrokeshire and the Nation".

He recently explained his views in an interview with PENTHOUSE, a magazine which caters for men who like pictures of naked women and correspondence about corporal punishment. No doubt it is among these people that he expects to find the nuclei for his future mass following. In this interview he makes his position quite clear. He is opposed to any further nationalisation, comprehensive education, a free National Health Service and what he calls "confiscatory taxation" of the rich. He wants to maintain Britain's military commitments east of Suez and the alliance with the United States. In typical fascist fashion, he wants to streamline the trade unions.

When the PENTHOUSE interviewer suggested that a great deal "of what you've been saying could belong in a Tory programme", he did not disagree. The only reason why he was not in the Conservative Party was that he "really wants to do these things" while the Tories only talked about it. "I find.... that I have more in common with right-wing Tories, like Julian Amery, than with the so-called progressive Tories....."

The key to Donnelly's thinking lies in his admission that for many years he has been associated with big business - with David Brown, a very large engineering association, with the great Phillippe electronic combine, and with Britain's largest commercial bank. "This has taught me much more than I've been able to help them", he said. He now sees his role as serving the interests of big business but, of course, he identifies this with serving Britain.

We end this article with the same question we asked in the beginning: Why was Desmond Donnelly allowed to remain in the Labour Party for so long? There are, of course, others who share his views. The Labour Party will not find its way back to its working class origins until it has purged itself of these elements.

lessons of french events

It is difficult to exaggerate the opportunity lost in the recent French events. For a period the French state machine had disintegrated and the way was clear to the overthrow of French capitalism - that the result would have been a workers' regime there can be no doubt: the workers held the factories and there were tens of thousands of people on the street ready and willing to initiate a revolution; the police were on the verge of striking, and the conscript army could not be relied upon. All sections of the community had completely lost confidence in the regime. To deny that there was a revolutionary situation in France, as the French Communist Party did (echoed by its British counter-part), was to fly in the face of the ABC of social science.

A workers' state in France would have decisively changed the relationship of forces between world revolution and world reaction. It would have sparked off a process which would have rapidly led to the overthrow of many other capitalist states. The perspective of democratisation in the existing workers' states would have been vastly strengthened. With an advanced country torn from the capitalist world the prospects for the industrialisation of the third world would have been speeded-up immensely. It is only by cataloguing the lost opportunities that we can gauge the extent of the treachery of the French Communist Party in opposing a revolutionary answer to the French crisis. But this party got its reward: the disastrous defeat it suffered in the elections was predictable and justly deserved. Once again it has been proven that those who choose the "parliamentary road to socialism" are putting off socialism until the Greek calends.

But the French working class remains undefeated: it is confident of power and ability to win concessions. Tens of thousands of young people learnt the lesson of revolution. Thus, there are favourable circumstances for building the missing factor in the French events: the revolutionary party. While May, 1968, may go down as France's "1905", it should not be necessary to wait twelve years for her "1917".

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English working class..." What is his programme of action? "Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. And it is the special task of the Central Council in London to awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for them the national emancipation of Ireland... is the first condition for their own emancipation". How does Mr. Bidwell see the problem? Black Power, he says, "...makes the work of convincing... white workers in Britain that skin pigment has nothing to do with human values, all that much harder."

How inconvenient! Instead of remaining respectably quiet in the face of mounting racism, and relying on Mr. Bidwell to soothe the lumpen scum who follow Powell, the black workers are organising movements of those they know they can rely upon: themselves.

Their crime, you see, is their talk of "white monkey" which gets white workers "thinking of black monkeys".

There are rich lessons in this for the British working class - lessons which will be discussed by all sections of the left for a long time. Those who have given up the revolutionary path seem to have been impelled further to the right by the French events: witness the MORNING STAR and TRIBUNE both blaming the ultra-lefts for the election losses in France. What would these gentlemen have said about Lenin had they been around in 1917?

We will return to these questions in the future, but now we want to concentrate on one aspect: that of appealing for support for our collaborators, the now-banned JCR. As we went to press the news came through that Alain Krivine (who is well-known to many readers of INTERNATIONAL for his activities in the Vietnam war campaigns) and his wife, Michelle, have been arrested by the French police. They are accused of trying to re-form the JCR. Several other of their comrades have been arrested and accused of the same thing.

We are sure that the comrades of the now-banned JCR will play an important role in building the party in France which will lead to the overthrow of capitalism in that country. This is precisely why the authorities are persecuting them. Our solidarity with the JCR is, therefore, not merely a question of internationalism: we are striking a blow for socialism in Britain too. Being persecuted by the state machine places great burdens on revolutionaries - it is difficult for many of them to follow their normal professions and any activities they take part in are doubly expensive. An international fund has been set up to assist the comrades of the banned JCR. Contributions from Britain should be sent to: Renate Prince, c/o BLACK DWARF, 7, Carlisle St., London W. 1.

Messages of support and resolutions protesting against the arrests and banning of the JCR (and the other ten revolutionary organisations) are urgently needed. Send them to M. van Ceulen, 111 Ave. Seghers, Brussels, 8, Belgium.

In this paragraph is contained all the cowardice, chauvinism and bigotry which has marred the workers movement in Britain - it is not the British workers' fault that they are racist, we are told, if the black workers would act modestly all would be well. One question, Mr. Bidwell: who started it? You know quite well that the growth of the Black Power idea has been in proportion and reaction to the growth of racism in Britain.

If Marx had employed this method he would have denounced the United Irishmen and the Fenians, and since he was always more consistent than Mr. Bidwell, he would have called for the deportation of the Irish.

Typical of Mr. Bidwell's arrogance is his post-script demanding to know the location of the black workers when he was leading a march against racism. Why should the black militants follow such a man? What has he to offer? What has he done to help organise in Southall?

By their absence, the black militants gave the most lucid answer possible.

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF



Monopoly Capital

Monopoly Capital by Paul M. Sweezy and the late Paul A. Baran is an important and extremely readable book, well worth the modest 8/6 that it costs. It is an attempt by marxists to explain the functioning of the capitalist system in the United States. Further it attempts to explain aspects of American society - its foreign policy and the crisis in the educational system; the militant upsurge of the Negro movement and the rise of mental illness in terms of their socio-economic roots.

TECHNIQUE AND METHOD

In conjunction with techniques that have been developing in the last few decades, Baran and Sweezy use a methodological concept mainly associated with marxian thought. What distinguishes their economic analysis from an orthodox economic analysis is the division of the gross national product into "social necessary costs" and "economic surplus". For orthodox economic analysis the cost of producing a given total product is equal to the value of that product, even when total product falls below full capacity level. It is impossible to identify the surplus unless economic society is viewed as a whole. Which is why the concept of the surplus is integral to marxian economic method and totally foreign to orthodox economic method.

MAIN THESIS

The authors show, in **MONOPOLY CAPITAL**, that the dominant corporations in the United States are so strong that they can practically stop price competition and price cutting. But that technological innovation continues at the same time, and the dominant corporations continue to respond to incentives for cutting production costs. This produces an even larger gap between production costs and selling prices and as a result profits tend to increase sharply. As Baran and Sweezy put it: "The economic surplus tends to grow constantly". But the monopolies must dispose of the surplus and the normal outlets for surplus absorption seem to be blocked. Consumption by capitalists does not grow at an ever increased pace. Productive investment cannot grow at such a pace, as this would create an ever bigger surplus absorption problem. Consequently new means of absorption must be found.

These, which have developed since the first, and especially the second, world wars, are

- 1) Stepping up of the sales effort;
- 2) an expansion of the means put at the disposal of civilian government; and
- 3) An expansion of military expenditure.

ROLE OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

One weakness of **MONOPOLY CAPITAL** is the authors' failure to deal with the exploitation of labour by capital and their consequent failure to deal with the capitalist need to increase relative surplus value. They point out that in the United States reserves of labour dropped during the Second World War and this in turn led to an improvement in the living standards of poor people. to quote the authors: "nothing short of

dramatic." They continue to state that in the fifties: "unemployment crept steadily upward, and the character of the new technologies of the post war period sharply accentuated the disadvantages of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers." This was due to new technologies. That for ten years real wages in the United States stagnated as compared with all other imperialist countries and that the increase in profit during this period was a result of the increase in relative surplus value thus produced. Therefore by excluding from their analysis of monopoly capitalism the continuous struggle of the capitalist class to maintain and increase the rate of exploitation of the working class, Baran and Sweezy put their whole economic concept of the present functioning of the capitalist system outside the realm of contending social forces. That is, outside the realm of the class struggle. They therefore deny any validity to the anti-capitalist potential of the American working class.

Nevertheless, this book, written with a clarity of thought and expression that is difficult to find on a subject so complex, considerably enriches the field of marxist economic analysis.

Martin Turner

* **MONOPOLY CAPITAL**: an essay on the American economic and social order, by Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy. Originally published by Monthly Review Press. Now published by Penguin at 8/6d.

The last Great Cause

Books about the Spanish Civil War have usually fallen into three categories: serious marxist analyses of the situation; contemporary accounts written from a C.P. point of view, including a hefty percentage of "joy it was..."; weapons in the cold war that were lovingly prepared by western intellectuals to make people realise that ideas lead to revolutions, that revolutions end in tyranny and that it is therefore safer to proclaim an end to ideology.

Stanley Weintraub's book escapes from the usual categories. He has traced, sympathetically, the involvement of the intellectuals in the Spanish Civil War. His method is reportage; poems, prose and letters of those involved are quoted at length. In this way all three tendencies are allowed to appear and some idea is given of the complexity of response to the messy, heroic and betrayed struggle that was Spain; from André Marty's "sanatorium" at Alcala de Henares, where the Russian firing squads worked overtime to liquidate the trotskysts and anarchists, to the Catalanian villages where they solemnly abolished money; from tragic and dedicated figures like Cornford and Caldwell to Errol Flynn over for a quick publicity stunt; the book manages to encompass all this. This book is worth buying.

R.Kirk

* "The Last Great Cause", published by W.H. Allen, price 50/-

RACIALISM IN BRITAIN

by PAT JORDAN

The Tory "revolt" over the Race Relations Act and the reaction of the Conservative Party leadership to this question cannot be understood in terms of a ruling class plot. There has been too much simplistic thinking on the left on this matter. Many who call themselves marxists have thrown away one of the basic methods in marxist thinking - that of trying to analyse the contradictions in a situation - when discussing racialism and fascism.

The simple truth of the matter is that at this stage it is not in the interests of monopoly capitalism for racialism to become an important factor in British politics. The most far-sighted sections of the ruling class, indeed, were opposed to imposing limits on immigration. The ECONOMIST quite rightly from a capitalist point of view, pointed out that Commonwealth immigration had been a counter-factor to the effects of full employment upon wages.

However, racialism arises from the very nature of monopoly capitalism and imperialism. The deep-rooted racialism of the British people arises from the ideological rationalisation of the domination of the colonies. Because in the real world the peoples of Africa, etc., were in an inferior position, in the world of ideas this had to be justified in terms of the intrinsic and "natural" inferiority of the non-white peoples. Anyone who has extensively read the literature of the 19th and very early 20th centuries will know that most was, at best, patronising to non-white people and at worst, disgustingly racist. This tradition is kept alive today by cowboy and Tarzan films and books. Such insidious brain-washing will take generations to completely overcome. Hence racialism has fertile ground to sow its seeds.

Modern monopoly capitalism, despite all the talk of the affluent society, still generates immense wealth at one end of the pole and poverty at the other. Quite apart from the policies of any particular government, it just cannot provide decent housing for the mass of the people, full employment is still the exception rather than the rule, and the much-vaunted welfare state has been shown to be a passing phase. Under these circumstances discontent is bound to be rife and in the absence of this feeling being channeled into class struggle the stranger will be the natural scapegoat.

Because the left wing of the Labour Party has failed to present a challenge to Wilson, because trade union bureaucrats have worked hand-in-glove with the Labour Government in cutting the standards of their members, and because no other section of the left appears in the eyes of people to be a real challenge, the stage is set for the demagogues to channel this discontent against the immigrants.

Heath's position must be seen in this light, he doesn't want to go against the basic interests of his class - for international reasons and for the sake of internal stability, just now, British big business would not welcome racial conflict within the country. On the other hand he is the prisoner of his party which is based upon the ideology of "Empire". Also it should never be forgotten

that the not inconsiderable Tory working class support rests upon the most backward and bigoted sections. Perhaps, more important, demagogic references to immigrants win elections.

This contradictory position explains the turmoil in the Tory party - it also explains Wilson's position, too: as always his policy is that of defending the interests of monopoly capital. But this should not lull us into thinking that the fight against racialism is not urgent and vital. Wilson and the monopoly capitalists are not masters of the situation and will, if necessary, drastically change course. Wilson's record is one of continually capitulating to the racists, even when from a general capitalist point of view it has been unnecessary or even harmful (what did British big business gain from the Kenyan Asians affair?). These capitulations have only whetted the appetites of the bigots and racist opportunists. The extreme danger will come when Wilson's capitulations co-incide with it being in the interests of big business to use racialism to damp down working class struggle.

From all this flows the basic fact that the best way to fight racialism, which at a later stage (and one perhaps in the not so far future) could provide the ideological basis for a fascist movement) is to counter-pose class slogans. To expect racialism to be dealt with through the courts is short-sighted in the extreme. Any strengthening of the state machine under capitalism is eventually used against the left. (The Labour Government's efforts are no exception, e.g., the prosecution of Michael X and the use of the Race Act against anti-fascist demonstrators.)

Abstract slogans which call upon the black and white workers to unite are meaningless and, can be reactionary if they are designed to stop black workers who want to struggle from organising. Class slogans must be designed not just to make the record but to set struggle into motion. "Fight the Landlord on the Street" is more relevant than "Black and White Unite against rent increases."

Finally, because the traditional sections of the workers organisations are doing nothing to meet the situation, the responsibility falls upon the small marxist groups to help to nip in the bud any fascist movement which tries to take advantage of racialism. Our position must be clear: we have to smash them before they have a chance to organise. The fascists must be intimidated - persuasion doesn't work! - they must be shown that they cannot march down the streets at will. However, it would be utopian in the extreme to think that the marxists by themselves can do this job. Their role must be that of mobilising sections of the working class to do this and particularly to seek to mobilise the black workers to take the strongest action against hoodliganism.

W. J. B. & Co., Nottm.(T.U.)
