

The Week

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS
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VIETNAM: URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED

Sponsors: Frank Allaun, M.P. - Perry Anderson - Chris Arthur - Julian Atkinson - Michael Barratt Brown - Norman Buchan, M.P. - Neil Carmichael, M.P. - Raymond Challinor - Henry Collins - Lawrence Daly - John Daniels - Peggy Duff - Ray Gosling - Richard Fletcher - Trevor Griffiths - Eric Heffer, M.P. - Ellis Hillman - Dave Lambert - Ralph Miliband - Stan Mills - Jim Mortimer - Tom Nairn - Dick Nettleton - Stan Newens, M.P. - John Rex - Ernie Roberts - Alan Rooney - David Steele - Professor E. A. Thompson - E. P. Thompson - Tony Topham - William Warbey, M.P. - Raymond Williams - Bert Wynn - Konni Zilliacus, M.P. - Robin Blackburn - Ken Coates - Chris Farley - Ralph Schoenman - Eric Varley, M.P. - Earl Russell, O.M. - Malcolm Caldwell - Tony Brewer

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THE WEEK

A NEW PUBLICATION...
 THE WEEKLY NEWS...
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VIETNAM: URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED

...the situation in Vietnam is becoming increasingly serious...
 ...the need for urgent action is becoming more apparent...
 ...the people of Vietnam are suffering from the effects of the war...
 ...the time has come when we must take action to help them...

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VIETNAM: URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED

This coming Sunday sees the start of Vietnam week. The various activities have been widely publicised and we earnestly hope that all the readers of The Week will participate to the full. We are giving a great deal of space to the discussions which socialists are having up and down the country about orientation; in doing so we must echo the sentiments expressed at Manchester that, above all, action is needed. All the people who have taken part in these discussions are united in their detestation of the way the Labour Government has supported American policy in Vietnam. Hence there exists an excellent basis for united action.

Action needs to be urgent too. It appears that the U.S. leaders have embarked on a policy of unlimited intervention in Vietnam. They have thrown aside all caution about the number of men they will put into the field, etc. It needs reiterating time and time again that the British Government remains the most firm and important ally the American Government has in this policy. We must again draw attention to the fact that all we do here gives the greatest encouragement to the sections of American society who are opposing their Government over Vietnam. Our opposition to the war in Vietnam must be based on the understanding that what is needed is not phoney talk about "peace" missions but a repudiation of American aggression. The British socialist movement should be firmly behind the demand that U.S. troops quit Vietnam and that the Vietnamese people are allowed to determine their own destiny. We hope that this is the theme of "Vietnam Week."

THE LESSON OF ERITH

The pollsters were wrong! We can quibble in our interpretation of the Erith result, as to whether it indicates the Labour or the Tories would be returned with a tiny majority, but about one thing we can be certain: the present policy of the Government is not an electoral success. Mr. Wilson cannot put too much blame on the press: he has had handsome - even generous - treatment over his handling of Rhodesia. What is lacking is a policy which raises enthusiasm and gets all the potential Labour voters out. Quite clearly such a policy must be anti-capitalist. It is Mr. Wilson who is rocking the boat by embracing Liberalism - except for its best features - not the left.

PROTEST AGAINST WITCH-HUNTS: To date some 20 organisations in Nottingham have condemned the expulsion of Ken Coates. Messages of solidarity have been received from all over the country. Add your weight! send your protest to Nottingham L.P., 265, Ilkeston Rd., Nottingham and West C.L.P. 233, Trowell Rd.

At the Manchester Socialist Conference, held last Sunday at the AEU Offices, Rusholme Street, a large gathering, representative of all sides of the labour movement, met to consider the situation which has arisen since Blackpool and the manner in which the momentum of socialism could best be maintained. Professor Peter Worsley, the chairman, outlines the aims of the Centre for Socialist Education which was launched in London a fortnight before, and a very lively discussion followed on the appropriateness of such an organisation to the present needs.

Geoff. Coggan, one of the delegates from Nottingham, reported on the enthusiastic response which C.S.E. had aroused in his area. He was, he said, very concerned at the likelihood of further fragmentation of the left as natural allies drift apart, still vigorously pursuing their own lines of action, but with less and less chance of achieving anything as they became mere pressure groups divorced from the mainstream of the labour movement. It was only too easy for a group to retain its integrity in this way, becoming so close-knit and in-bred that it could actually feel, in the purity of its arguments, that it was advancing. However wonderful it felt when a small group of comrades acted with one voice in this way, it remained a small voice in the context of the entire socialist movement. The need was to carry the logic of our arguments not merely to each other, but to the very base of the socialist pyramid. To talk of a subject like workers' control without ensuring that we had this basic understanding was a contradiction in terms.

The Nottingham delegate, who was last week elected as secretary of the Nottingham C.S.E. branch, concluded by urging the conference to take similar action before it dispersed, and to elect a committee so that the project could be got off the ground without delay. In all the discussion that followed, the desirability of an immediate decision was generally recognised, and the major criticisms were concerned with the limitation of the role of C.S.E. as an educational rather than an action one. However, it seemed to be agreed that action that did not spring from grass roots was unlikely to be effective and that an organisation such as C.S.E. was essential to the nourishment of the socialist argument at all levels. It did not preclude but, rather, buttress any action that might be taken in other directions.

The conference, of about 80 members, included delegates from Sheffield, Birmingham and Glasgow, in addition to a widely based local contingent. Amongst those present were Dick Nettleton, secretary of the conference, Alan Rooney, Frank Allam, M.P., Raymond Challinor, Joe Hesketh, Martin Flannery, Len Youle, Rosalind Delmar, and many other well known left wingers. A decision was unanimously taken to set up a committee with Colin Barker as secretary, which would keep in touch with branches of C.S.E. An early meeting of the committee would be called to decide on affiliation to the London Centre. Another decision taken unanimously was to protest against the expulsion of Ken Coates from the Labour Party.

TEXT OF RESOLUTION PASSED AT MANCHESTER SOCIALIST CONFERENCE from C Barker

This conference agrees to establish the Manchester Socialist Conference. The MSC should discuss the question of affiliation to the national CSE, but should never allow itself to become a mere discussion group, but in every sphere should attempt to inform and provide all possible assistance to working class and socialist struggles.

A small meeting in Birmingham on Sunday, November 14th, heard a report of the founding conference of the Centre for Socialist Education. The meeting had been arranged by inviting a number of known supporters of the idea of establishing an organisation of this type, plus a few other people who were interested in discussing the problem. The report provoked a lively response from one or two of the audience who considered that the establishment of C.S.E. might endanger the unity of the Labour Party. They used the well known "don't rock the boat" argument, but other members of the audience argued against being side-tracked into merely discussing this question. Another participant argued that this discussion in itself was the proof that such an organisation was both desirable and necessary. Criticism of another kind came from a comrade with considerable trade union experience - who had been the leader a particularly heroic strike - he argued that the fact that certain left wing organisations had not been invited to participate in the founding conference was undemocratic. He expressed the opinion that this omission was because the organisers did not want the C.S.E. to be too "left."

The chairman of the meeting and others answered these points by first stressing the need for an organisation like C.S.E. to arrest the fragmentation of the movement, and then pointing out that it would be the most democratic organisation - completely without bans and proscriptions - on the left in Britain. The whole evolution of the Labour Government proved the necessity of socialists taking stock; moreover, the founders were quite entitled to restrict the founding conference to known supporters of the establishment of a non-sectarian education movement. Only in this way could they have had a fruitful and constructive meeting.

The bulk of the audience were enthusiastic about the project and the chairman reported that support had been promised by several people who had been unable to attend the meeting. A committee was established to get the organisation off the ground. This committee is most representative; including Mrs. Beryl Ruehle, secretary of Selly Oak Labour Party, who has a wealth of experience in organising trade union education; a secretary of a Young Socialist branch, who is also a Federation official; the secretary of the Socialist Union at the University; John Chapman, who until his resignation was chairman of the Y.S. federation and editor of Y.S. page in the Trades Council newspaper; Barbara Allen, who is assistant secretary of the Birmingham New Left Club; and, in addition, other members will ensure contact with important bodies of trade unionists, the academic community and trade unions. A big public meeting is planned in January and it is clear that from this modest beginning the Birmingham C.S.E. will rapidly grow.

GLASGOW PROTEST OVER KEN COATES' EXPULSION

from Tony Southall

The following resolution was passed without opposition by Woodside C.L.P.: "It has been brought to our notice that Mr. Ken Coates, the President of Nottingham City Labour Party, and a candidate for the N.E.C. at the last Party Conference, has been expelled from the Party for expressing his ideas in print. The freedom to express opinions within the Party has long been one of our cherished traditions - had such a step as that taken in Nottingham been taken before, over half the present Cabinet would not be members of the Party. Being gravely disturbed by the whole affair we ask the N.E.C. to look into the matter, reverse the hasty and ill-conceived decision and re-admit Mr. Coates to the Party."

The new Centre for Socialist Education includes among its founders a large number of editors of socialist papers and magazines. Besides The Week, there were also people from the boards of New Left Review, International Socialism, Views, Labour Worker, International Socialist Journal, The Socialist Register, The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Labour's Voice, Voice of the Unions, Humberside Voice, and probably others besides.

May I make a suggestion? As a mere mortal, I can't find time to read all these excellent papers all the time. As well there are Peace News, Tribune, The Socialist Leader, Plebs, and all sorts of other papers which might well support the C.S.E. Might not one of the new movement's first services be the compilation of a cumulative index of the socialist press? Then when we need to research the latest debate on Rhodesia, or Workers' Control, we could see at a glance where all the most helpful articles were.

The ideal thing for the left would be to have one big democratic paper which everyone would read and write for. Until we can do that, an index would be extremely useful to socialist non-millionaires.

C.S.E. DIRECTORY

Readers who are interested in the activities of the Centre for Socialist Education should contact any of the following in their area or C.S.E., 19, Greenfield St., Dunkirk, Nottingham.

Belfast;	Tony McFarlane, 29, Eden Terr., Strabane, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland.
Birmingham;	Barbara Allen, 51, Lomaine Dr., Birmingham 30.
Bristol:	Tom Nicholls, Flat 3, The Rowans, Manor Park, Bristol*
Cambridge:	Robert Q. Gray, Caius College, Cambridge.
London:	Chris Farley, 15, Ramsen Rd., London N. 11.
	Sean Gervasi, 71, New End, London N.W. 3.
	Councillor C. van Gelderen, 6, Aycliff Rd., London W. 12.
Manchester:	Colin Barker, Top Flat, 43, Daisy Bank Rd., Manchester 14.
Mansfield area:	J.W. Attenborough, 144, Nuncargate Rd., Kirkby-in-Ashfield.
Midlands:	Bob Gregory, 54, Park Rd., Lenton, Nottingham.
North-East:	Dave Peers, 6, Bilborough Gdns., Newcastle 4.
Nottingham:	Geoff. Coggan, 47, Brindley Rd., Bilborough, Nottingham.
Sheffield:	Peter Smith, 48, Shirecliffe Lane, Sheffield 3.
Wales:	Tom Nicholls, as above.
West Middlesex:	Peter Jenner, 13b, Deane Way, Eastcote, Ruislip, Mddx.
Yorkshire:	Tony Topham, 1, Plantation Drive, Anlaby Park, Hull.

This list is preliminary and incomplete and will be brought up to date each week. The local organisers of C.S.E. would like to receive the names of people who might support its activities. These addresses should also be sent to the national convenor. The national convenor would be pleased to hear from anyone who would act as a local convenor. It would be helpful if interested people sent their telephone numbers when writing.

* note correction of flat number.

It strikes me that the main problem facing the left in Britain today - and this was unfortunately borne out by the meeting which established the Centre for Socialist Education - is its complete inability to relate A to B. Paradoxically, one of socialism's main claims is its ability to reason dialectically and consider society as a totality. But what we are faced with is a continuation of a long series of demands which are good in themselves but are unrelated to each other. We speak out against the war in Vietnam but don't draw the lesson from it, or don't bother to relate imperialism to internal social questions. We speak out against redundancy but leave it at that, and don't bother to formulate plans for social change, etc., In effect the right and its position is much more creditable. They have come forward with a total plan, with a total series of social and economic relations, and as bad as it is, it has a unity and coherence which allow them to turn around and claim that the left is anti-modern and that socialism is outdated. The plan as such enforces the existing regime by shrouding it in a myth of omnipotence and of econometric science and its sacred motto "increase production and you will increase wages".

What is needed from us is more than education but a series of broad guidelines that:

- (1) allow us to come together on a common programme; and
- (2) allow us to challenge the Government.

I think it is necessary for us to draw up a counter-plan which has as its philosophical basis a socialist rather than a liberal neo-colonialist basis. A counter-plan that would serve as basis for discussion so that in our educative activities, because of differences over individual issues and their implementation we don't sacrifice the fragile unity we achieved at the founding meeting of the C.S.E. by either sending 15 speakers to a meeting or saying nothing about a particular issue. Such a method has three essential merits: by fixing objectives it gives the socialist ideal a preciseness that it seems to have lost a long time ago; it gives the entire left the opportunity to express its aspirations; it permits us to show that the left far from being bankrupt of ideas has the only viable policy which is democratic. At the same time the formulation of such a counter-plan would go a long way to erasing the false division between "intellectuals" and workers.

Structural reform is at the basis of all the changes we want to see. I think in producing any kind of plan we ^{must} make it clear from the very beginning that we are after a system of industrial democracy where global planning, and all processes of decisions, will be decided by the people themselves. If the work were organised in a way whereby we present the theoretical assumptions first and then go on to define a counter-plan, I think ^{this} will show that we are interested in technological decisions. Unfortunately this was the fault with the plan drawn up by the P.S.U. in France and also of the little though extremely useful book Le Contreplan, by Julian Ensemble (really a rather large group of people) and published by Du Seuil. Therefore it is necessary to secure the maximum trade union co-operation possible. A work purely by academics will inevitably miss out on a huge number of points. Where they are useful though is in quantification and other procedures when we deal with the technical problems. Where they are not useful or of not more use than anyone else is in the conceptualisation of what should be done.

N.B. We understand that the CSE is ^{to} support this idea to the full.

A DOCKERS' PLAN FOR THE DOCKS: THE ALTERNATIVE TO DEVLIN

The Dockers' Group of the Humberside Voice has adopted the following charter, which is to be submitted to a Voice mass meeting of dockers later this month. The charter is based on the resolution carried last June at the Voice conference on workers' control held in Manchester.

- Point 1. A National Port Authority - public ownership of all port installations.
- Point 2. No more private profit - abolish all private employers of dock labour.
- Point 3. Democracy for the docks - self-management of labour by port-workers councils elected from the trade unions.
- Point 4. No Beechings on the docks - port workers councils to supervise the National Port Authority.
- Point 5. Trade union freedom. - fundamental rights of trade unions on wage negotiations and strike action to be fully maintained.

Trade unions should immediately press for guarantees on:

Fall back pay,
hours and overtime,
sick pay and pensions,
holidays,
equality of treatment for all dockers,
no redundancy, and
training facilities.

THE BRISTOL AND AVONMOUTH DOCKS LIAISON COMMITTEE CHARTER

This committee is recruiting hundreds of dockers on the basis of support for 11-point charter, which reads:

1. The National Dock Labour Board to maintain full control, i.e., contractors of labour - discipline and social welfare - present strength of the register to remain - no cutting in the manning scales, Weekly worker register to be frozen. No make-up of wastage.
2. All unregistered ports to be governed by the scheme.
3. £18.10s 0d fall-back guarantee. Each day to remain on its own - no devaluation - no disentitlement on failure to prove.
4. A 40-hour week, five-day week to remain. One call each day.
5. Overtime payment to be excluded from fall-back guarantee.
6. Upward revision of all piecework rates.
7. Sickness and accident pay to be 50% of basic pay (£18.10s) exclusive of state insurance.
8. Retiring pension to also be 50% of basic pay - also exclusive of state pension.
9. Three weeks holiday. Reduced or free transport fares - especially on all shipping, and payment of travelling expenses to and from work.
10. The trade unions to rigidly enforce a "no soliciting for work" rule.
11. Complete and effective nationalisation of the industry.

Britain built 24.4% more dwellings last year than in 1963 (383,200 against 307,000, one of the highest growth rates in all Europe, and surpassed only by the Netherlands (27%). But compared with the total population the rate comes well down at the bottom of the list (7.1 per thousand inhabitants.)

These facts emerge from the Annual Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics, just published by the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe. The bulletin states that more than 5.6M dwellings were built in Europe last year, 155,000 more than in 1963. The highest percentage increases following the Netherlands and Britain were recorded by Spain (24.3), Ireland (20.3), Denmark (16.5), Poland (10.9) and Yugoslavia (10.3). There was a decline however in Finland (19.5 down) and the U.S.S.R. (6.3). Although Sweden's building increase comes low down on the list (7.1) it leads in construction of dwellings per head of the population (11.4 per 1,000 inhabitants, followed by West Germany (10.7½, U.S.S.R. (10.2) and Switzerland (9.7). The U.S.S.R. has led in this category from 1958 to 1963.

The average size of new dwellings remains about the same in most European countries, the largest in 1964 being built by the Netherlands (5.2 rooms per dwelling); Spain (5.1); Norway (4.5) and Denmark (4.4). In East Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary and Yugoslavia, the average size was less than three rooms. But the equipment of new dwellings is improving, 90-100% last year having bath or shower, (almost 100% in Britain). In most European countries during the past few years, there has been a slight but steady shift from construction of one and two dwelling houses to multiple dwelling houses, as well as from private to state and public construction.

'FINES FOR UNOFFICIAL STRIKERS?

from a transport correspondent,

A bonus scheme, incorporating an unofficial strike penalty clause, covering 77,000 municipal bus employees, was agreed on at the Ministry of Labour on November 3rd. Both sides met Mr. D.G. Cox, a senior conciliation officer of the Ministry. The Federation of Municipal Transport Employers and the unions, including the Transport and General Workers Union, had agreed to the meeting, after the union opposition to a penalty clause under which the crews would lose their bonus for a period in the event of unofficial strikes. Following an offer for the unions to take a hand in adjudicating and administering penalties, the unions are now prepared to go along with the scheme. The plan provides for joint committees of investigation, headed by an independent chairman, to examine any mitigating circumstances in the event of an unofficial stoppage. The plan will go to the full National Joint Industrial Council. The financial terms remain unchanged - rising from a 10/- a week bonus after six months service to 30/- after 20 years.

A LETTER FROM THE "FREEDOM FOLK"

Enclosed is a cheque for £2. This is a donation from the Freedom Folk to The Week. We are happy to report that the Freedom Folk has now become firmly established in Hull and we are now trying to set up Freedom Folk clubs in other areas. Could you perhaps mention us in your paper saying that we are a left-wing club and our monies are donated to left wing and peace movements, and that we meet every Thursday 8.p.m. at the Bluebell Inn, Lowgate, Hull. We hope more donations will be sent to your valuable paper in the future.

N.B. For information about the Freedom Folk Club write: Flat C, 314, Beverley Rd., Hull.

On Tuesday, 9th November, Ken Coates was expelled from the West Nottingham Labour Party, because of 'his activities and publications.' The decision was taken by 24 votes to 15, after much argument, in which many charges were laid against him. He was given ten minutes to reply, through a barrage of interjections from the leader of the Labour Group on the City Council, Alderman Foster. This decision is unusual for a number of reasons. First, he is the President of the City Labour Party, of which West Nottingham Constituency is a small part. Second, the motion was initiated by the Secretary of the Council Labour Group, Councillor Kirk, and enthusiastically, if rather unscrupulously advocated by a number of aldermen, who had clearly evolved a 'party line' upon this question. Thirdly, the Regional Organiser of the Party, representing Transport House, sat silent, when charges which he knew to be untrue, were laid against Coates, and did not intervene to prevent a procedural injustice at the beginning of the meeting.

There is no doubt that whatever the ostensible reasons that were advanced, his expulsion was sought by the Labour Group leadership in order to enable them to avoid being controlled by the City Labour Party. That they could not expel him from that party goes without saying: indeed, his election to the chair last March was by the largest majority ever recorded, and it was this very fact which compelled them to approach their objective by the back door, expelling him at very short notice, from an organisation which represented a good deal less than one quarter of his total constituents.' The charges that were voiced against him fell into three main groups. As evidence of his 'activities' it was charged that he was a partial chairman, ruling the City Labour Party with an iron fist, terrorising Councillors. Such blatant lies could not be repeated by anyone who had attended a City Party meeting, and consequently they were fed into the meeting via the mouths of various stooges, who had been assembled at the meeting for the purpose. One lady who repeated a grotesque account of City Labour Party proceedings, which someone had retailed to her, admitted that she had only ever seen him three times in her life, one of which was the present time. This lady had never been at a City Labour Party meeting. In fact, if there has been fault in his conduct of the chair it has been of excess of tolerance not of partiality. The second, and by far the most insistent charge, was that his publications were inconsistent with party membership. This meant that the articles he had written were judged to be grounds for expulsion. In particular, one article was quoted and misquoted, interpreted and misinterpreted, a great many times. It was an article which originally appeared in 'Briefing', the daily bulletin which was produced for the Party Conference at Blackpool. It condemned the war in Vietnam, the White paper on immigration, and the proposal to put 'legal teeth' into the prices and incomes policy. He called upon the left to fight these policies, and to seek to reverse them. His points were strongly made, as many of us felt they needed to be, but if they constitute grounds for expulsion, then the Labour Movement is surely in a deep crisis, in which all its most conscientious members are liable to be evicted. The last charge was based on allegations appearing in a book:- 'The British Political Fringe.' It was said that 'The Week', which Coates helped to found, and 'International Socialist Journal', of which he is a board member, were the voices of a Trotskyist conspiracy. Coates explained that these 2 journals were a part of the New Left, and that they published articles from any source on the left, to style them 'Trotskyist' was absurd. There were several irregularities in the manner of his expulsion, which should be outlined before appropriate judges. This decision is a straightforward witch-hunt. Coates has been put out for his opinions, which are shared by thousands of Labour people.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY IN JAPAN (a long way from Blackpool) by Chris Farley

Within days of the Labour Party Conference, the Foreign Secretary was in Tokyo, where he made a remarkable speech on Britain's role in Asia to the Asian Affairs Research Council on October 19. It was only briefly mentioned in the British press, and for a time even the Foreign Office was, it stated, without a copy.

In Vietnam, said Mr. Stewart, the "overriding obstacle" to peaceful advance was the "savage violence" of the "Vietnamese Communists" who sought to "impose their will by force". Everyone except the Communists wanted peace: "that is what the United States want and that is why we support their policy in Vietnam". President Johnson has said on April 7 that Washington was prepared for "unconditional discussions".

To judge from Mr. Stewart's speech, nobody would think that the National Executive of his own party had just issued a call for the cessation of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. The Foreign Secretary amply justifies the suggestion made at Blackpool that the party leadership was putting out its statement for internal consumption only - to silence the uproar from the rank and file so that the serious business of supporting aggression and imperialism could continue uninterrupted.

MORE U.S. SERVICEMEN REFUSE TO FIGHT IN VIETNAM from an American reader

More American soldiers have refused to be sent to Vietnam, according to an article in the November 6th edition of the National Guardian. 19-year-old Jack Gorman threw his sea bag into the ocean from a Vietnam-bound U.S. vessel, in protest against being sent to Vietnam. Charged by the military authorities as "refusing to report", he was sentenced to five months' imprisonment and discharged. Michael Yankee, a youth of 20, was charged with "disobeying and order" and "being absent without leave", because he refused to go to Vietnam to fight. He was sentenced to three months' hard labour and discharged.

Opposing the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam, Larry Bobbitt, 18, refused to wear a navy uniform. Since March, he has been courtmartialled seven times for "refusing to report". He was scheduled for sentencing in Honolulu for imprisonment. Yankee and Bobbitt declared that other personnel in their units similarly objected to fighting in Vietnam.

20-year-old soldier Michael L. Fram openly expressed his sympathy with the activities of the "Vietnam Day Committee" against U.S. aggression in Vietnam. Early this month, when his unit arrived in Oakland, California, a military departure point for Vietnam, he was detained in the country because the military authorities were afraid he would affect the morale of the other troops. A military spokesman said that Fram's philosophy conflicted "with the very nature of the operation" conducted by the U.S. soldiers in Vietnam.

It is to be hoped that British socialists will support this movement which is so courageous. Messages of support, protests to the American Embassy, the mere spreading of information about these heroes will all help. However readers of the Week can best give moral aid to their comrades by making it absolutely clear that the Wilson Government does ^{not} represent British socialism on Vietnam.

N.B. Messages should go to: WCEWV, PO Box 19249, Washington, D.C. 20036.

A British Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners in Iran has been formed. Will Griffiths, M.P., is President, Ted Fletcher, M.P., Treasurer and I am secretary. A statement has been issued by the Committee on the Teheran trial. Issued on November 8th, the statement reads:

"On the 1st of November, a military court in Teheran sentenced two young Iranians to death and another to life imprisonment with hard labour on a charge of complicity in a 'plot' to assassinate the Shah. Nine others received various terms of imprisonment. The attempt on the life of the Shah referred to in the charges occurred on the 10th April this year when a conscript of the Royal Guard opened fire on the Shah in the Marble Palace, Teheran. First reports attributed the incident to a personal quarrel between two soldiers but on the 29th April several British newspapers reported the arrest of 8 Iranian graduates of British universities in connection with the incident. All were reported to have "confessed to their treacherous aims" but later reports indicated that two of the accused were abroad throughout and were not even under arrest. Soon afterwards rumours of torture began to leak out of Iran.

"At this stage many letters expressing concern were sent to Iranian Embassies abroad including a letter signed by 50 British Members of Parliament which was later answered by 58 Iranian Deputies. Assurances were given whilst the most abusive denunciations of those who expressed concern followed in the Iranian press. But during the summer, documents appearing to confirm the use of torture arrived in Britain. Unlike previous military trials, the Iranian authorities permitted the proceedings to be reported and the following points now became clear:

- (1) the arrests were arbitrary and, in the case of eight of the accused, kept secret until the opening of the trial.
- (2) The arrests, trial and sentences are based largely on political grounds and not on Judicial,

"The military prosecutor stated quite clearly: '...There are many youths now studying in high schools and universities...if you are punished they will understand that this is the wrong path. They will then go and choose the right path - the path opened before them by the state, the path taken by our society's organisations - the path opened before us by our leaders whom we have to obey. This is the aim.'

"The only incriminating facts were that one of the accused sentenced to death (Mansouri) made a confession to the Shah which he retracted in court. The other (Kamrani) knew the dead conscript, Shamsabadi, who was responsible for the shooting. Witnesses were not produced in court to substantiate the case based on this. The case against Nikkhah (sentenced to life imprisonment) was based on his authorship of a revolutionary thesis and charges against other accused included lending Nikkhah £35, membership of a communistic organisation, helping Nikkhah to type pamphlets, obtaining books and pamphlets from Nikkhah and burning them, membership of Eushidj (a commercial company formed by five of the prisoners), taking part in demonstrations while in England, supporting the Teheran taxi-drivers' strike. Quite clearly the principles of the Declaration of Human Rights have been violated by these trials and sentences and people of goodwill everywhere must protest. Contary to a widespread impression in Britain, Iran is not a free country....."

Editorial note: messages of support, enquiries, etc. should be sent to Mr. Newens, M.P., 16, Vicarage Lane, North Weald, Essex - hurry, time is short!

Only two years ago Mohdi Ben Barka had been the guest of the Middle East Committee of the Movement for Colonial Freedom. He came to London to ask our support for his struggle against reactionary forces which had staged the plot in Morocco in 1963. This was Morocco's "Reichstagsbrand"; it resulted in mass imprisonment of progressive leaders, 14 of whom were executed last March. Ben Barka was sentenced to death in absentia and had lived abroad since.

Morocco's Minister of the Interior and Security Chief, General Oufkhir, pursued a policy of ruthless "pacification" of the progressive forces. Oufkhir had already made a name for himself as "the man who broke the Vietminh" during France's war in Indochina. Oufkhir is the model of a loyal servant of colonialism, and a sworn enemy of progress.

On November 1st, M. Ben Barka had been kidnapped in Paris. A car stopped in front of a Cafe where he sat with friends. Two gentlemen went up to him, introduced themselves as French police and requested him to enter the car. He went without resistance, and ~~has not been seen since~~. According to Le Monde the gangster attack had been committed by professional gangsters hired in liaison with M. Oufkhir (Editorial note: it has since been established that certain French police were also implicated).....and who hides behind the Moroccan reactionaries is left to be guessed....Without doubt those who do not want the Conference of the Afro-Asian-Latin-American people to take place. This has been arranged for the first week in January, 1966, in Havana, Cuba. Mohdi Ben Barka was to have been the chairman of the conference and he had done a great^{deal} of the preparatory work.

The tri-continental conference of the representatives of the popular and liberation movements is to deal with many urgent problems of the anti-imperialist struggle: South Arabia, Palestine, Venezuela, South Africa, cultural problems and the struggle against imperialism and militarism are on the agenda.

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NEO-COLONIALISM THE CAUSE OF LATIN AMERICA'S ECONOMIC ILLS by Dave Windsor

The Uruguayan weekly, Accion, explained that the industrialised countries which followed a buy-cheap-and-sell-dear policy were responsible for the capital outflow, accumulative payment deficits and inflation in Latin American countries. Because of a drop in world prices, the governments of raw material exporting countries devalued their currencies to strengthen the competitive power of their commodities on the world market, the paper said. This gives rise to inflation, especially in such countries as Uruguay which have to import large quantities of consumer goods and services. From 1959 to 1964, under the forceful impact of currency devaluation, the cost of living went up 12 times in Brazil, 6 times in Uruguay and 4 times in Argentina. The rising trend of the cost of living became still more acute after 1963. Under galloping inflation, the paper continued, the discrepancy between prices in the domestic market and in the world market widens and this demands another currency devaluation. This is merely the beginning of a vicious circle.

From 1959 to 1964, the paper pointed out, Uruguay devalued its currency 3 times, Chile 11 times, Brazil 12 times. In these countries, the rise in exchange rates is completely at one with the decline in the selling prices of exports and the soaring prices at home.

Fidel Castro does not see any immediate prospect for improvement in U.S. Cuba relations, despite current negotiations between the two governments over the departure of Cuban emigres. This was reported by New York Times correspondent, Richard Eder, after a November 1 interview with the Cuban premier in Havana. Two other U.S. journalists and one from Spain participated in a five hour discussion with Dr. Castro.

Castro said U.S. aggression throughout the world was the principal barrier to a thaw in U.S. Cuban relations. 'There can be no general improvement,' he said, 'until U.S. relations with other parts of the world improve.' He cited U.S. intervention in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic as 'a more aggressive, more interventionist policy against national liberation movements.' While keeping the door open for any further specific agreements that his country and the U.S. might possibly arrive at in the days ahead, Castro indicated that he did not think there would be many such cases.

Fidel also dwelt on some of the specific measures being taken to cut down Cuba's expensive and often obstacle-creating administrative bureaucracy, a theme that has figured prominently in several recent speeches to the Cuban people. According to Eder, Fidel said that the Finance Ministry will be abolished, with its functions spread over several existing agencies. A number of middleman agencies involved in the distribution of food will also be abolished. He reportedly announced that the agency responsible for the collection of urban rents would be dissolved, and that 80% of the Cuban people will no longer pay rents. Under Cuba's urban reform laws, rents had first been slashed in half and later multiple dwellings were taken over by the Government and further reductions instituted. Abolition of the various agencies will reportedly eliminate 25,000 jobs. The campaign to reduce the size of the Government bureaucracy involves not hiring new people for a ten year period and providing training for new occupations at regular wages for those whose jobs are eliminated.

Citing moves to reduce tendencies towards bureaucratization and the stifling of free thought, Eder reported that Fidel had said they would seek to make the Cuban press 'less asphyxiated' with more discussion and controversy and with a more objective presentation of foreign news. As the revolution becomes more sure of itself, he reports Fidel as saying, 'We must work towards the most absolute latitude in what is printed.' Eder adds, 'There has also been an effort to stimulate more independent thinking among party members, he said, with less reliance on a manual of instruction borrowed from the Soviet bloc countries.'

Replying to rumours in the international press that Che Guevara was dead, Fidel said that he knew where Guevara was but would not disclose the place and that he was 'in the best of health.'

Other points in the interview dealt with the prospects for Cuba's sugar crop and the negotiations surrounding those who wanted to leave Cuba for the U.S. Fidel said it would be a 'tight squeeze' to fulfil this year's sugar crop quota of 6.5M tons because of lack of rain in several key areas. However, he added, extensive new plantings and increased fertilization will bring the 1967 crop to a record 7.5M tons. On the arrangements for those wishing to leave for the U.S., Fidel said that doctors and certain technicians might be delayed for a period, but that Cuba would expedite exit visas for all others. He said that, 'Our principle is that the revolution should be a free association of people who want to live here.' Asked by his interviewers if he didn't consider it unusual that Cubans wanted to go to the U.S., Fidel replied: 'Men have always wanted to go to your country from all parts of the world. Let me ask you how many Brazilians do you think would go to the United States, if the United States told them it would pay all expenses and make all arrangements, as it is doing here.'