

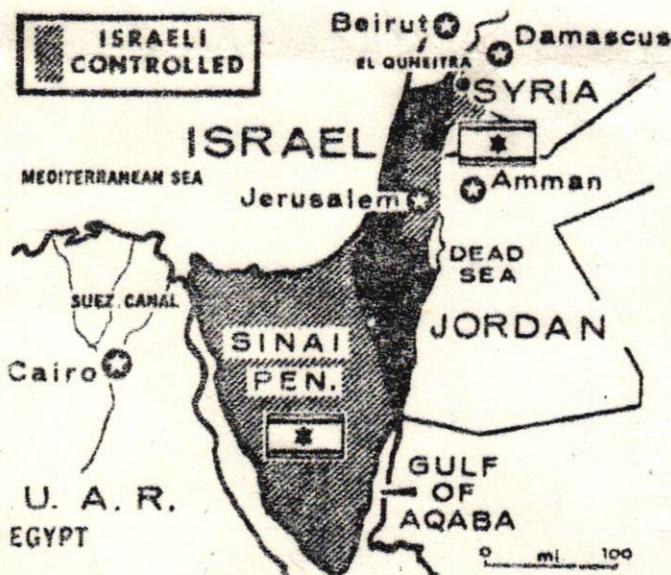
# The Week

# Workers Control Success

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

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Vol. 7. No. 24. June 15th, 1967



# MIDDLE - EAST

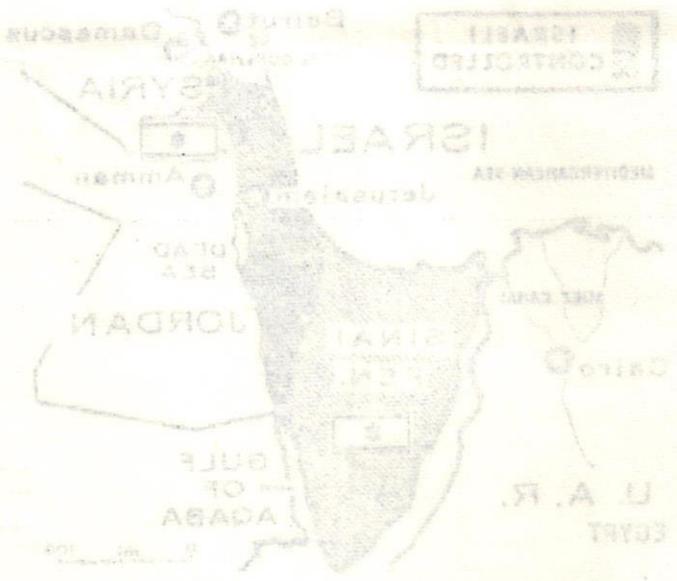
# AGGRESSION

Workers  
Control  
Success

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Vol. 7, No. 24, June 1971, 1971

MIDDLE  
- EAST  
AGGRESSION



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### MIDDLE EAST AGGRESSION

As each day goes by evidence accumulates that it was Israel that started the fighting in the Middle East, that this was done in collusion with the U.S. and the whole aim of the operation was to inflict a defeat on Arab nationalism. Apart from the evidence which has been compiled in press reports which we have quoted elsewhere in this issue, we have only to mention that most of Egypt's tanks were still painted green when the fighting started (showing that they had been rushed to the front); that the U.S. News and World Report correspondent in Israel reports that the U.A.R. forces had been taken off alert when Israel struck; and that the U.S. ship which was bombed was right at the point of battle, carrying out a "communications function" according to U.S. spokesmen. The Observer on Sunday, June 11th, reported that the aim of the last attack made by Israel - on Syria - had the aim of overthrowing the Government of that country, something which this paper said at the beginning of the crisis.

We have had at least one cancellation of subscription because of our stand. Ironically enough, much of the material which our former reader described as being worthy of Mosley was taken directly from The Times. It is a great pity that the genuine sympathy for the Jewish people that all progressives hold has been so misused by the capitalist press. The left has a colossal job of education to do in relation to the Middle East. In the many crises which will come up in the coming months it is essential that socialists in this country respond to prevent further aggression.

### STILL ONLY ABSTAINING

Somewhere between 31 and 35 M.P.s abstained on the renewal of the Government's wages standstill powers. There is no excuse whatsoever for either those who refused to vote against the Government, or for those who still stick to the theory that one isolates oneself if one doesn't vote for the Government. Abstaining is quite incapable of mobilising opinion and action against the Government on this or any other matter. The Government's decision not to throw out those who voted against the Government on the Common Market shows that the abstainers had nothing to fear. On the contrary what many Labour M.P.s have to fear is the loss of their seats at the next election. This Government has shown that it is determined to go ahead with its reactionary policies regardless of all the "good advice" it gets from well-meaning left wingers.

The lesson is this: unless some effort is made to convince militants and active trade unionists that someone in the Labour Party is going to really resist Wilson's wage freeze there is no prospect of bringing them into the struggle. One vote in Parliament which threatened the Government would be worth a thousand abstentions. If Wilson was really threatened in Parliament he would, as always, manoeuvre. M.P.s would then be doing something.

BOOT AND SHOE UNION LEADER CALLS FOR OPPOSITION TO VIETNAM WAR by A. Acheson

The National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives is a right of centre union, so it is all the more significant that the general secretary has made a call to the Labour Government to decisively oppose the Vietnam war. He did this when he introduced the political section of the executive council report.

Although it might be looked upon as essentially an American war it was one which could well escalate and involve all mankind, he said. He urged that the Labour government should make every effort to "settle this issue." They should seek to bring about a cessation of bombing of North Vietnam and of the scaling down of military activities by all sides in South Vietnam.

He said members of the Shoe Operatives' Union shared the dismay expressed by large numbers of American trade unionists about the Vietnam war. "It would be wrong of this conference to overlook the pressure that some of our fellow trade unionists are bringing to bear on their government," he added.

LONG-TIME LABOUR ACTIVIST "DISGUSTED" from a Leicester reader

I received a letter from a long-time Labour Party activist recently who wrote from hospital. He had been a member of a local council until recently but had to give the post up because he was due for a major operation. My friend had never considered himself a left-winger so his comments on Labour's record are all the more significant. There is no doubt that the feelings expressed in these extracts are shared by hundreds of Labour Party rank and file members all over the country. The relevant parts of the letter read:

"As regards the Labour Party, my disgust goes deeper and deeper. I had a friend come round, a highly successful young capitalist who runs 3 businesses besides lecturing (full time!) at the Tech, and he said: 'What's happened to them? Can you explain it?' The only answer I could give was that thinking they had no mandate for genuine left-wing policies (and thinking they wouldn't work anyhow), they decided to try and manipulate capitalism and instead found that the international bankers, the Civil Service, the city, and the professions took them over. The mistakes of this government are so numerous, so terrible, that it is difficult to open a paper. Fundamentally, however, I believe their failure lies in two things: a) snobbery and too great an awe for institutions, etc.; b) Cowardice - the belief that a law sternly applied against vested interests will not work, e.g., (negotiation and  $\frac{1}{2}$  a loaf is better than the whole hog and a sow).

An income tax inspector friend who came to see me here and hoped the Government would give the tax authorities teeth with which to catch up on the evasion they knew existed, is now thinking of voting Liberal; so is an accountant who was secretary of the Maving Labour Party. The middle-class Labour type sees that this Government provides no alternative to the Tories - so why vote for them? I suppose it is too easy to say 'I told you so' but not even I thought they would be that weak.

The Fifth National Conference on Workers' Control, sponsored by the Centre for Socialist Education, was held at the T&GWU offices in Coventry last weekend. Its opening coincided with the publication of the Labour Party's "Report on Industrial Democracy", and John Hughes, one of the authors of the Report, participated in the first morning's discussion.

The fact that the Labour Party has felt it necessary, at this time, to publish such a document - whatever its ambiguous shortcomings and despite the fears voiced by many delegates that it was no more than a sop to the left - is at least a recognition of the pressures that are building up around this issue. Even more, in the attendance of John Hughes and his presentation of the Labour Party's new Report, was it a recognition of the Workers' Control Conference itself. In the four years since the Conference was first convened in Nottingham, there has been a steady development in both the size of the conference and the scope of the discussions. This year over 300 trade union delegates took part and a most important development was the participation of a working group of delegates from unions in the car industry.

The chairman last weekend was Bill Jones, the T&GWU's nominee for the TUC General Council, and the speakers included Hugh Scanlon, contender for the presidency of the AEU, whose blistering attack on the Government's economic policies was widely acclaimed, and Ernie Roberts, who is running for the position of general secretary. Speaking of nationalisation, Ernie Roberts said that the concept of 'Fair Compensation' had bedevilled the labour movement and placed a burden on the backs of the workers in the very industries which had been taken over on behalf of the people. "How", he said, "can we confiscate what is ours by right?" He pointed out that in the public sector there was neither democratic control nor democratic accountability, and that, far from giving a lead, the Government paid some of the lowest wages in the country. "The Government and local government, between them, employ 20 per cent of the labour force. What is stopping them from instituting equal pay? What is stopping them helping the lower paid worker?"

The Labour Party Plan was received with understandable suspicion and there were many who felt that a Government which had so misused the word 'socialism' would certainly exploit to the full the ambiguities in the widely differing concepts of workers' control and workers' participation. Ken Coates was more optimistic and he saw in the publication of the Report the widening of a discussion which would take up its own perspectives and momentum, regardless of the Government's intentions. He warned the Government that it would be playing with fire if, in fact, it had no other motive than to keep at bay the pressures that were building up in the labour movement.

But the heart of the conference lay in the seminars which considered in greater detail the problems of fighting for democratic control in individual industries. Arising out of these discussions many plans were announced - among them a decision for a Busmen's National Conference to be held within a matter of months. On steel, it was recalled that the blueprint which began as a working report by the steelworkers who had participated in previous conferences is now the property of the unions and workers in that industry. A Steelworkers' Conference is to be held in Sheffield next week and further conferences are planned for Wales, Scotland, and for areas, like Workington, which are seriously affected by the rationalisation plans for that industry. Details of the various papers presented and accepted will be dealt with in subsequent issues of The Week.

## WORKERS' CONTROL AND THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY by a special correspondent

Among the many papers discussed at the very successful conference on workers' control last week-end was one on the aircraft industry. Over twenty of the delegates (most actual workers in the industry) discussed the following paper and amended it. The amended paper will be published in the full report of the conference.

### The Aircraft Industry: Some Considerations

The Labour Government is at present planning to make certain changes in the structure of ownership in one section of the aircraft industry. What this change amounts to is that the Government is prepared to buy up a minority shareholding in the airframes section, i.e., in Hawker Siddeley and the British Aircraft Corporation. This means that the Labour Government is proposing to do even less than was proposed by the Plowden Report which advocated a state majority shareholding in airframes. The T.U.C. policy goes along with Plowden.

However, such minor alterations in structure of ownership as proposed in both the Labour Government and Plowden versions, have not been enthusiastically received by aircraft workers. The official policies of the AEU, ASSET and DATA call for the complete nationalisation of the aircraft industry - airframes and aero-engines. This is a logical, minimum socialist demand, as both sections of the industry are heavily subsidised, both are dependent on Government orders for their existence and both are vast monopolies. Yet none of the main engineering trade unions, the TUC or the Labour Party have advanced any definite ideas for the development of industrial democracy in the aircraft industry.

But some of the aircraft workers have begun to take the initiative on this. The Joint Shop Stewards Committee of the Bristol Siddeley Engines combine (now part of Rolls Royce) have set up a workers control study group composed of shop stewards from each of the main B.S.E. factories - at Coventry, Bristol and Watford. This study group is not yet at a stage of being able to present a completed plan for the democratic ownership and control of the industry - the discussion on this will be carried further at the Coventry conference and after. A useful part of a preliminary study has already been covered at previous meetings of the group. At the last study group meeting, a critical examination was made on Ron Smith's 'steel plan' and it was generally agreed by the group that aircraft workers must see to it that a similar plan is not foisted on to the aircraft workers.

The discussion has now reached a point where the study group is working on the practicalities of decision-taking and democratic control in a nationalised industry.

### THE NATIONALISED AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY : SOME WORKERS CONTROL ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

#### What to take-over:-

- all airframe interests of Hawker Siddeley and B.A.C. should be taken over; also, all Rolls Royce aero-engines interests.

- Government should issue fixed interest stock in return for assets at minimum valuation - payable only during the life of the holder. Should shares be then taken over by the Government?

- what should the nationalised aircraft industry be allowed to manufacture? Only aircraft - or also hovercraft, engines other than aero-engines, etc? .....

### 1. THE NATIONAL AIRCRAFT BOARD

What should be its size, composition and democratic elements? Composition: 50% Govt., appointments, 50% aircraft workers reps.? Government nominees should include representatives from both BEA and BOAC, and probably Ministries of Econ Affairs, Technology & Board of Trade.

Who should the aircraft representatives be? Are they to be directly elected from plant level? What is our attitude towards position of full-time trade union officials and TUC nominations? The position of Chairman of the Board - both Government and aircraft workers representatives able to put forward nominations for the post? What powers of veto over Chairman? What is period of office to be? The Government should consult with the Board on all major aircraft matters? The National Board would make representations to the Govt. and would be able to issue its own recommendations on the aircraft and transport section of the National Plan? The National Board would seek the advice of the Group-level and plant-level Boards on all major items of planning and especially on the long-term planning of the industry? The National Board would have powers in the field of research, development and design?

### 2. REGIONAL OR GROUP LEVEL BOARDS

At this intermediate level between the National Board and the Plant-level Boards, the Boards could either be organised on linking aero-engines plants together in one group and airframes plants in another group or there could be geographically based regional type groups. There may be advantages in geographical groupings. The regions might be: South West (Bristol HQ), South East (London), Midlands (Coventry), North (Manchester) and Scotland/N. Ireland (Glasgow).

Composition: 50% Govt., inc. plant-level accountants  
50% aircraft workers representatives - from plant level and/or t.u.s.?

Although these Regional Boards would do a lot of their work as separate units, they must all regularly get together nationally to exchange ideas and information on planning, projects and targets? Recommendations, ideas, etc. for National Aircraft Board should go through national meeting of combined Regional/Group board first. Powers: allocation of work to plants linking up the work of individual plants.

### 3. PLANT LEVEL BOARDS:

It is clear that the present system of shop floor gangs, whose elected leaders already organise work on the shop floor, could be extended. In view of this, what should composition of local Board be? 50% workers? Or 100% workers councils (t.u. nomination allowed)? Appointment by ballot for 2 years? How would following be fixed:- man-hours for job; earnings & bonus; education & training; discipline; Importance of workers having full access to shop-floor accounts.

INDUSTRIAL NOTES from David Robinson.

Provocation Admitted by Sunley Director.

During the Ministry of Labour Court of Inquiry, which is examining the Labour disputes at the Barbican, George Avery, a Sunley director, admitted that the company had provoked a strike so that it could shut the site and reopen without the militant works committee which had led a number of actions for improved conditions. Sunley's plans for effecting the strike were outlined by John Sunley, the chairman, in a letter to Sir Cecil Mant, controller-general in the Ministry of Public Building and Works, which was the client. He explained that if, as had been suggested at a meeting with Sir Cecil and Jim Mills, National Federation of Building Trade Operatives president, Sunley sacked eight of the militants' leaders, it was certain to lose at a disputes commission on the grounds of victimisation. It would then have to take the men back which would give them greater authority than before.

The company was therefore announcing changes which could be expected to lead to an unofficial strike on mass-meeting in unauthorised time. If any of these happened the contracts manager "will immediately discharge the whole of the works committee for misconduct" wrote Mr. Sunley. "By doing this we believe we will have a reasonable case at a dispute panel and if we can win, it will not give the new works committee the same strength." More serious action would be taken if this plan failed. In fact it succeeded. A strike was called and the works committee was sacked, followed a few days later by the entire workforce after a regional disputes commission had failed to reach a decision on the dispute.

The Ministry of Labour Court of Inquiry has not yet published its report but the chairman, Lord Cameron, said that Sunley "brought about a situation in which the works committee was induced to commit an offence." On these grounds it might well be difficult to rule that the men should not be re-engaged. (Based on a report in the Financial Times.)

Blind Workers in Pay Strike

Over 300 workers, mostly women but including some male workers and supervisors, at the Royal Glasgow Workshops for the Blind staged a half-day token strike yesterday in protest against blocking of their pay claim by the management. Special buses were hired to take them to a demonstration outside the City Chamber in George Square. Their claim for 12/- a week, sanctioned by the Prices and Incomes Board in March, has been refused by the West of Scotland Joint Committee for the administration of the workshops. The workers are members of the National League of the Blind, the foremen and supervisors, some sighted, of ASSET.

£6 Wage-Cut Causes Strike.

About 1,500, members of the AEU and the ETU employed at the Brush Electrical Engineering Company, Loughborough, began an unofficial strike yesterday over a piece work dispute. A union spokesman said the management suspended a man in the switchgear department for two days because he refused to do work at a price which would cause his wages to fall by at least £6 a week. The stoppage will be continued after the suspension period if the company continues to be unreasonable.

## FASCIST THUGS DOING IMPERIALISTS' WORK IN GUATEMALA

A number of Right-wing terrorist groups have recently been operating in the Guatemalan Oriente by murdering thousands of peasant supporters of the Revolutionary Guerilla movements. The slaughter of these peasants is being carried out with the obvious approval and collaboration of not only the Guatemalan regime, but also the U.S. imperialists themselves.

Some of these grotesque organizations have been using soldiers in civilian clothes to carry out their "anti-communist pacification". In fact the principal terrorist group known as the White Hand is a creature of the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional, which in 1954 spearheaded the C.I.A. sponsored invasion from Honduras which overthrew the elected social-democratic government of Jacobo Arbenz (who is at present exiled in Cuba). Since last July, M.L.N. leaders and their followers have been disappearing into Honduras. A new radio station based in Honduras has been warning peasants of a new invasion with massive American support.

Also the White Hand's vigilantes in the Oriente have received roughly two thousand rifles and machine guns which were given to the Guatemalan army under the U.S. military aid programme. The same machine guns are now being used in the slaughter of thousands of guerrilla collaborators and sympathisers in the towns and villages along the Atlantic Highway, which was formerly a stronghold of the guerrillas. Even the Army spokesmen have put the death roll in two provinces alone at roughly two thousand.

Put together, these two facts: the reports of broadcasts about a U.S. supported invasion from Honduras, and the passing of America's "gift" of two thousand machine guns from the hands of the Army to the terrorists, appear to be enough to indict the U.S. of complicity in the fascist uprising. Also, in the face of the previous mounting guerrilla activity and influence in the country, it looks as though these terrorists have saved, at least for the moment, the possibility of direct U.S. military intervention in the tradition of the invasion of Dominica in 1965.

The fascistic offensive has been recognised by the hated and feudalistic landowners as being advantageous to their continual suppression and exploitation of the landless peasants who favour the guerrillas. It seems clear enough that these are the ones who are financing the terrorists. The violence of recent months is believed to have claimed more lives than all the activities of the guerrillas and the reprisals of their traditional adversaries, the Army, for the past five years. Even the Roman Catholic bishops have strongly protested the counter-revolutionary slaughter. A missionary said that "there is hardly a day when you don't see a body floating down the Rio Managua". The daily violence has become a way of life for most peasants in the country. In the words of Yon Sosa, leader of the guerrilla movement MR 13 (the revolutionary movement of November 13th) "our Campesino carries a long machete in a leather scabbard for self-defense, and will buy a shotgun or pistol before he buys a pair of shoes".

Obviously the long term effect of the terrorism inflicted on the peasants will be shown by their increasing alignment with the revolutionary movements, which like the N.L.F. in Vietnam rely on the peasants for their support rather than the landowners and the U.S.

AN APPEAL FOR REGIS DEBRAY

The following letter appeared in The Times of June 13:

"Journalism and information media have evolved since 1792. Commenting on the battle of Valmy, Goethe made the prophetic statement: "It is here, and today that a new era begins for humanity." It was here in effect that for the first time, in a battle prefiguring Dien Bien Phu, that a classic army was crushed by one in rags.

Those for whom the gathering and imparting of information is a profession, whose mission it is to "cover history in the making" are often of necessity placed in difficult situations. Accompanying the Duke of Weimar's army, Goethe scarcely left his carriage. Today he would be called a war correspondent. But what is his opposite number called when serving on the other side? What is the status of a correspondent covering the precarious existence of guerrilla forces?

Since coverage of both sides in a guerrilla war is an obvious necessity the status of war correspondents is an imperative for those journalists attached to irregular forces. An international status must protect those photographers, news cameramen and writers whose professional activities are connected with armies of irregulars. The nature of the forces to which they happen to be attached must not be used as a pretext by a government, an army or a secret police arbitrarily to arrest, torture, execute or imprison members of such professions whom they happen to capture.

On April 20, Regis Debray (a Frenchman), George Roth (an Englishman) and Alfredo Fructuoso (an Argentinian) were arrested in Northern Bolivia. Regis Debray, a writer and philosopher, accredited to the weekly Mexican paper Successos entered Bolivia on a valid French passport. His fate and that of his companions, arouses the most urgent and acute concern. Since his arrest no one has been allowed to see him or communicate with him, in spite of a writ of Habeas Corpus issued on his behalf in Bolivia. The place, indeed the country, where he is held prisoner with his companions remains secret. There are grave fears that he and his companions may die under torture.

As signatories to this appeal, we demand that the guarantees listed above be accredited to Regis Debray and his fellow prisoners. French and British diplomats have been denied access to them. Their prolonged isolation, lack of legal aid, and the attested intervention in the case of interrogators and "experts" of non-Bolivian nationality amply justify the pressing urgency of this appeal.

Signed by:- Lindsay Anderson, John Berger, Jeremy Brooks, Peter Brook, Basil Davidson, M.A. Donnelly, Peter de Francia, Jean Franco, Graham Greene, Christopher Hill, R.O. Jones, A.L. Lloyd, Joseph Losey, John Mendelson, Iris Murdoch, Edna O'Brien, Roland Penrose, Frank Pierce, George Tabori, Robert B. Tate, Arthur Terry, Kenneth Tynan.  
June 10

Editorial note: Bertrand Russell has also made an appeal on behalf of Debray and is now seeking to get the widest support for his efforts.

Egypt's army was not the only casualty in the recent Middle East war. Whole sections of the left became completely disoriented. Such stalwarts as Sydney Silverman became apologists for Israel's aggression against the Arab countries - "Israel need not be ashamed of her victory" wrote Silverman in last week's Tribune. Others, including Paul Rose and Raymond Williams went as far as protesting because Christopher Mayhew spoke on the radio - accusing him of being pro-Arab. This phenomena was not confined to Britain: Jean-Paul Sartre, who has a heroic record on Vietnam and Algeria, signed a statement just prior to the Israeli attack which spoke of the reasonable approach of the Israeli Government and sought to mobilise opinion against Nasser and the Arabs. Nor was it confined to the broader left: one well-known British group which considers itself Marxist has undergone a profound crisis because its leading theoretician took an anti-Israeli view.

How is it that people who have reacted to most events in a generally correct manner end up in this particular crisis siding with imperialism? We must first note that to a certain extent the statements of Arab leaders have assisted the imperialists in causing confusion on this question. Because they lack an international socialist policy such people as Nasser and the leaders of Syria have had to express themselves in racialist terms. They have made no appeal to the Israeli people to support them in their fight against Zionism, despite the fact that a very large proportion of the Jewish population of Israel, namely, those of Asian and African descent suffer from discrimination. Israel faced (and perhaps still faces) a severe economic crisis in which between 7 and 10% of the workers were unemployed (one might add, in passing, that the war came at a very convenient time to solve that particular problem!) There should have been, and could have been, an appeal from people who call themselves socialist to the peasants and workers of Israel. Having said this, we must add that this weakness on behalf of the Arab leaders was no excuse whatsoever for those sections of the left which capitulated to anti-Arab hysteria. Moreover, there are much deeper reasons at work.

One of the basic theoretical weaknesses of the left in the metropolitan countries played a big role: the failure to distinguish between the nationalism of an oppressed people and the chauvinism of an oppressor nation. It is an absolute crime, especially for those who shame the name of Marx by calling themselves Marxists, to equate Arab nationalism - the product of imperialist and neo-colonialist exploitation of the most savage kind, with Zionism - the product of the desire of Jewish capitalists to have their own nation-state to exploit. We see the same mistake made daily in relation to the Negro struggle in the United States - especially by sectarian self-styled marxists. Whilst socialists will at all times seek to inject socialist ideas into any living struggle they have to recognise that the nationalism of oppressed people, no matter how it expresses itself, is an objectively progressive force. When it comes into conflict with imperialism we must support it, regardless of its temporary leadership.

Another factor operating is that under normal circumstances it is possible for the left to hold together a large number of tendencies verging

PRESS REPORTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST compiled by Dave Windsor

Hundreds of Napalm victims in Jordan based on New York Times

Military sources in Amman were quoted yesterday as estimating that the Jordanian Army had lost 25,000 men, about half its strength, in dead, wounded and captured in the four-day war Israel. Earlier reports had set the number at 15,000.

A Lebanese doctor, Kemel Bikhazi, leader of a 23-man volunteer medical team from American University Hospital in Beirut, disclosed the figure here. In General Army Hospital in Amman, Dr. Bikhazi said casualties he had seen were victims of what he diagnosed as napalm burns. He said, however, that he had no previous experience with napalm injuries.

He had also been to the military hospital at Zarqa, where, he said, of 600 military casualties, he had not seen a single bullet wound. He reported that more than 200 casualties there were diagnosed as suffering from napalm burns. "The casualties were fearsome and many were burned to death." He said, adding that the wounded soldiers could talk of nothing but "fire-bombs, firebombs."

As he returned to Amman from Zarqa, Dr. Bikhazi reported, he saw the remains of a mobile medical unit, marked with a red cross, that had been destroyed by napalm.

U.S.-ISRAELI COLLUSION "OBVIOUS"

The Times of June 13 carried an article by one of its Washington correspondents, Louis Heren. The article commenced:

"Most diplomatists stationed in Washington are persuaded that the United States was in collusion with Israel last week, and perhaps before. Not the kind of collusion that President Nasser has claimed to excuse his defeat, of course, but they appear to have had a useful working relationship.

This was obvious in the United Nations Security Council or, rather, behind the scenes, when Washington began to press Jerusalem to accept the cease-fire resolutions only when the victory of Israel arms was assured. Mr. Arthur Goldberg, the American permanent representative was heard to say after one period of negotiation with his Russian opposite number: "Take your time."

Russian efforts to include in the resolution a demand for troop withdrawals were defeated. Really heavy American pressure to stop the fighting was not applied before Friday, when Israel began to move into Syria. Washington shifted from its public neutrality to a more benign nonbelligerence only after super-power agreement not to intervene had been reached on the hot line, and demonstrated. But clearly some assurances were given to the Israelis before the hostilities began.

The more faint-hearted in Jerusalem could rest assured that an Israel defeat would never be allowed. General Moshe Dayan must have been fairly sure of about 96 hours in which to achieve his objectives before the Security Council could call a halt.

ISRAEL PREPARED FOR YEARS, PROVOKED AKABA BLOCKADE

In a long, well-argued article in The Times of June 14, Charles Douglas-Home, its defence correspondent, demolished the myth that it was 'General Dayan's war.' He explained:

"The campaign was the product of years of patient training, involving the acquisition of suitable equipment for Israel forces, and the preparation of Israel's fighting men to use that equipment. It was not General Dayan who planned Israel's Air Force, who bought the French aircraft which contributed so much to the victory, who designed the two special Israel bombs whose accuracy made the whole unbelievable operation possible.

It was not General Dayan who patiently trained the Army in night fighting, ensured that tank crews were drilled each year to attain the highest accuracy at longest ranges and at night, and practised mobilization exercises and individual training to the point where every man had within him the ability to think and readjust to changing situations."

Douglas-Home shows that the timing of the war was decided by Israel, even to the extent of provoking the blockade of the Gulf of Akaba:

"...the inclusion of General Dayan and the other new Ministers automatically set Israel on a course for war at the time and place of her own choosing."

Indeed for many days before General Dayan's appointment Israel was preparing to force the blockade at Sharm el Sheikh with a specially manned cargo ship which was being made ready at the Ethiopian port of Massawa.

Any reference I made at the time to the possibility of a test ship being sailed into the Strait of Tiran to establish an unequivocal pretext for war was categorically forbidden by the censors. Moreover, I have been told on the highest authority that nothing was changed - either in policy or in tactics - between the time General Dayan was appointed and the start of the war."

The timing was linked with the morale of Israeli troops:

"By the time General Dayan assumed office the plans had already been laid, the training accomplished, the tactics largely agreed. In fact, although most observers believed that the waiting posed an intolerable strain on the reservist army in the desert, General Rabin is of the opinion that those two weeks provided just the period of time necessary to prepare the reservists for war. Any sooner and they would not have been fit and ready for battle; much later, and their morale would have been on the way down."

ISRAEL COLONIZES ARAB TERRITORIES: Jerusalem, June 13 (Associated Press)

Israel today began administering the territory it conquered west of the River Jordan as virtually a separate entity with its own currency and local government. A tight military cordon cuts off the Old City, and the west bank of the Jordan from Israel. Reliable sources said eventually a network of customs and frontier posts will cut off the Arabs in the conquered area of Jordan until a final settlement is made. The Arabs are to be administered by Israelis and will not be able to pass freely into Israel, these sources

## NASSER'S RESIGNATION SPEECH

We are reproducing extracts from Nasser's speech of resignation because we are of the opinion that British socialists should know exactly what arguments Nasser has used rather than rely upon the hysterical articles which have appeared in most of the British press.

"Brothers,..... We all know how the crisis began in the first half of last May. There was an enemy plan to invade Syria, and the statements by his politicians and all his military commanders declared that frankly. The evidence was ample. The sources of our Syrian brothers and our own reliable information were categorical on this.

....It was our duty not to accept this in silence. In addition to it being a question of Arab brotherhood it was also a matter of national security. Who starts with Syria will finish with Egypt. So our armed forces moved to our frontiers. Following this came the withdrawal of the United Nations force then the return of our forces to the Sharm el Sheikh position which commands the Tiran Straits and which the Israeli enemy used as one of the results of the tripartite aggression on us in 1956.

The passage of the enemy flag in front of our forces was intolerable and so were other matters connected with the most precious aspirations of the Arab nation. Our estimates of the enemy's strength were precise. They showed us that our armed forces had reached a level of equipment and training at which they were capable of deterring and repelling the enemy....

On the morning of last Monday, June 5, the enemy struck. If we say now it was a stronger blow than we had expected we must say at the same time, and with assurance, that it was much stronger than his resources allowed. It was clear from the very first there were other forces behind him which came to settle their accounts with the Arab Nationalist movement. There were significant surprises:-

1. The enemy we expected to come from the east and north came from the west. This showed he had facilities beyond his own resources and exceeding the estimate of his strength.
2. The enemy attacked at one go all the military and civil airfields in the United Arab Republic. This meant he was relying on something more than his normal strength to protect his skies from any retaliation from us. The enemy was also fighting on other Arab fronts with other assistance.
3. The evidence of imperialist collusion with the enemy is clear. It sought to benefit from the lesson of the former open collusion of 1956, this time concealing itself cunningly. What is now established is that American and British aircraft carriers were off the enemy's shores, helping his war effort.

Also, British aircraft raided in broad daylight positions on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts, in addition to operations by a number of American aircraft reconnoitring some of our positions. The inevitable result was

that our land forces, fighting a most violent and brave battle in the open desert found their air cover was inadequate in face of decisive superiority. It can be said without fear of exaggeration that the enemy was operating an air force three times its normal strength.....

The nature of the desert did not permit a full defence, particularly with the enemy's air superiority. I realize that the development of the armed Battle may not be favourable to us. I tried with others to use all resources of Arab strength. Arab petroleum played its part. The Suez Canal played its part. And there is still a major role required of Arabs everywhere and I am fully confident they will be able to perform it.....

We now reach an important point in this soul-searching by asking ourselves: Does this mean we do not assume responsibility for the consequences of this setback?

I tell you truthfully that I am ready to assume the entire responsibility. I have taken a decision with which I want you all to help me. I have decided to give up completely and finally every official post and every political role and to return to the ranks of the public to do my duty with them like every other citizen.

The forces of imperialism imagine that Abdel Nasser is their enemy. I want it to be clear to them that it is the entire Arab nation and not Gamal Abdel Nasser. The forces hostile to the Arab nationalist movement always try to picture it as Abdel Nasser's empire. That is not true, for the hope for Arab unity began before Gamal Abdel Nasser. It will remain after Gamal Abdel Nasser. I have always told you that it is the nation which survives. Whatever his (Nasser's) contribution to the causes of his homeland, he is but an expression of a popular will and is not the creator of that will.....

The Revolution is not the monopoly of one generation of revolutionaries. I am proud of the contribution by this generation of revolutionaries.

It has brought about the evacuation of British imperialism and the independence of Egypt. It has defined its (Egypt's) Arab character, fought the policy of zones of influence in the Arab world, led the socialist revolution and brought about a profound change in the Arab way of life. It has affirmed the people's control of their resources and the product of their national action.

It recovered the Suez Canal and laid down the basis of industrial build-up in Egypt, built the high dam to turn an arid desert green. It has extended generating power networks all over the northern Nile valley and extracted petroleum resources after a long wait.

More important than all this, it has placed the workers in the leadership of political action. They are always the source for new leadership carrying the banner of the patriotic and nationalist struggle phase after phase, building up socialism and winning victories."

## ISRAEL IS THE AGGRESSOR\*

Israel's attack on Syria, which has continued despite universal demand for ceasefire and assurance by Israeli leaders that they intend to advance no further, should be condemned as aggression. In this policy, Israel has proceeded with the unstated approval of Western governments which desire the overthrow of the Syrian regime because it challenges their customary exploitation of the resources of the Arab world. It is dishonourable for Western governments to call publicly for ceasefire but to remain silent about Israel's continuing attacks.

Israeli spokesmen have indicated that Israel will not automatically relinquish its newly captured territory, which is three times the size of Israel itself. This, too, is aggression in the Israeli pattern of earlier years: it seizes what it can and holds on until this becomes the "status quo". Israel should respect ceasefire arrangements, cooperate with any agency which supervises them and recall all its troops within its borders.

The demands of the governments of the United States and of Britain for the unfettered flow of oil from Arab land are demands that the exploitation of these lands continue unhindered. The Arab world must be permitted to own and develop its own natural resources.

Those who rightly sympathize with Jewish victims of Hitler's aggression in Europe should not equate Israel's survival with its policy of territorial conquest. Aggression is unjustifiable, the more so when perpetrated by those who know its full meaning.

\* Statement issued by Bertrand Russell on June 12.

### The Left and the Middle East Crisis contd....

on to the right because issues are not crucial. However, when it comes to the crunch, weaknesses which are not important under normal circumstances become decisive. Such moments as the outbreak of war (the debacle of the 2nd International in 1914 is the outstanding example) bring these weaknesses to the fore. We may note that many of the people who have taken a bad position of the Middle East crisis have been those who have resisted - and even fought against - a solidarity position on Vietnam. Other factors operating include the association of the oppression of the Jews by Hitler with the Arabs' anti-Zionism. On many sections of the left - particularly those who went through the experience of fighting Mosley - to be critical of Jewish people or institutions (including reactionary ones) is equated with Fascism.

For the left, the ability to stand firm in such situations is vital: any vacillation, or weakening on principle starts a process which inevitably leads one along the path of Wilson and Greenwood. The steeling one gets in standing up to such pressures is part of the essential training of a socialist. Moreover, when the situation becomes clearer, as it is now on the origins of the Middle East war, one's standing and prestige on the movement is enhanced. Political clarity comes from the vigorous discussions at such crisis points. Those on the left who correctly appraised the nature of events in the Middle East last week will be in a better position to fight for marxism and a broad, principled left alternative to Wilson.